

and population of the country. From the cosmopolitan point of view this is needless; from the national point of view it is everything.

These, then, were the economic arguments which, it may be said with confidence, appealed strongly enough to the Canadians to have carried the day, even if they had stood alone. But a greater consideration lay behind. Reciprocity carried with it an inevitable political entanglement. If the Maritime Provinces looked to Boston for their well-being, if Quebec and Ontario were inextricably connected with the market of the central States, if the Grain Provinces poured their harvest into Minneapolis and Duluth, inevitably the lines of social, commercial, and political intercourse would have been distorted from the mould in which we have sought to cast them. This process once started could not have been arrested. The solidarity of the Dominion of Canada, the economic integrity which it is acquiring after years of sacrifice, would have been rent asunder. With it would have been broken the tie which binds this country to the Mother Country and the other Dominions under the British Crown. This, undoubtedly, was the great underlying thought in the minds of the people of Canada, which cast the silent vote of the masses, in defiance of party allegiance, and in many cases in disregard of personal gain or loss, against the Reciprocity Compact.

The whole situation seems clear enough in retrospect. It was by no means so clear in the troubled months just elapsed. It was the first intention of the Laurier Government to have passed the compact on the strength of their solid party vote in the late Parliament. We can see now what a betrayal of the national will such a course would have involved. The first effort of their opponents was to force them from this course. Great meetings were held in Montreal, Toronto, and other centres: the Government was challenged to put the issue before the people. With each succeeding month a national opposition developed, though its strength was realised by few. Prominent Liberals deserted the fold. A national Anti-Reciprocity League undertook to lay the case before the people. The Conservatives in Parliament, encouraged by the spreading opposition, stubbornly blocked