

is most improbable, and it is only possible when the products of the ill-paid peasants of India, Russia, and South America bring down the price in the British market to a point at which our farmers cannot sell their products at a profit sufficient to enable them and their neighbours to live in the comforts to which they have been accustomed. But, shall we lose the traffic from east to west? The opinion of Sir Donald Mann, one of the great railway builders of Canada is that we will not. The opinion of Sir William Van Horne at one time president of the great Canadian Pacific railway does not sustain that view that we shall. Some years ago a committee was appointed by the Senate to inquire into the feasibility of the Georgian Bay canal, and Sir William Van Horne appeared before that committee and although the Georgian Bay canal when built will take from the railway a vast amount of a certain class of freight, Sir William Van Horne did not oppose the scheme, but on the contrary gave it his strong support. Like this reciprocity agreement, it would add he said to the prosperity of the western farmer and lumberman, and he declared it to be his opinion that the canal would in that way contribute to the business of his railway far more than it took from it. The greater prosperity of the people, whether due to cheaper transportation of grain through the canals or because of higher prices due to reciprocity, means for the railways and the great seaport cities an augmentation of the volume of business in finished products. Neither the Canadian Pacific railway, nor the Grand Trunk Pacific, nor the Canadian Northern railway, are likely to lack any conveyance of natural products for a long time to come. It is the law of nature, that for centuries to come and may be for all time to come the North American continent will be the great purveyor of natural products to the continent of Europe. The trade from Canada to the United States will continue to increase, and it requires no unusual foresight to see that this increase will inure to the benefit of our ocean ports. Montreal will beyond all doubt replace New York as the first ocean port of North America; indeed, Montreal has already taken the premier position. That is a decree not of mine, not of the Canadian government, it is a decree of nature and of geography. There can be no evasion of the fact that the water route from Montreal to Liverpool is 220 miles shorter than that from New York to Liverpool, and that 1,000 miles of the Canadian route lies within the shelter of adjacent shores. During last season of navigation, and the season before that, Montreal defeated New York in the race, for in the export of butter and cheese the port of Montreal leads the way on the North American continent. And, Sir, fifty years ago Montreal entered in the race

with New York and the American ports. Fifty years ago the Post Office Department of Canada carried the mails of the United States by the St. Lawrence river. Fifty years ago the mails from Paris, from Brussels, from London, were sent by Liverpool and Rivière du Loup in the St. Lawrence, not to Canada alone, but to Chicago and all the western states. There were some accidents in the St. Lawrence in those days; it was not so well lighted and as well buoyed as it is to-day. We have to-day three main lines running from Montreal and Quebec to Liverpool, and I venture to say that 60 per cent of the passengers on those lines are from the United States. Why do they go by Montreal and Quebec? It is because it is the shortest route, and I dare say also because it is the most picturesque route. There need be no fear of our not maintaining the supremacy of the St. Lawrence river for the North American continent. We need not be afraid that the trade of the north will pass to the south by New York or by New Orleans, as has been suggested of late years.

One of the objections urged against this agreement is that so much benefit will inure to Canada from it that we shall waste all our natural resources, devastate our great wheat areas, our lumber and our standing timber, and deplete our fisheries. Well, Sir, there is no fear of our depleting our natural resources, now that the people are becoming impressed, through the policy of this Liberal government, with the supreme importance of the schemes for the conservation of the country's resources. Canada last year produced 21½ bushels of wheat to the acre, which is about 5¼ bushels to the acre higher than the yield of the United States. But in our western provinces we are working a virgin soil of great natural fertility. We have, however, a long way to go yet before we reach our ideal, and indeed the figures which I am about to quote from Professor Robertson, give me the ground for the confident hope that we shall not only obtain for our soil a productiveness 50 per cent greater than it has at present, but will maintain it for all time. England has been taking crops of wheat from her soil for a thousand years, and her soil should have been exhausted centuries ago if constant cropping results necessarily in depletion. But listen to the figures. During the last ten years the average yield of wheat per acre in England has been 31½ bushels to the acre, while last year the average was 33¾ bushels. So that far from a lessened productiveness in England, Professor Robertson assures us that the yield per acre now is higher than ever before. The farmers of Canada start with an unsurpassed soil, and by the application of intelligent methods, such as are followed in all the leading European countries, they