

Reciprocity or Protection

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portation have been greatly changed since 1866. The Grand Trunk was then our only outlet to Europe. The route of the St. Lawrence was at best precarious. Now we have the Grand Trunk fully equipped, we have the Intercolonial from Montreal to Halifax, the Canadian Pacific across the continent, the Transcontinental, and Canadian Northern soon to be completed. To these roads Canada has contributed over 500,000,000 dollars, public money, not to mention 80,000,000 dollars, expended on canals, for the purpose of transporting the products of Canada, not to the markets of the United States, but to the markets of the world. They are in the nature of an investment by Canada, in transportation generally, and can only be a good investment so long as they are used for that purpose. What, then, would be the consequence to the principal shareholder (that is, Canada) in these roads if by treaty the produce they now carry were diverted to the United States? What would a cut-off to Chicago of the wheat and cattle trade of the West mean to the C. P. R., the G. T. P., the C. N. R., and the Intercolonial Railway? Would there be any business reason for building the Hudson Bay Railway? What would be the effect upon the ship-owners on our great lakes and the River St. Lawrence? Or upon the owners of elevators at the different terminals? Or the thousands of men employed by these transportation systems? Would Montreal hold its precedence over Buffalo in the handling of grain and all that it implies? Would our canals be filled with barges as they now are? Even if there was an advantage in prices in the markets of the United States, would that advantage compensate for diverted transportation? Would we not be breaking faith with the people of Canada who voted their millions for these roads by shifting a large portion of the traffic to American roads and to the Erie Canal? And with British capitalists who invested in the stocks and bonds of all our transportation systems?

(2) Another consideration: The rates of ocean-going freight depend largely upon obtaining cargoes both ways. If we transferred our grain and cattle to American seaports, Canadian liners would be deprived of an outgoing cargo, and ocean freights on goods to Canada would necessarily be advanced, and consequently all our imports from Europe would be enhanced in price. Is that desirable? Is it desirable to endanger the whole commerce of Canada as it would be endangered by diverting trade from Canadian ports and giving to Boston and Portland the trade that rightly belongs to Montreal, Quebec, St. John, and Halifax? And what affects freight would also affect more or less the ocean-going passenger traffic from Canadian ports, as the losses from one would have to be made up by higher rates on the other, or be both abandoned.

Imperial Considerations

And, last, what are the Imperial considerations involved in a reciprocity treaty? Our horizon in recent years has so broadened, that in the parliament of Canada, Imperial interests are openly avowed to be worthy of consideration. The preferential tariff with Great Britain is a concession to the Mother-country. The new Navy is to protect Imperial as well as Canadian interests. The treaty with Japan has its Imperial side, as declared by Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Victoria a few weeks ago. Might I not, then, reasonably ask:

(1) Shall this preference be impaired and our consideration for Imperial interests minimized?

(2) Shall we weaken our position with friends in Britain who are disposed to consider favorably a preference to the Colonies in the British market by diverting our natural products to the markets of the United States, and thus lose what might be a substantial advantage in the markets of Great Britain?

(3) Shall we prejudice all the capital, Canadian and British, invested in our railways, ocean steamships, terminals, etc., by diverting to American railways a large portion of the grain and cattle trade of the West?

(4) Shall we leave the impression on the capitalists of Great Britain that investments made in Canada in good faith may be wantonly disregarded, as a matter with which the government has no concern?

(5) Should we form commercial alli-

ances that would divert trade from the Empire to a foreign country?

(6) Should we take the risk of a treaty, by no means urgent, which is liable to be misinterpreted, as the Washington Treaty was, and so disturb the friendly feeling now happily existing between Canada and the United States?

(7) Shall we enter into partnership with a foreign country to the detriment of our commercial and possibly our national relations with the Mother-country?

Editorial Utterance

The following is the editorial from the Standard:

The lofty tone of Sir George Ross' article on the projected reciprocity negotiations between Canada and the United States, which we publish in another column, adds enormously to the weight of the reasons he advances against the proposals. Sir George Ross is one of Canada's most eminent statesmen; he preceded Sir James Whitney—whose opposition to the reciprocity negotiations was declared in the interview with him which appeared in these columns a few days ago—as Prime Minister of Ontario, and is now a member of the Dominion Senate. In politics he is a Liberal and a follower of Sir Wilfrid Laurier—a fact of some significance, seeing that his views on the reciprocity question show that the former Liberal and the present Conservative Prime Ministers of Ontario, the wealthiest and the most progressive of the Canadian Provinces, will have nothing to do with these arrangements. The grounds of Sir George Ross' objections are very definitely stated in his article. He sees quite clearly that in so far as reciprocity might be successful, the interests of the Mother-country would be injured. The great railroads of Canada, in which some five hundred million dollars of money—at least two-thirds of which are British—have been invested, would be seriously crippled if, as a result of a reciprocity treaty, the wheat and cattle trade of the West were diverted to Chicago. Not alone the railways, but the shipowners on the Lakes, the elevator owners at the terminals, the thousands of men employed on the transportation systems, all of whom came into existence in response to a different policy, would be injured if the new policy resulted in the deflection of trade from the present established channels to the United States. Sir George Ross plainly hints that the proposed new policy would be "breaking faith" with Canadian investors and British capitalists; and we assume that Sir Wilfrid Laurier's repeated declarations, in the speeches during his recent Western tour, that respect for vested interests must be a cardinal principle in any negotiations, mean that these important interests are not to be sacrificed to a small and short-sighted, if clamant, party in the Dominion.

Sir George Ross advances other equally substantial reasons from the point of view of the interests of Canadian producers. Both Canada and the United States have exportable surpluses of farm produce. If larger quantities of Canadian wheat, for example, found their way to the United States the certain result would be a glut in the supply, and therefore a lowering of the Canadian selling price. This must be bad for the Canadian farmer. Even more objectionable is the contingency indicated by Sir George Ross. He suggests that "under a free exchange would not Canadian wheat be used to bolster up the price of an inferior article, the produce of the United States, and thus give a fictitious value to the product of a rival country to the injury of the Canadian producer?" This objection is, we believe, perfectly sound. The wheat trade of the world is being captured by Canada from the United States. It cannot be to the interest of the Dominion to prop up, even for a few years, the declining industry of her greatest competitor. In addition to all these interests those of the British workman are not overlooked. Any decline in the eastward freights from Canada would raise the freights on goods from Europe carried to Canada. The resulting increase in price of British manufactures in the Canadian market would cause British trade to be lost to the United States. Such a disturbance in our trade might cause serious unemployment at home, an effect which, we believe, no Canadian wishes to ignore. We are confident that the views so plainly expressed by Sir George Ross represent the dominant sentiment of the people of Canada.

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