

The Brain Growers' Guide

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RECIPROCITY: THEN THE REST

Considerable is being made of the fact, by certain Western members in the House of Commons, that the reciprocity agreement does not give the farmers all they asked for and does not touch the privileged interests. W. D. Staples, the member from Macdonald (Man.), last week in the House accused the Guide of misrepresenting the reciprocity agreement. He has discovered that he is opposed to the agreement because it does not hit the classes of Special Privilege. He admits that he is getting resolutions every day from the farmers' organizations in his constituency, demanding that he support the agreement. He thinks, however, that these farmers do not know what they are talking about. He should realize that they understand just as well and possibly better than he does the terms of the reciprocity agreement and the benefits it will give to the farmers. No person has ever suggested that the agreement hits the special privileged classes hard. It reduces the duty on agricultural implements $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and 5 per cent., the duty on cement $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per 100 pounds, and the duty on coal 8 cents per ton. The farmers are not satisfied with this, but they are sensible enough to take what they can get at present and then force the government to give them more when the agreement is ratified. Mr. Staples makes a great deal out of the statement of Sir Wilfrid Laurier last week, that he would not reduce the duty on manufactured articles any further at present. On this account Mr. Staples thinks he can excuse himself for opposing the agreement. He knows that his constituents want it, but that apparently does not matter. Sir Wilfrid's statement on the tariff question is by no means final. The farmers have asked for free agricultural implements, an increase in the British Preference and general tariff reduction, and will not be content with less. When Sir Wilfrid came West last summer he told the farmers at Brandon that he thought the tariff was pretty nearly all right. When he got into Saskatchewan and met the farmers at several different places he changed his mind considerably, and by the time he had gone through Alberta he was sure the tariff was not right, and promised that it would be improved. He will probably change his mind even yet as to further reductions. **THE FARMERS OF CANADA ACCEPT THE RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT ONLY AS A PART OF THEIR DEMANDS.** They are thoroughly aroused to the injustice of the protective tariff and no government will live long in Canada that does not recognize this. If Mr. Staples is sincere he will endeavor to help his constituents rather than betray them to the protected interests. We have said that the present struggle is not a political one, but is a fight between the common people and the classes of Special Privilege. Why? Because Special Privilege sees the handwriting upon the wall. They know it is only a question of time until they will have to do business upon its merits and without being legalized to milk the public. The length of that time depends upon whether the members of parliament truly represent their constituents, or whether, like Mr. Staples, they refuse to work in the interests of their constituents and prefer to play into the hands of Special Privilege. If an election is brought on during the present year before the redistribution following the census, the West will lose a great many members. **IT WOULD BE A VERY UNWISE ACTION ON THE PART OF EITHER POLITICAL PARTY TO FORCE AN ELECTION AT**

THE PRESENT TIME. The people of the West are watching their members at Ottawa very closely, not only on the tariff question but upon all the other vital questions. They know quite well what is going on at Ottawa. The reciprocity agreement is satisfactory to the West so far as it goes, and no Western member can excuse himself for not supporting it. If Mr. Staples will only act in the interest of his constituents, and do his own thinking, he can help them a great deal. If he acts in the interest of Special Privilege, and allows other people to do his thinking for him, he is not the kind of man that will help along the interests of the Western people. The Western farmers today are wise. It will pay Mr. Staples to be wise also.

LABOR FAVORS RECIPROCITY

At a meeting of the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council, held on March 16, the following resolution was passed with but one dissenting voice:

"That this meeting heartily favors the reciprocity proposals between this country and the United States, believing that it gives a measure of relief to the producer and that it will tend to strengthen the friendly relations of the people of the two countries on this continent and will suggest the advisability of further increasing the rate of British Preference."

There was a long discussion upon the above resolution in which the leading officers of organized labor in the City expressed their hearty approval of the pact. The annexation bogey was given short shift, and emphasis was laid upon the better feeling which free trade would bring about between the two nations. It was regarded as a step in the direction of universal peace. The abuses of protection were ably exposed by one of the speakers, and the day was looked ahead to when there would be no tariff walls surrounding Canada. The debate upon the resolution was conducted upon a high plane, and though the speakers did not see in the agreement a great deal of relief for the general consumer, they realized that it was the beginning of the end of protectionism, and welcomed it accordingly.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND FREE TRADE

Probably the most notable public utterance of the past week was that made by Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Minister, in the British House of Commons on March 13. In discussing the question of Britain's defence he referred to the possible adoption of a proposal made by President Taft to submit all questions of international dispute to arbitration. Sir Edward Grey said:

"When two of the greatest nations thus should make it clear that under no circumstances were they going to war again the effect of their example on the world must have beneficial consequences." . . . "Nations entering such an agreement might be exposed to attack by a third nation. This would probably lead to their making another agreement to join each other in any case of quarrel with a third power in which arbitration was refused." . . . "In entering an agreement of this kind there would be risks and you must be prepared for some sacrifice of national pride. I know that to produce such changes public opinion must reach very high ideals—higher than some people think possible, but men's minds are working in this direction, and history shows instances of reaching such an ideal point." . . . "The general adoption of such a system might leave some armies and navies still in existence, but they would remain not in rivalry but as the world's police." . . . "Nations are in bondage to army and naval expenditures. May the time soon come when they realize that the law is a better remedy than force."

The proposal by President Taft to which Sir Edward Grey referred was that made on

March 22, 1910, in an address before the Peace and Arbitration Society in New York. The president's words were:

"Personally I do not see any more reason why matters of national honor should not be referred to a court of arbitration than matters of property or of national proprietorship. I know that this is going further than most men are willing to go, but I do not see why questions of honor may not be submitted to a tribunal composed of men of honor who understand questions of national honor, as arising between nations."

There is a deep significance in the fact that two of the world's greatest powers should even consider making a treaty and a declaration that under no circumstances would they ever war with each other; it is still more significant that these two should be the great Anglo-Saxon nations. Canada has a deep interest in any negotiations of this character between Britain and United States, because in the future Anglo-Saxon federation for world peace Canada will stand as a full partner. Britain and United States united for mutual peace and mutual defence would create a precedent which would secure the support of public opinion in all civilized countries. The mad haste and waste in military and naval armament would become a crime, and its inhuman toll would cease forever. No more humane or noble cause could enlist the sympathies of the greatest statesman. International disputes could be settled by international courts of justice composed of men of the highest judicial attainments and of unquestioned honor. Great wars of the past have been brought about by many petty causes, and frequently because of commercial greed or interference with trade. Freedom of trade removes the greatest incentive for war, and with the establishment of international free trade, international peace would soon follow. It will only come about by the force of enlightened and patriotic public opinion. Speaking at Atlanta, Georgia, on March 7, 1911, President Taft, in referring to the reciprocity agreement between Canada and the United States, said:

"When we entered upon the conference I authorized the Secretary of State and his commissioners to offer free trade in every thing, but this Canada could not grant us, because she has a protective system and she was afraid of the competition of our better organized industries."

This is the first intimation we have had that United States is prepared for absolute free trade with Canada. The chief obstacle in the way of continental free trade is the power of the protected interests in Canada. Public opinion, however, is daily growing in favor of freer trade. It will not come immediately, but the tide is setting in that direction, and as the tariff between Canada and the United States goes lower it is bound to come down between Canada and Britain. Freer trade between the Anglo-Saxon nations is nearer at hand than many realize. The reciprocity agreement is one of the best possible guarantees of peace between Canada and the United States. By forwarding the cause of international free trade we are forwarding the cause of international peace. Public opinion in Great Britain is greatly enthused over Grey's speech. Mr. Balfour, leader of the opposition, has risen above party and has commended the spirit of Grey's utterance. The whole world is watching this great movement for the uplift of mankind.

Do the Western farmers know what they want? Do they understand the reciprocity agreement? We will guarantee to any anxious politician that the Western farmers are thoroughly informed upon these matters.