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THE TRADE REVIEW

AND

Intercolonial Journal of Commerce.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1868.

THE TRADE CONVENTION AT OTTAWA.

THE expected permanency of the tariff which is about to be enacted at Ottawa, has caused commercial men throughout Canada to take more interest than usual in it. We have had, consequently, more meetings of local Boards of Trade on the subject than usual, and deputations to Ottawa have of late been quite the rage. Last week a general Trade Convention was held at the Capital, which took up the whole subject. This Convention was composed of representatives of the Boards of Trade belonging to Ottawa, Kingston, Belleville, Brantford, Hamilton, Stratford, London and Windsor. It was presided over by John Stuart, Esq., of Hamilton, and was a most respectable and influential body. Its recommendations are worthy of earnest consideration by the Government, as being those of gentlemen practically acquainted with the commercial wants of the country; but we do not by any means agree with, nor do we think Parliament will accept, all the conclusions at which they arrived.

The convention took the wise course of appointing sub-committees to consider and report upon the different points which it was proposed to consider. Five committees were struck, as follows:—1st. Sugar duties, &c.; 2nd. On manufactures; 3rd. Export duties; 4th. Excise; and 5th. Banking, &c. In referring to the reports of these committees, which were generally accepted by the convention, we cannot go into details: we only propose to give the general conclusions arrived at, and to say a few words regarding each.

The first committee—which may be called that on groceries—reported against the present tariff on sugars, and in favor of one cent. specific per lb. and 23 per cent. *ad valorem*. A reduction of the specific duties on tea was recommended particularly the discrimination now existing between green and black teas; 40 per lb. specific and 20 per cent. *ad valorem* were considered about the right thing. We incline to the belief that the recommendations of the convention regarding the sugar duties will be agreed to—at least this much is certain, the present rates on sugar will be modified. We see no good reason or justice in green tea being charged 7c specific and black only 3c. Why the man who drinks his black tea should have it

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cheaper than the individual who prefers green, it would be hard to discover. The recommendation of a system of "drawbacks" on refined sugars and manufactured tobaccos, would be something new in Canada, but not unknown in England—both bounties and drawbacks being common there long, long ago. If a system of "drawbacks" would serve to increase our trade with foreign countries, and we think it would, we see no particular reason against the Government adopting such a system. Any move which it is believed by practical men such as attended at Ottawa last week, would promote the foreign transactions of the Dominion, is, at least, worthy of a trial, when the matter can be tested without inflicting injury or loss upon the community generally. Among other points agreed upon, and which call for remark, is the one that the Government should charge no duty on discounts allowed for cash—that is, where \$90 pay a bill for \$100, the duty should be charged on the former not the latter sum.

Considering that most of those who composed this convention were commercial men, we are a little astonished that their decisions favour of protection so strongly. The prevailing characteristic is very far from free trade—is, in fact, more protective than any recommendations laid before Parliament for some time. They recommend that hops be protected by the same duties as the Americans have imposed; that machinery and leather be placed in the 15 per cent. list, that export duties be placed on saw logs, stave, and shingle bolts &c.; that 20 per cent. be put on sheepskins with the wool on, and the same amount on hemlock and other barks. These are important recommendations, and Parliament is not at all likely to be agreed as to the advisability of acting upon them. Something may be said in favor of encouraging the manufacture of machinery by taking it out of the free list, but what about leather, which already has 10 per cent. upon it? Is there any necessity of making it 15 per cent., and also putting an almost prohibitive duty on the export of hemlock bark for the particular benefit of that branch of business? The export duty on sheepskins many will object to, as, indeed, all the export duties recommended. We are certainly of opinion that the Americans should not have things all their own way in regard to taxing our products going into their country, but we decidedly object to any counter-movement calculated to inflict injury upon our own people. We have the report of Mr. Brega, recently made to Congress, showing that the duties which that body has placed on our produce principally comes out of the American taxpayer, and there would be great folly in Canada also exhibiting the amusing spectacle of cutting off its nose to spite its face! When duties can be imposed to our own ad-