The Standard

WHAT ACTION NEXT?

The time is rapidly approaching for a closer and sharper definition of the Reciprocity controversy. Two months of Parliamentary discussion, leisurely, dispassionately, almost academically conducted, have passed. The press has echoed and expanded and to a certain extent added to the arguments outlined in the House of Commons. Platform appeals have followed in a somewhat tardy way and not over a very wide territory. The people at large have been attracted to a study of the question and it can be truly said that the area of interest is continually widening, and the indications point to further enlargement.

As results what has developed? There has occurred a decided break in the Government forces in and out of Parliament. It is futile to ignore the significance of the open and absolute defection of Mr. Sifton, Mr. German, and Mr. Harris. It is not going too far to say that no three men in the Liberal ranks stand for more in business knowledge and general grasp of the bearings of Reciprocity upon the economic and National future of Canada.

Sir Wilfrid had no stronger man in his cabinet than Mr. Sifton, who came from the West and knows the West, and in addition has a wide knowledge of Canada as a whole. Mr. German stands for a county and community which combine old agricultural and new industrial capabilities in a remarkable degree, and Mr. Harris is the representative of busy Brantford and a high class farming interest surrounding it. That such men break the life-long affiliations of party on this question is significant in itself, but becomes infinitely more so in that it is typical of a widespread feeling among Liberals in all parts of the Dominion.

This has been shown in the resolutions of Boards of Trade and business associations, in innumerable personal protests by men in all ranks and occupations, and the generally apathetic and apologetic tone of the party press. The Anti-Reciprocity League which has launched its organization in the two significant meetings in Toronto and Montreal is mainly the outcome of dissident Liberalism and will enlarge and continue its work to all the Provinces.

The Liberal Conservatives in Parliament are united and the party outside is in general accord therewith. Manitoba Conservatives in the agricultural West have voiced their views in the Legislature without a defection, and British Columbia has even more emphatically followed suit.' No more remarkable scene has been witnessed in Ontario than the solid enthusiastic vote given to Sir James Whitney's resolutions of unwavering opposition to the pact.

In Saskatchewan and Alberta the surface tendency appears strongly in favor of the Grain Growers' contentions, but it would be idle to ignore that underneath all this noisy assertion of Reciprocity, Free Trade, and class prejudice there is not a very substantial body of thinking men, who, when the time comes, will make themselves felt for the maintenance of our commercial independence, along the lines of the policy of the last thirty years. Quebec and the Maritime Provinces may be depended upon to negative the pro-American programme.

Taken by large and the country is not in sympathy with the proposed policy, whilst the best business interests, the trend of National feeling, and loyalty to Empire ideals are all deeply hostile.

The question now is what is to be done and how? It is intolerable that two ordinary men should pledge the faith and pawn the honor of the Canadian people in this unauthorized reversal of public policy and be allowed to bluff it through. They hold the cards in Parliament so far as a majority of votes is concerned. As it now appears there is little hope that a sufficient number of members can be detached from their support to prevent an affirmative vote in the House, and in the Senate there will be a few Liberal senators who will repudiate the pact, but added to all the Conservative senators, what are they among so many?

So far, therefore, as Parliament is concerned, the Government have the majority, and are determined to pass the measure. They have gone so far that it is now more dangerous for them to retreat than to advance. Besides, they are, through Messrs. Fielding and Patterson, pledged to President Taft and his "steady Americanization" policy. It matters not that Champ Clark blunders out the all impelling motive behind the Taft Policy in his declaration that "We are now ready to annex Canada," nor that J. J. Hill proclaims the prime present motive to "dish British preference," nor that the United States press from Maine to California follows in more or less open jubilation over the coming "conquest of Canada." To all this the Government opposes the superior smile or the vacuous laugh. Nor does it matter what protests or arguments come from Canadian interests everywhere. To these the uniform answer is "You are too late, we have pledged our faith to President Taft."

The are two courses open. One is to let the measure pass and go into immediate operation, despite the fact that there was no mandate, and that there is an apparent majority hostility to it in the country, and then fight it out at the next general election. This course is open to two serious objections. First it approves the unfair and absolutely unconstitutional proceeding of the Government. To approve their course is to condone, and what is worse to dignify and strengthen it as a precedent. It is to substitute bureaucracy for responsible government, and to invite further action in the same direction. If two ordinary men can agree with Taft to reverse our trade policy, and gain acquiescence, what is to prevent them from further agreeing to consummate commercial union in the same manner? The crisis is a fundamental one and should be challenged and solved at once. Not to do so is to be recreant to the first principle of free government; if for no other reason the people should summarily repudiate the arrogant assumption that their National interests and future can be bartered by two men without mandate or assent.

Secondly, such acquiescence vacates the citadel to the enemy in a campaign on which depends the future of Canada. It allows accomplished legislation to take the place of a proposed policy, and gives a year or two to its supporters to entrench their forces and store supplies. The meretricious and surface advantages

(Second column)

which are first apparent will all be displayed, the deeper lying disadvantages, which develop later and are most destructive, become visible only after lapse of time. If there is to be a fight, if we are not to submit and take this thing "lying down," if it is really a crisis in the history of Canada, why should we permit our adversaries to occupy the vantage point, and strengthen their forces and secure their supplies for the final contest? If we really believe our professions, the fight is now on and either present acquiescence or inactivity makes the struggle more difficult and the outcome more uncertain. In another issue we shall discuss the alternative action.

A CORONATION TRUCE.

Although the Coronation is three months distant, London is as busy with preparations as if it were to come next week. Besides all that is going on in public there are rumors that in private a truce is being arranged between the Liberals and the Unionists in virtue of which "the constitutional question" will be postponed until King George has "his crown on his head, a-writing of his acts of Parliament."

London expects to entertain and be entertained by an immense crowd of visitors. If all these visitors were to reach Great Britain to find it either in the midst of a political squabble or still hot and angry after one, the impressiveness of the occasion would be sadly marred. Hence the report seems plausible that Premier Asquith and Mr. Balfour have come to an understanding that the sweet and holy harmony of the Coronation week shall not be disturbed by wrangling over the "veto." They will have popular approval if they have got together in this way; for it is a cherished British tradition that the Coronation should be the signal for a grand outburst of loyal enthusiasm.

King George is entitled to the consideration of politicians. A Coronation comes but once in a lifetime to a king. He must bear his full share in making the ceremonial a success, and he must not spare his privy purse. The King is making ready for all the expenses expected on the occasion, and for some that he has undertaken on his own initiative. One of them that will cost him a pretty penny is a grand garden party or outing to one hundred thousand London children, drawn from the class in whose daily lives there is little pleasuring. These children will be entertained at his expense.

The King has ordered 100,000 souvenir "beakers" to be made for this occasion, and fifty or seventy-five years hence there will be many an old man or woman within the sound of Bow Bells who to an admiring crowd of children will exhibit "the beaker King George gave me the day he was crowned." There is a vista of kindly thought to the Coronation assured by His Majesty's remembrance of the children of London.

PAYING A HIGH PRICE.

An advertisement in the New York papers announces meeting dates of the "American Annexation League," whose avowed object is to bring all this continent under the sway of the United States. Such efforts have not been infrequent. Their futility, as far as this country is concerned, has been due to the sturdy independence of the Canadian people, which has enabled them to carve out a career for themselves.

The president of the annexation league, however, is more hopeful now. Interviewed by the New York Times he expresses the conviction that "if the reciprocity treaty goes through, Canada will soon be in the United States fold," and ends by the statement: "I tell you, the Stars and Stripes will be floating in all those countries in a few years. It must be done to protect and secure the commercial supremacy of this country."

President Taft says Canada is "at the parting of the ways." Senator Beveridge of Indiana frankly states that the object of reciprocity is to stop the efflux of industries to Canada and subjugate this Dominion to the United States trade. Champ Clark, the leader in whose hands the treaty will rest, announces that he believes in it as a means toward the annexation of Canada. Men like Sir Edmund Walker, Sir James Whitney, Sir William Van Horne and other well-known Canadian citizens warn us that we are throwing away the prize of our National manhood. And to all this is opposed the suave compliments of Uncle Sam. They are certainly being bought with a heavy price.
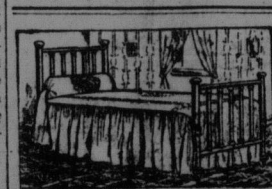
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(Third column)

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE BAHAMAS.

Mr. Editor:—

I read with much interest your very clear and common sense allusions to the agitation in favor of the request of the people of the Bahamas to enter the Dominion, while the question of the hour is the repudiation of the reciprocity agreement, others matters must not be neglected, and this one not to be overlooked. The present writer has paid some attention to it, and about twenty years strongly advocated it in the Sun of that time, under the heading of "What Canada Should Include." These were Newfoundland, Greenland and the West India Islands; and in speaking of the latter, he said: "There are certain things that cannot be produced in our country, and must be had from abroad. This will always place us at a disadvantage with our neighbors south of the line, and just in that proportion we annually pay large amounts, and under present conditions must continue to do so, and to that degree will contribute to the enrichment of other peoples—be the hewers of their wood and the drawers of their water. That is a condition of dependence and subserviency that should not be continued, and that it need not be continued is the opinion of many whose opinions are entitled to the greatest consideration.

It would seem therefore to be to our national advantage to join hands and each find in the other the things of which each is awaiting. It may be said that our needs may be met by treaties of trade and commerce without the responsibilities involved in political union, but experience has shown that out of political union we will always have formidable rivals in even the markets under the British Flag.

The present writer has advocated the acquisition of Newfoundland, and has given his reasons in previous issues of the Sun. He now advises our rulers to turn their eyes to the West Indies and seek acquisition there. Whether this should be done by bringing pressure to bear upon the Colonial Office to unite all the British possessions in that region as a first step, or by directly approaching the legislatures of such of the groups as a union which would be mutually beneficial, must be left to the wisdom of the statesmen. No long list of word signs confuse: only nine characters to learn and you have the entire English language at your absolute command.

No doubt the difficulties arising from distance, the diversities of race, the manners and customs of the people and the comparatively little knowledge we have of each other, are not to be overlooked, but let the principle of union be affirmed, and all these things may be safely dealt with later on. Canadians have had some experience along these lines, and the difficulties that confronted the founders of the Dominion in pre-Confederation days were perhaps as formidable as any that would have to be grappled with in the case now being considered. If the thing is one to be desired, a basis of union can be agreed upon by which the interests of all can be well served.

Very naturally I am much gratified that my views are receiving such warm endorsement, and trust the movement will soon take definite shape and form, and Canada have her "land of fruits as well as of cereals."

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Current Comment

(Chatham Commercial.)

With the record of the past three years administration of affairs under the Hazen Government's rule, no man who has the interests of the Province at heart will vote for a candidate pledged to support the remnant of the incompetent crowd which well nigh brought it to the verge of bankruptcy, and endangered its resources for the material enrichment of themselves and their friends rather than for the good of the community. Whatever Mr. Hazen and his colleagues may or may not have done, they have at least given the Province honest administration.

(New York Press.)

Every once in so often we read in the news of a handful of women getting up some kind of health organization "to encourage good health and lessen the spread of consumption by discouraging the custom of kissing on the lips." Somehow, most of the members are in looks and age not of the type that are usually sought by the handsome young men who throw themselves at the feet of the beautiful and young and beg for kisses, though occasionally some young beauty does some active work in the ranks for a bluff.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

In the British House of Commons Mr. Balfour asked why the British manufacturers had not been consulted by the Government during the Reciprocity negotiations between Mr. Fielding and Mr. Taft. To this the Foreign Secretary replied that they had not been consulted for the reason that both parties to the negotiations were desirous of secrecy. Exactly, and for the same reason the Canadian people were kept in the dark until the conspiracy was ready to be rushed through its legislative stage.

(Toronto Star.)

Fundamentally, the obligation of marriage rests neither upon legal contract nor upon religious ceremony, but upon loyalty, affection and honor, divine laws that are stamped upon every human heart. The relations of man and wife, of parents and child are universally and eternally sacred. They do not rest upon statutes and creeds; statutes and creeds rest upon them and from them derive all the strength and virtue they possess.

(Vancouver World.)

"Procrastination is the thief of time," says Young in his "Night Thoughts." Still it is wise to put off at night what you are going to put on in the morning.

(London Free Press.)

The Fielding who would have disrupted confederation in 1886 is the Fielding who in 1911 would undermine Canadian fiscal independence.

(Advertising columns)