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OUR INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE.

A HISTORY OF CANADA'S PROGRESS.

The Vast Development of Commerce Between the Provinces of Canada—A Comparison of the Figures Prior to Confederation and at the Present Time Shows Amazing Results—What is Yet Needed is Faith in Our Country and United Work for Its Progress.

[From The Empire, December 28th, 1889.]

Early in the twenties a trio of remarkable men—Chief Justice Sewell, Rev. John Strachan and Hon. J. B. Robinson—prepared and presented to the Colonial Minister a plan for the union of the British communities in North America. The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies referred that plan to James Stuart, another remarkable son of Canada, afterwards created the first Canadian baronet in recognition of his labors in the preparation of the Union Act of 1841. Mr. Stuart reported against the idea of a general union, chiefly on the ground that there was scarcely any trade between the Canadas and the Maritime Provinces. In describing the condition of things then existing he says: "There is absolutely no intercourse whatever between the Canadas and New Brunswick. An immense wilderness separates the inhabited parts of both, and they have no interchangeable commodities admitting of any trade between them by sea. Nova Scotia is remote, is only accessible from the Canadas by land through New Brunswick, and keeps up a small trade with Lower Canada by the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in productions of the West Indies. Between Lower Canada and Prince Edward Island there is hardly any communication whatever."

The First Effort at Trade.

This was in 1824. The very next year, probably at the instance of Chief Justice Sewell, the legislature of Lower Canada made the first legislative effort to promote interprovincial trade. It authorized the Government to offer the sum of £1,500 a year as a subsidy for a steam service to develop trade between Quebec and Halifax. The Nova Scotian Legislature promptly responded by voting £750 a year "as a premium for a steamer of not less than 500 tons burthen. Stimulated by these offers, a joint stock company at once laid the keel of a steamer of 1,370 tons burthen, which when completed (by the way, hull built in Quebec; machinery all made in Montreal), cost £16,000. She was called the Royal William, and was placed upon the route in 1832, plying between the ports during that and the following season of 1833, but then withdrawn "because of insufficiency of business."

It may be of interest to note that immediately upon being withdrawn she coaled at Picton, Nova Scotia, and was sent to Eng-

land, thus becoming the first steam-driven vessel that ever crossed the Atlantic. She made the voyage in 23 days. It was from this steamer's success in crossing the Atlantic that Samuel Cunard first had lodged in his busy brain the idea of the ocean steamship service, which became an accomplished fact in 1840.

The grant of the Canadian and Nova Scotian legislatures produced great results, but not in the special direction intended. The experience of the owners of the Royal William proves that interprovincial trade in 1833 was a very small affair. Thus discouraged the promoters made no further attempts.

The Liberal Idea of 1859.

In 1859 the Liberal party of Upper Canada held a convention in Toronto to do some Cabinet work in the way of manufacturing a platform upon which all sections of that party could stand together with comfort to their political consciences. The union of the British provinces of "the greater half of the continent" had been adopted by the Conservative party as their policy and Mr. (now Sir) A. T. Galt taken into the Cabinet as the exponent of that idea. In dealing with the question thus forced upon them, the Liberals, as the result of their deliberations, concluded to oppose the union policy of their political opponents, and did so chiefly on the old Stuart ground of 1824; viz., that the trade between the Canadas and the Maritime Provinces was so small that union, from an Upper Canadian point of view, was not worth having.

An Effect of Reciprocity.

During the remaining years of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, we may be sure that the trade of an interprovincial character did not grow any larger; for the great and overshadowing fact of that treaty is, as the late W. J. Patterson, of Montreal, abundantly proved, that it transferred to the merchants and traders of the United States a large proportion of a growing direct trade between the provinces, which had existed prior to 1854—the value of the trade in 1865 being less by half a million of dollars than the value of the trade in 1853—a fact that should be borne in mind in all efforts to make freer than they are the trade relations of the Dominion with