

### Why Not Preferential Tariff for Great Britain?

Newfoundland, Unlike Canada, has never given the Mother Country preference under her Tariff, and is now under present Exchange Situation, actually giving a very great preference to the United States.

Newfoundlanders are pleased to designate their native land as "The Most Ancient and Loyal Colony," and are pleased to hear their Country so designated. But there is at least one point as regards patriotism, in which we may be blessed for being lacking and the same is accentuated to-day.

Other British Colonies and Dominions give Britain a preferential duty with regard to imports. Canada does, and it seems peculiar that we who have followed Canadian systems so closely and especially those of taxation and finance have not with regard to this, and bearing in mind our proud title of "Loyal" also done the same.

I consider that this is, at this time, a matter for public discussion and consideration and it may be that through the press we may get some opinions on the matter, which may lead to something being done. Some time prior to this, I discussed the matter of Imperial Preference with my friend Mr. Harold Mitchell and other officers of the earlier Veteran Executives, and members, and they thought something should certainly be done in the way of Empire Trade Preferences.

I am hopeful that Colonel Bernard and the present Executive, and members of the G. W. V. A., in the present as in their past endeavours to keep the Empire firmly knit together, will shortly take this matter up, as they are qualified to speak to it and no doubt will. It is also to be hoped that influential bodies like the Board of Trade, the Men's Patriotic Association, our Societies and Labour Organizations may discuss this matter and we should like to see the various Women's Patriotic Associations, continuing the good work they have been doing, making themselves heard on it.

In fact, the women, as being most largely the shoppers of the Dominion, can take this matter to a large extent into their hands and no doubt will. We should now have a tariff that is for the good and upbuilding of the Empire and not one to build up or give unwarranted strength to any other Country.

It may be that this will, amongst other Post-War Problems be taken up by the Government this session, and we shall be glad to learn that this is the case, and we may depend on the statement on both sides of the House to act, and we should especially expect to hear from our War Veteran members.

We must build up the Pound Sterling! It is a bit run down now through overwork and War efforts.

The Pound Sterling went out to save the Empire when the Hun thundered at our gates just the same as our boys did. An inordinate desire for money may have been the curse of the world's civilization for hundreds of years, but Newfoundland and the Empire voted their money for the good of civilization as if it were so much water, and some time it will be seen that it did them good. But now we are nearly all a bit war-wearied, and there is not the wine of excitement to stimulate and brace us to further efforts.

Still there is much to be done, many problems to be settled coincident with the ending of the war. There are many of the boys to be put upon their feet. Now I come and say the good old Pound Sterling must be upon its feet and take the pre-eminence place in trade and commerce which it once proudly held. And the stronger the Pound Sterling becomes, the stronger the Empire will be found to be becoming, and the stronger the Pound Sterling becomes, the more it will purchase and the more can be done for those in the Empire for whom much should be done. And the stronger the Pound Sterling becomes, the more you will be able to buy for your money. A good many Pounds Sterling have gone East to Russia, and they will never come back. This was one of the big losses that Britain had and it has to be made up. Lately, the Pound Sterling has been coming West. It went out and did its bit to help win the war, and is not quite so strong on its feet as it was, and some people if not exactly turning up their noses at it, are saying,—"you are not as strong as you used to be," and making it out worse perhaps than it really is.

In the U.S.A. now for instance, they have been making it out as being about 30 per cent. weaker. More lately they have been making it out to be a little luster. Up there, they even made out our Canadian-Newfoundland dollar to have become weakened to the extent of about 17 per cent. Lately they have been figuring we are only weakened to the extent of about 12 per cent. But as the Pound Sterling strengthens so also will the Canadian-Newfoundland dollar sit up.

The strengthening of the Pound Sterling will mean considerable gain for Newfoundland through those interested in fish, shipping, etc., where drafts are drawn on London. Britain has to buy a big lot of stuff from the United States, (some that she will later buy within the confines of

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her own Empire.) In this article I am only going to consider one item, she buys from the U.S.A. and that is Raw Cotton, and of that she purchases at least 75% of her imports there. It happens that Freight and Insurance on Cotton are extra heavy, owing to the dangerous nature of the cargo, and these have in most cases to be prepaid, so a large exchange has also to be paid on these as well as on the raw cotton. In those days when prices, exchange, freights, etc., move up and down, it is difficult to arrive at exact figures, in some cases, but I

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figure Raw Cotton has lately been costing the British Manufacturer about 35% more than what it cost the American Manufacturer, this being mainly caused by heavy exchange. The British Manufacturer has to add this exchange, etc., to the cost of his goods. On his manufactured cottons we have therefore to pay our Customs duty on this exchange he paid America. It is a peculiar situation, and a barrier to British Trade, as it makes British Cotton goods higher and farther tends to shut off buying from the British Market, for the American Manufacturer with his Cotton 35% cheaper, can manufacture more cheaply. Then we have not,—when buying Cotton goods in America,—to pay duty on any exchange, though we have to pay an exchange of 13% to 17%.

This matter may be perhaps seen more clearly if we give some illustrative figures. Suppose we buy £1, 0, 7 in Manufactured Cotton Goods from Great Britain and \$5.00 worth from the States. Prior to the war each amount of goods could be paid for by practically

ly \$5.00 in Canadian-Newfoundland currency, and the duty on each was the same. Lately for £1, 0, 7, British Goods (if we are paying spot cash) we only paid for same \$3.97 to \$4.33, figuring on Exchange ranging from \$3.55 to

\$4.85. For our American \$5.00 worth we had to pay \$5.55 to \$5.60. We shall for the sake of the easier figuring consider the earlier and corresponding figures in each case. In passing Customs's entries on these goods,—the British Goods that really cost us \$3.97 we had to pay duty on as being worth \$5.00, an advance in the Duty of 26%, and as regards the American Goods which cost us \$5.55 we only paid Duty on \$5.00 which was a reduction of about 15%.

The British Goods are taxed 26% more duty than appears reasonable, and American Goods are taxed 15% less than might appear reasonable. This is because our Government is still following the old custom of taxing the Pound Sterling as being worth \$4.85 2-3 and the American dollar as being worth One Hundred Cents. It is certainly making it hard for

the British Manufacturer to sell his goods in Newfoundland. The same thing occurs to some extent in Canada but not so largely, as in any case Canada gives Britain a lower Duty on Cotton Goods than to the U.S.A. and the manufacturers to a large extent herself. The Canadian Government will, however, consider the matter at the moment it is illegal.

**BRITAIN.** Cotton piece goods bought, £1, 0, 7 pre-war cash value Canada-Nfld. money, \$5.00; pre-war and present customs value, \$5.00; pre-war and present duty at 28 1/2 per cent, \$1.92 1/2.

**U.S.A.** Cotton piece goods, \$5.00; pre-war cash value Canada-Nfld. money, \$5.00; pre-war and present customs value, \$5.00; pre-war and present duty at 28 1/2 per cent, \$1.92 1/2.

Britain, £1, 0, 7, late cash value \$3.97 to \$4.33; real percentage on cash value for 28 1/2 per cent. goods, 48 1/2 per cent to 44 per cent.

U.S.A., \$5.00, late cash value \$5.55 to \$5.60; real percentage on cash value for 28 1/2 per cent. goods, 33 per cent to 34 1/2 per cent.

Britain, £1, 0, 7, present duty 49 1/2 per cent. goods, \$2.47 1/2; real percentage on cash value, 62 1/2 per cent to 56 1/2 per cent.

U.S.A., \$5.00, present day duty 49 1/2 per cent. goods, \$2.47 1/2; real percentage on cash value, 42 1/2 to 44 1/2 per cent.

The above tabulation of figures (which are I think correct to a fraction) will show that where Cotton Piece Goods are dutiable at 28 1/2% British Goods have really been taxed 48 1/2% to 44%, and American Goods only 33% to 34 1/2% on their real value.

On Manufactured Cotton Goods which are dutiable at 49 1/2% ad valorem, British Goods have been taxed as high as 62 1/2%, where American Goods are taxed 42 1/2%.

It would appear reasonable now if the Government for Customs purposes figured on the Pound Sterling as being worth about 4.30 and the American Dollar \$1.10 to 1.12 1/2, where it can be shown British Manufacturers are not getting a square show, or in certain cases the ad valorem duties might be changed.

At the moment it is easily apparent America has the advantage though everybody practically now throughout Newfoundland is calling out for British Goods per preference.

I believe that the matter might be adjusted without the Government forcing any loss in Duties, and we might naturally assume this would be one of the first points they would consider. But as this is a National Question we shall ask both sides of "The House" to consider the problem, and see if this time Newfoundland cannot give Canada a lead.

K. M. BLAIR.

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