

Montreal Free Press

Unabridged News

Vol. X.—No. 8.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 1874.

SINGLE COPIES, TEN CENTS.
\$4 PER YEAR IN ADVANCE.

RECIPROCITY AND MANUFACTURES.

It is bad policy to strive to belittle the meeting of manufacturers which took place last week in Hamilton. The numerical size of the assembly is a minor consideration. Its representative character is what we must look at. It is not necessary to regard it as an expression of the opinion of all the manufacturers of the Dominion, but quite sufficient, for all practical purposes, that it embodies the views of an important section of the manufacturers of the Dominion. As such, the meeting was highly important. The men who attended it hold large and varied interests in the country and are quite competent to discuss these in all their bearings. That they, after a full debate, marred by no partisan feeling, should have condemned the proposed Reciprocity Treaty, as at present drafted, is a fact which cannot be overlooked and which no amount of partisan newspaper criticism can counteract. If Mr. Brown imagines that he can, by a stroke of his pen, force his free-trade ideas upon the people of Canada, as he has endeavoured to do in the Treaty, he will find himself mistaken. On the other hand, if certain manufacturers hope to use their opposition to the Treaty, so far as to have their theories of Prohibition enforced, they will likewise soon discover their error. Moderate protection is the golden mean which the necessities of the country require and which the voice of the people will insist upon having. That is the *conditio sine qua non* of the progress of a young nation such as ours. That is especially essential in the case of Canada, placed by its geographical position in the neighbourhood of a great overshadowing country. Mainly because the proposed Treaty eliminates this condition, it cannot be acceptable to the manufacturers of the Dominion. A paper of this city makes light of the Hamilton meeting by saying that the Treaty will pass in spite of it, because it is favourable to the two major interests of the country—the agricultural and the lumbering. That is one of these sweeping generalizations which are often accepted without being proved. It is by no means a clear case that the agriculturists of Canada unanimously desire reciprocity and it is well known that the lumber trade will flourish, as it has flourished, whether the Treaty be enforced or not. Thus these the advantages to these two interests cannot be taken as off-set to alleged disadvantages likely to accrue to the other interest of the Dominion through the Treaty. We trust that the good example set by the Dominion Board of Trade at St. John, the Hamilton Board of Trade and the manufacturers meeting at Hamilton, in banishing politics from the consideration of the Treaty, will continue to be imitated, and that the opposite example set by papers, of both the leading parties, will be carefully eschewed. Otherwise, we make this prediction and publish it as a warning. If the proposed Reciprocity Treaty be made a party question, it will be carried through Parliament, by the Government majority, without a single change or modification.

We have reason to know that neither Mr. Brown nor the Government is disposed to alter a single clause in the Treaty. The only hope is that they will be found to do so by the absolute pressure of public opinion as expressed in the views of the most responsible classes, utterly irrespective of party. After all, the measure is one with which as such, politicians have nothing whatever to do, and from which they ought to be made to keep aloof. We repeat that it would be a thousand pities if they were allowed to use it for their own personal and selfish ends, perfectly regardless of the greater good of the greater number. Another possible source of comfort is that the United States Congress may make modifications in the Draft, thus setting an example which may shame our public men into imitation.



STATUE OF JACQUES CARTIER, TO BE PRESENTED TO THE CITY OF MONTREAL BY THE FRENCH SCULPTOR, M. ROBERT.