

42 AUSTRALASIAN RECIPROCITY PROSPECTS.

Mr. Seddon's Last Work was for Closer Trade Relations.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Sydney, June 11th, 1906.

Mr. Seddon, the late New Zealand Premier, opened up in Sydney a new scheme for improving the condition of the masses, which he intended to introduce at the next session of the New Zealand Parliament. He proposed that such as choose shall pay such a sum as he or she may see fit into a fund at the post-office, either weekly, monthly or yearly, and for every pound paid in the Government would contribute a handsome subsidy, to vary according to the condition of the payee. For the married the subsidy would be larger than for the single, and fathers' subsidies would increase with their family. A friendly society member would get a special subsidy, as Mr. Seddon thinks that these societies are useful in the encouragement of thrift. The amount of the subsidy Mr. Seddon did not state. He hoped that in the end it might do away with the old age pensions as the annuities under his scheme would be better than the payments made by the State to the poverty-stricken and helpless old.

In Sydney Mr. Seddon was very chary over the question of reciprocity but at Adelaide he was freer, and advocated an agreement between Australia and New Zealand. In Melbourne he has had interviews with the Commonwealth Premier, the results of which will be made known later. Some years ago the New Zealand Government arranged with South Australia and Canada a small measure of reciprocity, but the sentiment against it in New Zealand prevented it being submitted to Parliament. Now it is believed that a fair measure of reciprocity with Australia could be carried, and the night before he sailed he signed an agreement for reciprocal trade relationship with Australia. It was to be presented to the Parliaments of the two countries on June 26th.

South Africa has also sent proposals to the Commonwealth for a preferential tariff. The business men of Australia want the Government to accept it, as Australia sells a good deal to the various South African colonies. But the offer from South Africa is very trifling, the rebate being about 3 per cent. It is a question if the Commonwealth Government can deal with it at the ensuing session.

It is pointed out here that the trade of Australia with British South Africa is very much larger than the Canadian trade, the imports from Australia being set down at £1,004,082 and those from Canada at only £251,766 for the half year, ending 31st December last. Australia is second to the United Kingdom in exports to these colonies.

Trade Mark Legislation.

The Trade Mark Act passed by the late Commonwealth Parliament has gone into effect. It prohibits the importation of goods which carry a forgery of a registered trade mark, or to which a registered trade mark is falsely applied, and all goods manufactured at any place outside of Australia carrying the registered trade mark of any manufacturer, dealer or trader in Australia, unless it is accompanied by a definite indication of the country of origin. This Act is very similar to some clauses of the Commerce Act, which has also gone into effect, with the exception of certain goods, which require a proclamation to be issued. The general tenor of the Commerce Act is, that, while it does not require that the label or name shall give any indication of the contents, yet if such a description of the contents is given it must be accurate, or the goods may be seized. These Acts are very much akin to those passed by the British Parliament, and Canadian exporters to Great Britain will not be astray in exporting to Australia upon similar terms, save that it is only necessary, as stated above, to specify that the goods are made in Canada.

In respect to correct naming there are difficulties for the Customs authorities in the administration of both Acts. Names which once were descriptive of the material from which the goods were produced have become simply the name for a recognized quality. Linen paper, when so marked, would be prohibited under the Commerce Act, because originally it was made from linen rags. To-day it is not, and people who purchase linen paper know that it is simply the name of a certain high-grade paper. Tin plates is a recognized commercial term, for sheet iron or steel plates tinned. If the Commerce Act is to be literally interpreted, goods bearing this description would be debarred.

Canadian Agent's Work.

You may be interested in knowing what are the duties of the Commercial Agent in Australia. This is a record of one day in the Sydney office:

- (1)—Answers to letters re Canadian trade, of which there was but one.
- (2)—Writing two letters to Sydney newspapers in reply to criticisms upon Canada. One daily paper has a New York correspondent, who seems to be mad on the relationship between Canada and the United States, with never a good word for the former.

- (3)—Interviews with proposed tourists or settlers in Canada.
- (4)—Interview with the correspondent of Brisbane newspapers, respecting emigration to Canada, how Canada advertises, what are the results of such emigration.
- (5)—Interview with the Australian correspondent of the London "Times" as to the financial arrangements between the Dominion and Provincial Governments in Canada, what led up to these arrangements, and how they have succeeded.
- (6)—Request from a railway man for information as to the sight and hearing tests used on the railways of Canada.
- (7)—Interview with a commission agent, who had taken up a line of Canadian goods. His complaint was that he had sent in his first order ten months ago and it had not yet been filled.
- (8)—Enquiries as to what prospects there would be to obtain supplies of clean apples and potatoes at the end of the year from Canada.

Empire Day has taken a firm grip upon Australia, and it was celebrated both in the city and in country places. Addresses upon the Empire were the features of the meetings, both at school and other gatherings.

L. W.

SIR JOSEPH WARD IN NEW YORK.

New Zealand Premier Wants a Treaty With the United States.

Mr. Seddon's successor as Prime Minister of New Zealand is Sir Joseph Ward, who, on his way home from England, called to see President Roosevelt, at Oyster Bay, and sailed yesterday from San Francisco.

Before Sir Joseph saw the President he said the thing nearest his heart in America was the development of a reciprocity sentiment between New Zealand and the United States. Two hours later he remarked: "Reciprocity is not an easy thing to bring about in this country." Then he gave his views:

"New Zealand," he said, "is ready to make a universal 10 per cent. reduction in her tariff to the United States in return for a like concession, and is prepared to make such a treaty binding, without action by the New Zealand Parliament. She now grants this reduction to Great Britain and would be glad to do so to the United States.

"If this is too broad a proposition, we would be glad to make this reduction on specific articles which each nation buys abroad. For instance, New Zealand wool finds a market in the United States, although it is purchased through England. Then, we dig gum from the ground which America purchases in large quantities for the manufacture of varnish and many other things, and in which there is no competition.

"What we want from America is certain grades of pine lumber, tinned salmon and many kinds of manufactured goods. We buy all of our roll top desks from you; we buy of America from \$800,000 to \$1,000,000 annually.

"There would be some opposition in New Zealand to reducing our tariff on lumber, but our people build their own homes and prefer wooden houses, and while we have a timber country, we need your pine.

"New Zealand is a country capable of maintaining a population of from twenty to forty millions. You are building the Panama Canal, and are our nearest English-speaking neighbor (excepting Australia). Our trade is growing, our interests are identical. It would seem wise statesmanship to cultivate our relations along the commercial line, and we are willing."

As an indication of the keen desire on the part of New Zealand to keep in touch with the United States commercially, Sir Joseph said his Government had for a number of years been paying an annual subsidy of \$100,000 to the Sprickles steamship lines to touch there every three weeks. This subsidy is granted under three-year contracts, at which times the appropriations are made. Difficulty is always experienced in getting this appropriation, and as the Parliament now in session renews this contract Sir Joseph is anxious to get home.

Prof. H. T. Newcomb speaking at Ithaca, N. Y., before the Economic Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, attempted to show statistically that government is not so good an employer of labor as private enterprise and referred strongly to the curtailment of privileges to the laborer which would follow Government ownership. A government becoming an employer has the power to compel the services of employees upon its own terms, a power which Prof. Newcomb contends would be exercised peremptorily in the event of a large body of men asserting a contrary right. This being so, the workingman becomes virtually a slave, a fact he should thoroughly realize before voting for public ownership.

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