

COMMERCIAL UNION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA: A DISCUSSION.

NOVA SCOTIAN ARGUMENTS AGAINST COMMERCIAL UNION.
(*The American.*)

THE discussion on the question of Commercial Union between the United States and Canada which is being carried on through the columns of *The American* will have a tendency to bring out all obtainable information bearing on this important subject, and finally present it in such shape that the public will be able to judge of the question in its largest light. This may be a step toward discovering how a majority of intelligent citizens really look upon the proposition to remove all commercial barriers between the English-speaking nations of North America. So far, this question, of such vital interest to every resident of Canada, and so widely important to millions of Americans, has not reached the stage where the average man is likely to take it under serious consideration. The papers in all sections of the Dominion have had a great deal to say about commercial union. These arguments, for and against, are almost innumerable, and usually attractive enough when one does not hear the other side. But, as a rule, these expressions do not come from those who are in a position to comprehend the magnitude of the proposed business revolution, or of the questions which will demand answers immediately after it has been brought about. Some of the articles that have recently appeared in Canadian journals, presuming to show why this radical change should be effected at once, are surprisingly vague and illogical, and many effusions presenting the opposite view are equally general, inconclusive, and wide of the real mark. On the one hand, fishermen, farmers, lumbermen, and miners, seem to desire commercial union; on the other, manufacturers and a large proportion of wealthy merchants do not want the custom-houses abolished, or any reduction of the duty on American goods, except in a few instances. The first class is undoubtedly the most numerous; but the latter is the most influential. Thus far the Canadian money kings have been able to control the views of the leaders in both political parties. Both of the classes mentioned argue from their respective standpoints, and neither is able to look the question squarely in the face and decide upon it after studying its full import.

If we are to investigate this matter upon an international basis, where we will find the only ground from which a final decision can be reached, we must consider the respective wants and preferences of Canada and her gigantic neighbour. In the first place, we see a young country still trammelled by the difficulties which beset all infant nationalities. The expenses incurred that the country's resources may be developed have rolled up an enormous public debt, and this weight hangs like a millstone about the neck of the Dominion. Canada may be a youthful Titan, but all her strength is required to carry this load and at the same time support her enormously expensive civil service. With the present revenue it is nearly impossible to meet obligations as they become due, and any change which would tend to materially contract this income must occasion national bankruptcy. How would the revenue of the Dominion be affected by commercial union? The large sums received from duties on goods imported from the United States would be totally lost, and we cannot doubt that many Canadian manufacturers would suffer to a serious extent, without a counterbalancing advantage to others. Thus, the country would not only lose the frontier tax, but also experience a severe reduction of internal revenue. It is also evident, that, with a free entry of Yankee productions many of our heaviest merchants would be unable to retain a large share of their most valuable trade. The present monetary situations of Canada and the United States are such that whenever their interests come in contact upon anything near equal chances, the smaller country is bound to suffer. With no other defence save that provided by distance the Canadians cannot hope to hold their own. The advantages which unlimited commercial intercourse with American traders would bring to Canadians who are not in any way connected with our manufacturing, must be considered as very great, but hardly sufficient to offset the loss that would fall upon the national revenue. These are some of the strongest arguments which may be urged against

commercial union, and their force is generally admitted by those who are earnest advocates of a national reciprocity. As for the Americans, whose factories are usually able to turn out more productions than they are able to dispose of, we cannot blame them for wanting additional markets, and a free swing through Canada to them would certainly be a great advantage.

But there is another and more potent reason why the portions of Canada west and north of New Brunswick should hesitate before removing all restriction to the introduction of American merchandise. The maritime provinces are distinguished from the rest of the Dominion, because, as has often been proved, their most important interests are separate. In the true Canada one may observe the germ of nationality. But the Atlantic States exhibit no qualities which could make them full portions of such a country. If the Dominion is ever to become a nation in the fullest sense of the term, it will only find elements of weakness in the people residing in that part of its territory from which the rest of it is partially separated by the obtrusive prominence of Maine. The union between these sections was never either natural or happy, and the quicker a complete separation is brought about, the better it will be for both parties. If the Canada we have designated becomes commercially united with the Republic, a firm protective tariff against the rest of the world will be the natural sequence. These new world countries would thus enter into an offensive and defensive business alliance against the goods of other nations, and practically exclude the greater part of that which is produced beyond their own borders. On such a foundation only one structure can be erected. When the interests of all occupations have become the same as they would be if there were only one country, an absolute and permanent business union has been accomplished; and the road upon which we travel to reach this stage will certainly lead us onward to a political consolidation. For Canada, commercial union with the United States, means the annexation of Canada to the United States. The more thoughtful and reflective statesmen on both sides of the line see that such an end is not desirable. Under an honest government Canada will have every prospect of increasing in population and national strength, until the time when in the natural course of events her people have reached the position that will entitle them to rightfully demand independence. There is a certain amount of annexation talk in some Ontario and Quebec papers; but the real sentiment of these provinces is clearly unfavourable to any such movement. Judging from the most reliable accounts that come from the States, we should say that the bulk of American people are not anxious for Canada to become a part of their country, which is already extensive enough to suit the most ambitious. Some ten or fifteen years ago, the citizens of Chelsea, Massachusetts, by a large majority voted in favour of annexation to Boston. But the gentle citizens of the "Hub" saw through the business, and by a most emphatic verdict at the polls, refused to accept the gift of the town while it was staggering under an enormous municipal debt. If Canada should ask for admittance to the Federal Union while bending under its present immense obligations, our Yankee friends might wisely invite her to stay at home, and explain that their shoulders are already burdened with all the national debt they care to sustain.

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A Lesson in Practical Anthropology.

SIR C. W. WILSON, in a paper read in the British Association, on "The Wild Tribes of the Soudan," after describing the tribes and their clans, with their divisions and alliances, remarked that it was interesting to observe how thoroughly General Gordon had understood the situation in that region, and at once pointed out the remedy. When he left England, his instructions had been to proceed direct to Suakim, open up communication with the supreme sheik of the Hadendosman who had taken no part in the rebellion, and isolate and crush Osman Digma by raising against him the surrounding tribes, whose sheiks he knew personally. There can be little question that if this policy had been carried out early in 1884, before Sinkat fell and Baker Pasha had been defeated, it would have been successful. But, unfortunately, General Gordon's plans were changed and he proceeded up the Nile.