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TOPICS OF THE TIME

Free Trade, Wanted and Not Wanted

AS time passes, our friends to the south of the line are becoming increasingly desirous of a reciprocity treaty with Canada. The movement in that direction, to which we referred recently, seems to have gained in strength since the presidential election. Some of the leading Republican papers in the country are now earnestly prosecuting a reciprocity campaign and reminding their readers how desirable it is that a better understanding should be reached with their Canadian neighbors. Says one of these papers: "We have the spectacle of two peoples akin in blood, ideals, and conditions, barring each other's way to progress. If the people of Canada are less wide awake to this incongruous situation than we are, let the joint high commission determine that fact anew for us." Another leading journal says: "Overtures should now be made by our government, and made promptly. Either we must begin negotiations for reciprocity within the next few months, or such negotiations will be barred by changed conditions that will not only affect seriously our exports to the Dominion, but also tend to further separate and estrange the two peoples."

But if this be the desire of the United States, it is not Canada's desire. It is somewhat late in the day for Canada to now consider such a measure as a treaty of reciprocity. There was a time when we wanted it,

or thought that we wanted it, but all classes of our people are now pretty well agreed in this, that having been repulsed as we were by the United States, at the time when we were willing to enter into closer relations, we shall not be likely to leap at their offers, now that our own interests lie so plainly in another direction. Since that time Canada has become a nation; we are perfectly willing to maintain the best of good terms with our American friends, but our present inclination lies rather in the direction of increasing than levelling down the tariff wall. The United States, particularly the border states, want reciprocity; Canada does not want it; so plainly it is their move first.

New Provinces in the West

HOW the Canadian West is growing is evidenced, among other ways, by the movement for autonomy in what are now the North-West Territories. This is one of the matters to be discussed during the present session of parliament, and the result will probably be the erection of those territories into one or more separate provinces, with full systems of government as in the other provinces of the Dominion. The promise was given by Sir Wilfrid Laurier some time ago, and it is known to be in line with the wishes of the western people themselves. The matter of greatest difficulty is the settlement of the limits and the adjustment of the lands.