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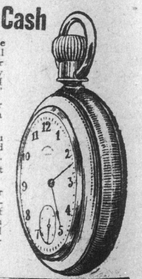

TORONTO

CANNOT LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Points Out the Difference Between Canada and China

Freaks of Unreasoning Panic Discarded and Question of Trade Agreement Handled from Common Sense Point of View--Mr. Foster's Alarm and Unfairness---Trade in Canadian Channels.

Following is the second instalment of the speech on the trade agreement by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, as reported in the Toronto Globe's Ottawa despatches:

Cause of the Change.

But I ask again, what is the cause of the change of attitude which we see on the other side of the house? That cause cannot but be flattering to the government. The only reason given is that Canada today is prosperous as she never was before. If Canada were still in the position in which we found it when we took office in 1896, with the vast fertile lands still unoccupied and untilled, with its natural resources dormant as they had been since the early days of creation with its transportation facilities still in the most rudimentary stage, with industry stagnant, with agriculture unremunerative—were Canada still in that position, I have no doubt that today the policy we are proposing would be received with favor, and the empyrean would resound with exultation. But the country is, instead of being in that condition, prosperous, extraordinarily prosperous, and we are told by hon. gentlemen opposite: "Do not go any further, fold your arms and let well enough alone."

Canada Not China.

Well, what is this country? What are we? Is this Canada or is this China?

Some hon. members—Hear, hear.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—The Chinese have left well enough alone for 4,000 years. Four thousand years ago they were probably the first nation on earth, and so satisfied were they that they refused to move. They let well enough alone for 4,000 years. If a reformer showed his head against them he was ruthlessly put down and told to let well enough alone. It is said—and I believe it is historically true—that gunpowder was invented by the ingenious Chinamen, but the people of China never used gunpowder for the defence of their territory, though often exposed to invasion. They depended on the great dragon to sweep off their enemies from the face of the earth by the fire from his eyes. They let well enough alone. It was a Chinaman who invented the compass, but they never used it for navigation, and for 4,000 years their little junks navigated around their shores, never getting away from the land. They let well enough alone.

Some hon. members—Hear, hear.

Will Not Do for Canada.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—And we are asked to adopt this Chinese policy. But, sir, this is Canada, and we shall have to go on whether hon. gentlemen opposite will follow or not. We will drag them on even against their will.

Some hon. members—Hear, hear.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—That is our policy. We must go on. Some years ago a young lady showed me her album, which, as a young girl, she had shown Sir John Macdonald, and asked him to write in it the motto of his life, and he wrote on it his motto: "Hope on, hope ever." How far the Conservative party is from that motto today! (Cheers.)

Will Carry on Policy.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—But we shall go on with our policy. Our policy is to advance, and if it be wrong we shall submit willingly to the judgment of the Canadian people, and to the punishment which ought to be given every man who brings in a wrong policy. But this is our policy. Our policy has been, is, and will be, so long as the Canadian people continue to place in us the confidence they have shown us during fifteen years, to seek markets wherever markets are to be found. We are above all an agricultural people, our chief wealth is the growth of those products of the temperate zone, fruits, cereals and vegetables, and it is our boast—but a boast founded on actual experience—that in cereals, vegetables and fruits we can, without exaggeration, beat the world. (Cheers.) At the northern extremity of the temperate zone our cereals have more strength, our fruit has better flavor, our vegetables have more delicacy than similar productions from other parts of the world, and under free competition, not barred in any way by tariff legislation, they will displace all other products on the tables of the wealthy. Our object today is to open the door of the American market, to open the door of a nation of 90,000,000, which has been closed to us for the last fifty years and when we are now on the eve of reaching that long-sought object we are met by objection after objection, we are deluged by a plethora of sophism, we are told that if such an arrangement is to go into effect and Canadian vegetables, cereals, and fruits can cross the boundary line and be eaten free of duty by the American people, it will be all over with the Canadian Confederation, and even the British Empire will reel and rock upon its foundations. (Cheers.)

Discard Unreasoning Panic.

Sir, let us discard these freaks of unreasoning panic, let us approach this question from the point of view of common sense, from the basis of first principles. (Hear, hear, and oh, oh.) Let us, I say, approach the question from the point of view of common sense—and I am glad that my remarks on that point evoke some response from the other side—we will see how far they will go. If, sir, I were to state to my hon. friends on the other side that amongst civilized mankind, all those who work, work with the object of disposing of the product of their labor, I should be told this is a truism that is running in the streets. If I were to add that the man who works has the legitimate ambition of getting the greatest possible remuneration for his labor, I should be told this is a mere truism. If I were to say that the man who works will be better remunerated the more clients he has seeking the products of his labor, I should be told this is a truism. And yet this is the long thing, this very truism, which is embodied in the proposition now before you. All that we ask under these resolutions is to obtain for the man who works in the fields the best possible remuneration for his labor. And does that proposition require any defence? Is it not simply on the line of common sense? Is it not the first of all principles? How, then, is it that it is not accepted at once? I will give the reason. I will try to be fair in giving these reasons.

Good Words for Negotiators.

But, before I proceed farther, I must say that it seems to me that the House of Commons and the Canadian people at large owe a debt of gratitude to my honorable friend the minister of finance (Mr. Fielding) and my honorable friends the minister of customs (Mr. Paterson) for having obtained from our neighbors such an advantageous arrangement, and having obtained it without the sacrifice of any Canadian interest. Mr. Chairman, before I proceed farther perhaps I may be permitted to say that, in my opinion, the discussion which has taken place up to this time has been carried on upon a high level. Of course I do not agree with my honorable friends on the other side who have taken part in this discussion, but I pay them the tribute, one and all, of having taken part in a fair manner, in a manner which, I think, deserves acknowledgement on our part and reflects credit upon themselves.

Mr. Foster Unfair.

I am sorry that to this I have to make an exception in the person of my honorable friend from North Toronto (Mr. Foster). My honorable friend from North Toronto was not satisfied to criticize the arrangement, in which, indeed, he would have been within his rights, but he was unduly unfair, in my judgment at all events, in trying to depreciate not only the agreement, but those who had made it. He spoke of my honorable friend, the minister of finance and my honorable friend the minister of customs as being very ordinary men. He referred to that two or three times, speaking of my honorable friend the minister of finance. Well, if my honorable friend from North Toronto has not learned it yet, he may learn it now, that if he had to his credit one-half the achievements of my honorable friend the minister of finance, he would have reason to be more proud of his career than he can be. Then he went over the list of the cabinet, taking them in tuffi, this one and that one, and at last he came to my poor humble self; and of my poor humble self he spoke of follows: "A man of such fine financial mind and business acumen as the Right Hon. gentleman himself who leads the government."

A Home Thrust for Foster.

I have never posed as a man of fine financial mind or of business acumen; but when I see the pretension put up by some men who dabble in finance and business, I am surprised at my modesty. If I had dabbled in finance and business I am prepared to admit I should have made a sad mess of it; but I could not have been worse than my honorable friend. If, after having posed as a business man and financier, I had nothing to show but a record of failure I would go and hide myself for very shame, and be very chary of throwing stones into other people's gardens for fear they should be returned to me with compound interest.

Objections to Agreement.

I stated a moment ago that the agreement we made is simply to get better prices for the produce of the Canadian farmers. This is a proposition so obvious that I am surprised it should have received the treatment it has received on the part of our friends opposite. But the objections made to this agreement are not to be found within the four corners of the same, but are all based upon extraneous grounds. The opposition, the Conservative party, are against this agreement, because, they they tell us, it will produce consequences which will be deplorable for this country. I have listened with some care to nearly all the speeches that have been delivered in this house on this question, and those which I had not the opportunity to hear I have read with equal care, and I think I am fair in stating that the objections made to this arrangement are fourfold. The first objection is that the effect will be to deflect the carrying trade from Canadian channels to American channels. The second is that it will destroy our natural resources. The third is that it will imperil our industries. And the fourth—and certainly not the least—is that it will dissolve our autonomy and land us ultimately in the American Republic. I think I have fairly stated what are the objections of honorable gentlemen on the other side; and the house will perhaps permit me to discuss them.

The Carrying Trade.

Let us take the first, the objection that this arrangement is going to deflect trade from Canadian channels into American channels. This question is to be discussed from two points of view: from the point of view of the goods going from Canada into the United States for the purpose of being carried over Great Britain, and the goods going from Canada to the United States. Now, regarding the first, those goods sent from Canada to the United States to be carried to Great Britain, in what way does this arrangement undo the system now in existence? At the present time goods go from Canada to be shipped from Boston, New York or any American port without paying duty. In the same way American goods come to Canada to be shipped out by Montreal, Halifax, or St. John without paying duty. A cargo of wheat can leave Winnipeg for New York and there be discharged and put on board ship without duty being demanded. A cargo of grain can leave Minneapolis to be taken to Montreal and shipped thence without paying duty.

The Bonding Privilege.

This is by virtue of the bonding privilege which has been given by each government to the other for the purpose of transportation. It has been in existence for something like sixty years, and I have never heard a complaint that it was unfair to one party or to the other. There was a time when I felt nervous on reflecting that the bonding privilege was simply an act of good-will on the part of the United States towards us. That was the time when we had no communication of our own to the sea. But now that we have a continuous communication on Canadian soil from sea to sea, we feel that the United States can remove the bonding privilege at any time they please, and if they do so they will suffer more than we should. But, sir, our condition is absolutely safe whether this treaty passes or not.

Trade in Canadian Channels.

Now, sir, it does not follow that for my part I am opposed to the policy of retaining in our own channels Canadian trade; on the contrary, I am very solicitous in that respect, and I think I can show by the records of this government that we have favored the building of lines through Canadian territory from east to west, with the intent of keeping trade in our own channels. But I may say this to the honorable member for North Toronto (Mr. Foster) ,to the leader of the opposition (Mr. Borden), and to the member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton), especially, that if they expect that they are going to keep trade within Canadian channels by legislative enactment, by trade impediments, they make the greatest of all mistakes, a mistake which was tried once and had to be abandoned. Sir, when the C. P. R. was created in 1881 it was with the avowed policy of creating a channel of communication between east and west. The policy was to keep so far as legislation could do it Canadian trade in Canadian channels. Now, my honorable friend from North Toronto commented upon this rather severely, and with great force of language, as to the results upon the credit of Canada, upon those who had invested their money in these enterprises, when they learn that by this legislation the lines of eastern and western trade could be tapped at any place, and trade could be diverted from channels running east and west to channels running north and south.

Mr. Foster's Alarm.

This is the language which the honorable member for North Toronto made use of on that occasion, and I quote it in view of what I shall say a few minutes later:

"Take the capital invested in the east and west lines of communication; was it ever dreamed in Britain, sir, that the time would ever come when a change of policy would be inaugurated by the men who petitioned for the money, who pleaded for the investment of capital, and got it at long last? Was it ever dreamed that when this capital was securely fixed and invested, the long lateral lines of railway should be tapped every few miles by communication to draw off the trade intended for them to southern routes and do away with the long haul of the east and west lines?"

The C. P. R. Contract.

My honorable friend had in his mind perhaps when he spoke that way the circumstances that in the contract with the C. P. R. Company precautions had been taken to keep the trade flowing east and west. In that contract with the C. P. R. Company the following clause was inserted as clause 15: "For twenty years from the date hereafter no line of railway shall be authorized by the dominion parliament to be constructed south of the C. P. R. from any point at or near the C. P. R., except such line shall run southwest or to the west or southwest, or to within fifteen miles of latitude 49."

Mark the words. The men who invested their money in that enterprise had this inducement: that the Canadian government would not permit any railway to be built south of the line of the C. P. R., and that for fifteen miles north of the boundary line there should be absolutely no railway at all. Therefore, under those circumstances, trade could not be diverted from Canadian to American channels; there would be no possible communication. That was the extreme precaution which was taken by the government of that day; that was a restriction upon the energy, upon the enterprise of the people of the west which was to last for twenty years. Under that restriction the capitalists of the world were invited to put their money into the enterprise, and they did it upon the faith of the Canadian government.

Could Not Bind Manitoba.

How long did this agreement last? Did it last twenty years? Sir, it lasted just six years, and at last after six years the Canadian government had to recall that legislation. And how did it occur? This is one of the most dramatic pages of the history of our country, and no one knows it better than my honorable friend from Brandon. I do not know if he was then in the legislature, but I know he was a young politician, and he could not have been indifferent to what was taking place. There was a restriction put upon the energy, upon the enterprise of the people of the west, and of the province of Manitoba in particular. The people of Manitoba wanted power to trade north and south; they wanted to trade with their neighbors the American people; they wanted to have railway communication with them. But there was a statute, there was an act of parliament, there was the authority of the Canadian government, which prevented them from trading with their neighbors to the south, and the Canadian government attempted for six years to keep that legislation in force. The legislature of Manitoba passed acts chartering the railways, allowing them to cross that zone of territory which the government were attempting to reserve from civilization and the benefits thereof.

Policy of Disallowance.

The legislature of Manitoba wanted railways to communicate north and south; they chartered railways to that effect, and these charters were disallowed one after another, disallowed in 1881, disallowed in 1882, disallowed in 1883, disallowed in 1884, disallowed in 1885, disallowed in 1886, the legislature of Manitoba petitioned this government, petitioned parliament, to do away with this restriction, and year after year that prayer was denied. At last in 1887, notwithstanding all the restrictions put upon their energy, the government of Manitoba, with the assent of the whole people of Manitoba, passed another act chartering a company to run from Winnipeg to the boundary line, where it could reach the American system of railways, and this act was disallowed. The province passed beyond that disallowance and proceeded to build the railway, though there was no legislation empowering them to do so. It was practically an act of rebellion.

My honorable friends from Manitoba, my honorable friend from Brandon, remember that on a certain day in the month of October, 1887, when the Canadian Pacific Railway Company attempted to challenge the right of the province to cross their line towards the south, 200 citizens from the city of Winnipeg, members of the government, members of the legislature, financial men, professional men, merchants, bankers, went in a body to the point of the crossing and repelled force by force to allow the crossing of the Canadian Pacific Railway by the provincial line. Then, sir, the Canadian government came down and at the following session the privilege was repealed, a privilege that had to be purchased by the Canadian government, bought back by the Canadian government from the Canadian Pacific railway. Now, I ask the honorable member for North Toronto what became then of those investors who had put their money into the Canadian Pacific railway upon the faith of the Canadian government? Were they ruined by it? No, the result was that their stock, which was worth at that time 30, has now reached 213.

Along Natural Lines.

I repeat, if you attempt to prevent the people from trading in natural channels, no amount of legislation will accomplish that object, but let nature alone and then the trade will be carried on on Canadian lines. Why? Because we have the interior waterways and the shortest and the better lines. Take the condition of things today. Winnipeg can trade with Europe by way of the United States, it can trade with Europe by way of Canada. The line of railway from Winnipeg to Montreal is 1,414 miles, and from Montreal to Liverpool 2,760 miles, a total of 4,174 miles. From Winnipeg to New York, by way of Minneapolis, Chicago and the American lines, the distance is 1,790 miles, and from New York to Liverpool 3,026 miles, or a total distance of 4,826 miles. The American line is 4,826 miles, the Canadian line is 4,174 miles, a distance in favor of the Canadian line of 692 miles. Do you require any legislation, I want to know, to compel trade to choose the Canadian channels? Is it not obvious that for very self-interest trade will always take the Canadian line, because it is the shorter one? Well, sir, that is not all. We have had experience as to what has happened, and our experience has been that our trade over the Canadian channels has increased by leaps and bounds as against the trade by the American channels. In 1900 the total amount of wheat exported from Montreal was 4,000,000 bushels; in 1910 it had increased from 4,000,000 bushels to 14,160,000 bushels. Of American wheat, the total number of bushels exported to and from Montreal in 1900 was 5,000,000 bushels, and in 1911 that had increased to 10,000,000 bushels. So, therefore, there is no doubt on this point, the Canadian line must have the preference because the Canadian line is the best and the shortest.

Interprovincial Trade.

But, sir, the question has to be examined from the point of view of goods which are exported from Canada to the United States with a view to consumption in that country. My honorable friend the leader of the opposition, when he spoke upon this subject, stated that our policy ought to be to favor interprovincial trade. To this, sir, everybody said, "We all favor interprovincial trade in preference to trade with other nations," and I am prepared to admit with my honorable friend that the home market is the best for all kinds of products. But I have to observe to my honorable friend that this agreement concerns only natural products, and my honorable friend will not contend that the Canadian people can consume the whole production of our natural products. My honorable friend from Brandon the other day stated that the home market would require about eighty per cent. of our products. It is difficult to secure reliable statistics upon this point, so as to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to how much of meat, of eggs and of fruit is consumed by a population. This depends much on the means and wealth of the population, but it is possible to obtain not only satisfactory but conclusive evidence and statistics as to the amount of wheat which is consumed by a population, and it is far less than eighty per cent. Thirty years ago or thereabouts the opinion was held that the consumption of wheat was about five bushels per head, and today I am satisfied it is much larger. I discussed the matter some weeks ago with a prominent miller, and his opinion is that at the present time the consumption of wheat is between six bushels and seven bushels per head. If that be the case, the Canadian consumption of wheat, assuming a population of 8,000,000, would be about 50,000,000 bushels. If that be the proportion of the consumption to the production of Canada, then Canada consumes only fifty per cent. of her production of wheat.

The English Market.

Where is the balance to go? My honorable friend will tell me we have the English market. So we have. The English market is quite ample enough to take the surplus production of wheat in this country for many years to come, although we are sure the production will increase ten-fold by-and-bye. But, sir, there are other products than wheat which the British market cannot absorb, or cannot absorb with the same convenience as the American market can. The honorable member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) spoke of hay in Quebec, and rather hinted, although he did not say so, that the sending abroad of hay is bad business for the farmer. I can tell my honorable friend from Brandon (Mr. Sifton) that no hay will be exported from the hillsides of the eastern townships of the province of Quebec, but as the minister of agriculture reminded my honorable friend from Brandon, we have in the province of Quebec natural meadows, which require no tillage, and upon which the best of timothy has been grown, not for fifty years, but for 100 years. All along the two shores of Lake St. Peter there are natural meadows, a few inches only above the level of the water, which are yearly flooded, and which, to the knowledge of everyone in the province, have been for 100 years or more growing hay and nothing else. The counties of Berthier, Montmorency and St. Maurice, on the north shore, and the counties of Nicolet, Yamaska and Richelieu on the south, are so situated that they have a population of perhaps 1,000, who are growers of hay and for whom this treaty, if it becomes law, will be a most positive boon. Today they cannot sell any hay in the United States because there is a duty of $4 a ton. Let the duty be removed, and then immediately there will be an immense trade in that section of the community, as there was some thirty years ago. The same thing applies in the case of eggs, poultry and mining products. For this reason it is to our advantage that we should have not only the British market, but the American market also.

Transportation Interests.

The honorable member for Brandon (Mr. Sifton) made the argument that if you were to adopt this arrangement our present facilities for transportation to Great Britain would become useless. I differ from his altogether. The trade will go on just the same, but we will raise more of these commodities than we raised before. Then there is the cattle trade with Great Britain. We have some yet, but it is not as large as it ought to be, because it has been retarded by the embargo put on it some twenty years ago or so, and therefore if we are not able to sell all the cattle we can raise in Great Britain, there is a more ready market in the United States.

Imperial Preference.

Now I have come to a very important point. It has been stated in this discussion and repeated in the press, indeed the statement has been alluded to in Great Britain, that by this arrangement we were putting an end to every possibility of mutual preferential trade with Great Britain. My honorable friend from Brandon made that argument, and I have heard it from the other side of the house. I take positive issue with that statement, and I say more: that statement does not bear criticism, it has only to be analyzed for its falseness to be shown. Sir, we have never taken part on this side of the house, we have refused to take part, in the controversy which has been long going on in England on the question of mutual preferential trade. We would not take any part in the contest between the tariff reformers and the free traders. We thought it would not be dignified, we thought it would not be any part of our business, we thought it would be an act of impudence on our part for us to take part in this controversy, whether on the one side of this question or on the other, and we preferred to remain silent upon that point, having laid our policy before the English people. And what was our policy? Our policy was set forth by the Canadian ministers in Great Britain at the conference of 1902, and it was in these words: "The Canadian ministers stated that if they could be assured that the imperial government would accept the principle of preferential trade generally, and particularly grant to the food products of Canada in the United Kingdom exemption from duties now levied or hereafter imposed, they (the Canadian ministers) would be prepared to go farther into the subject, and endeavor to give to the British manufacturer some increased advantage over his foreign competitors in the market of Canada."

Cannot Affect Britain.

This was our policy laid down at the imperial conference of 1902. This is our policy in this year 1911, at the conference which is soon to take place. We have been told by the other side of the house that the action we have taken with regard to this agreement has made it impossible to implement the policy thus laid down. How can that be argued seriously? The Canadian ministers at the conference in 1908 stated that they were prepared to give to Great Britain a preference on manufactured goods in our market if Great Britain would give us a preference on our natural products in her market. Great Britain does not export many natural products; on the contrary, she is a large importer of natural products. We are exporters, not of manufactured products, but of the natural products, and we are large importers of manufactured products; and we have given to the Americans only a free entrance to our market for their natural products, as they have given us a free entrance to their market for our natural products, and how can that affect the British Islands? Surely it in no way at all affects our trade with Britain. The United States can enter our market with their natural products, but it is certain that England will never send a bushel of any kind of grain to Canada. However, England can give us a preference in her market for our natural products if she chooses to change her policy, and then we are prepared to give her upon her manufactured products a corresponding advantage. Sir, the policy of Canada is just the same as it was three months ago when this arrangement was made. It is the same today as it has been for the last twelve years, and it will be the policy of the Canadian government at the next Imperial Conference which will open in May next. What, then, of all the shrieks and lamentations and imprecations we have heard from all sides upon this point? Surely the question has not been properly thought out, for if it were it would have answered itself.

Favored-Nation Treaties.

Perhaps it is just as well now, since I am reviewing all the objections to this agreement, that I should take up another point which has been made against it, and which has drawn many a tear from some gentlemen sitting on the other side. I refer to the consequences of the agreement on what are known as the most-favored-nation treaties. There are in existence certain old treaties between England and other countries, in which it is provided that if England or any of her colonies give a preference to any country in the world, the same treatment shall be given to certain nations with which England has these old treaties. These treaties were in the past of so little consequence that we never troubled about them, but when in 1896 we found in our way the treaty with Germany and the treaty with Belgium we asked for the renunciation of these treaties. But similar treaties with other countries were not in our way, and therefore we did not trouble about them. However, all of a sudden these treaties have assumed enormous magnitude in the eyes of some, and some few days ago I heard a gentleman on the other side of the house say that we were practically opening our doors to the whole world. Well, the whole world is a great phrase, but let us examine in detail what it is composed of in this sense. The whole world in detail, so far as these treaties are concerned, comprise Venezuela, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Russia, Japan, Denmark, Colombia, Bolivia (and whoever heard of any trade with Bolivia?), Austria-Hungary and the Argentine Republic. Let us see what our trade is with these nations. All told, last year we exported to Venezuela $14,000 worth, and we actually imported from Venezuela $53,000 worth, a trade which would probably supply the next corner grocery. And in this $53,000 worth of trade of Venezuela there is not included any of the natural products we mention in our agreement with the United States. Then from Switzerland we imported $2,633,000 worth and we exported to Switzerland $10,000 worth. And our imports from Switzerland were chiefly silks and cottons and manufactures of silks and cottons. To Sweden our exports last year were $11,000, and our imports $207,000, and there was not a dollar's worth of anything included in the agreement. We exported to Spain last year $51,000 worth, and imported from Spain $1,040,000 worth, but they were oranges and tropical fruits of that character such as are not included in the agreement at all. With Russia our exports were $59,000 last year, and our imports $138,000, and I cannot find among them a single article which would come within the scope of the agreement.

The First Item Affected.

To Norway and Sweden our exports were $487,000, and our imports $168,000, and amongst these there are some fish included, and Norway would have the benefit of free fish under this agreement, and that is the first item we find which is at all affected. Then we have some trade with Japan, but does anyone imagine that Japan would send us wheat, butter or cereals? With Denmark we had some trade, but not a very extensive one, our exports being $425,000 and our imports $36,000, and while Denmark is a butter-exporting country, not a pound of butter came to Canada from Denmark. Then, with the State of Columbia our exports were $42,000 and our imports $28,000, but they included nothing mentioned in the arrangement. Bolivia we have not any trade with; we did not import anything from it or export anything to it. To Austria-Hungary our imports are $1,410,000 and our exports $69,000, and the imports are chiefly laces and things of that kind. Then I come to the last—the Argentine Republic; our total exports are $2,869,000, and our total imports $2,181,000, but I find that we have not imported from Argentina a single article that is included in the arrangement. Argentina, however, is a wheat-growing country, and it exports wheat, but if ever the Argentine Republic sends wheat to Canada there is no reason why Canada should not send wheat to Argentina. So that objection is wholly exploded, and may be dismissed without any further reference.

Our Natural Resources.

Another objection which has been taken to this agreement is that it will destroy our natural resources. My honorable friend from North Toronto was particularly indignant on this point. He grew eloquent and asked us what we meant by establishing a Conservation Commission for the preservation of our natural resources, and then proceeded with ruthless hands to destroy their work. I have to say to my honorable friend that the Commission for the conservation of our natural resources was not at all intended to deal with the question of political economy, but the question of physical science. My honorable friend says that we should preserve our natural resources for our children, and for our children's children; but I ask my honorable friend, what is the object of these natural resources? Water, forests, minerals have been given to man by the Creator for the use of man, and all civilized nations have acted accordingly. Why did our ancestors leave their respective lands and come to this country and take it from the Indians, if it was not for the purpose of taking hold of the natural resources of the country and using them for their benefit? The Indians were men after the heart of my honorable friend from North Toronto; they were great preservers of natural resources; they kept them, not for themselves, but for their children and the children of their children. They never used them to any great extent.

When Our Ancestors Came.

When our ancestors came here they found the Indians using implements made of wood and stone. They never cultivated the soil; they lived on fish and game. They were in the midst of immense forests, but they never felled a tree to build a house. They lived beside the most noble streams in the world, but they did not use them to turn a wheel. They never used water to wash. They were people after the heart of our ancestors, who came here to enjoy the natural resources of the land. Unfortunately they not only used but also abused them. It is the reproach of the white settler that if he has used these natural resources he has been impudent and has destroyed them much more wantonly, and consumed them for his own benefit. It is charged today against the Canadian farmer that he is not cultivating the soil, but mining it and taking all the fertility out of it. It is charged against the Canadian lumberman that he is not only cropping the lumber as he should, but in his operations is destroying much more than he uses. I think it is admitted that in the valley of the Ottawa, where timber has been cut for the last one hundred years, the lumbermen have destroyed more timber than they have ever carried away.

Object of the Commission.

Sir, the object of the conservation commission is simply to advise the lumbermen and others how to use the natural resources of the country. But if that be the case, the commission, which is ably presided over by my honorable friend from Brandon, will do an immense service to the community in teaching the farmer and the lumberman, by suggesting legislation and by doing what has not been done until the present time, showing all our people how to use these resources with prudence, so that they will be preserved for our children and our children's children. But, sir, what has this to do with our agreement? Our honorable friends say that the resources will be taken by the Americans. Well, the Americans will take them if they pay for them; but whether they take them or not, whether this agreement goes into force or not, the natural resources of the country will be made use of; but I hope they will be made use of in more prudent manner than they are at the present time. My honorable friend from North Toronto need have no more apprehension on that point.

Industry Not in Peril.

I pass to a more important objection, really the only objection of any consequence that I know of. That objection is that this agreement will imperil our industry. How will it imperil our industry? This agreement is concerned chiefly with natural products. There are no manufactured products dealt with in this agreement except agricultural implements. In negotiating this agreement we have adhered strictly to the terms of the resolution which was adopted at the Liberal convention of 1893, in which the Liberal party declared for a treaty of reciprocity in natural products, and a carefully considered list of manufactured products. Why did we put this restriction in our resolution? Why did we state in so many words that the reciprocity which we would negotiate, if it ever became our lot to do so, would be confined to a carefully prepared list of manufactured products? But, sir, there is a vast difference between reciprocity in natural products and reciprocity in manufactured goods. This is the reason we have acted with this prudence. I do not know who was present at the conference which took place between our two representatives and Mr. Knox, but it is not a great effort of imagination to suppose that the Americans were far more concerned about obtaining reciprocity in manufactured products than they were in natural products. But our negotiators would not consent to any reciprocity in manufactured products, but insisted on limiting this agreement simply to such manufactured products as agricultural implements. Well, we have limited our agreement to that, and in doing this I know that we have not gone as far as certain sections of the community wanted us to go.

Acted With Discretion.

A certain section wanted free implements altogether, but we did not think it prudent or advisable to go that way, and why? The reason is that the men on the treasury benches, who are responsible, recognize in tariff matters the wise difference between manufactured and natural products. It is easy enough to put up a customs duty or enact a protective duty, but it is always a difficult task to decrease or remove such a duty. The reason is well known. It is obvious that if you raise the customs duty or impose a protective duty you create at once a fictitious temperature, and if the industries established under that tariff and under that temperature and condition have to face suddenly a removal of the duty, you might annihilate in the course of one night millions of capital and reduce to non-employment thousands of operatives. That is why we have acted as we have done. We have gone very timidly, with great care, into this agreement. When we came into office in 1896 we had the same problem before us, the same consideration weighed upon us, and we took the utmost possible precaution. Whilst giving, as we were bound to do, to the consuming public abatement of the tariff, we took every precaution in so doing not to injure any existing industry, and I think we have been successful. (Cheers).

(To be continued)

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NOT EATING MUCH FISH

With two weeks of lent gone, there is no sign of reduction in the high price of fish, and a wholesale dealer said yesterday that less fish is probably being eaten in St. John during lent than ever before. There is a fairly large supply but it has been found impossible to force the price downwards, and with cod selling wholesale at $6.50 per hundred pounds, the demand is not very brisk. Pollock remains at $4.50 per hundred, while fresh fish are scarce and correspondingly high. The failure of the catch on the south shore of Nova Scotia is responsible for the high prices.

BETTER THAN SPANKING

Spanking does not cure children of bed-wetting. There is a constitutional cause for this trouble. Mrs. M. Summers, Box W. 70, Windsor, Ont., will send free to any mother her successful home treatment with full instructions. Send no money but write her today if your children trouble you in this way. Don't blame the child, the chances are it can't help it. This treatment also cures adults and aged people troubled with urine difficulties by day or night.