

August 31, 1854: "Not the liberty (falsely so called) of . . . mobocracy! . . . but the all comprehending liberty that has made the little rocky island of Albion far above all Roman fame! . . . Annexation Never!"

The HAMILTON GAZETTE, reacting to suggestions of annexation to the US.

Loyalties Bloom In The Spring

Financial insecurity is especially disconcerting in a cold country. But in the early nineteenth century, Canada depended on the exportation of grain, fish and lumber to Britain. It felt secure within the Imperial Tariff System, but in the 1830's Britain rewrote the rules. Canada looked south, but the United States had rules of its own.

When Lord Elgin later arrived as Governor General, he said, "Depend on it, if free navigation and reciprocal trade with the Union be not secure for us, the worst, I fear, will come and that at no distant day."

The worst was annexation. Some Americans wanted to annex Canada and a few Canadians wanted to be annexed. As a poet in the St. John, New Brunswick *Morning News* put it:

On Loyalty we cannot live,
One ounce of Bread it will not give,
Clear the way for Annexation,
Or we shall meet with Starvation.

Lord Elgin was a man of action. He went to Washington in 1854 and smooth-talked a reciprocity treaty through Congress, and trade flowed freely for ten years.

In 1866, the United States, smarting

over British behaviour during the Civil War, abrogated the treaty. Canada survived, but for many Canadians reciprocity became the will-o'-the-wisp of true prosperity.

Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier sent a delegation to Washington in 1897 and was rebuffed. He was rebuffed again in 1898. "There will be no more pilgrimages," he said. "We are turning our hopes to the old motherland."

A decade passed. In the US, the Republican Payne-Aldrich tariff incensed farmers. President Taft decided that Canadian-United States reciprocity would help calm them down. A treaty was negotiated with Canada and the US Congress gave its approval.

Laurier and the Liberals, it seemed, had scored a coup, but not all Canadians were pleased. The Conservative Party, having little choice, decided to fight.

It fought shrewdly. The spectre of annexation was raised once more, and some prominent Americans inadvertently helped.

The Conservatives got a copy of a letter from Taft to his old mentor, Teddy Roosevelt: "The amount of

Canadian products we would take would produce a current of business between western Canada and the United States that would make Canada only an adjunct of the United States. It would transfer all their important business to Chicago and New York with their bank credits and everything else and it would greatly increase the demand of Canada for our manufactures."

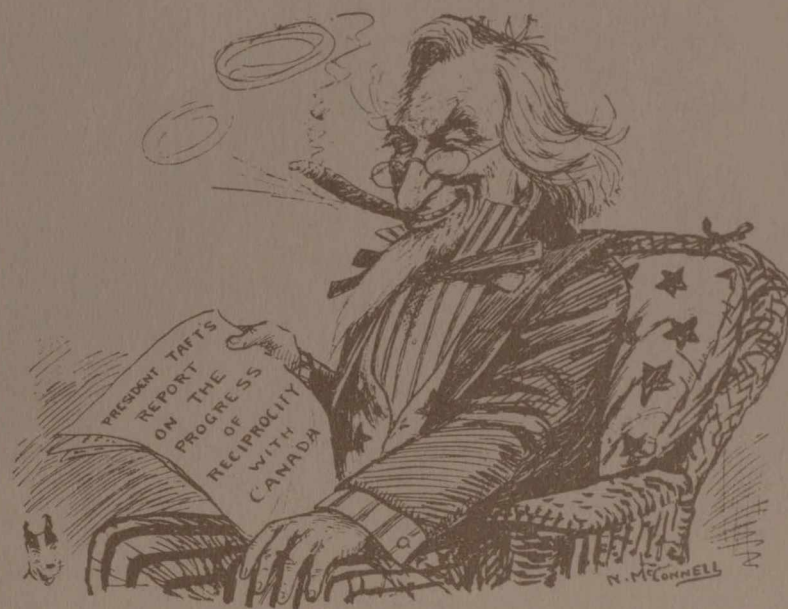
House Speaker Champ Clark rose on the House floor to say: "I hope to see the day when the American flag will

float over every square foot of the British North American possessions, clear to the North Pole."

Laurier was undone. The prize he had won begat his own defeat, reciprocity died, and the Conservatives swept into office.

Today, the world's greatest exchange of goods is across the common border. Each country ships over \$21 billion in merchandise to the other annually, and the complexities of the trade are staggering.

More grist for the Canadian opponents of reciprocity



UNCLE SAM—"I CAN ALMOST HEAR THEM SINGING THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER' IN OTTAWA, BE GOSH."

Manitoba Archives

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				