

THE INFLUENCE EXERTED UPON THE CANADIAN TARIFF BY THE TARIFF OF THE UNITED STATES

It is difficult to arrive at a conclusion on this question which will be acceptable to all, for the question is usually discussed as a practical political question.

An answer to the question may be found in the Tariff History of Canada.

To go back to the days preceding Confederation, we find, in 1859, that the action of the American Congress in adopting a 50 per cent. rate on spirits caused the insertion of a 50 per cent. rate on spirits in the Canadian Tariff Resolutions.*

Later we find that the action of the Canadian Government, in 1872, in removing the duties on tea and coffee was, so far as appears, caused solely by the antecedent action of the United States.† The events of this year furnish a still further example of this influence. It was discovered later on in the session that the United States intended to discriminate adversely against "teas and coffees imported through Canada," and so provision was made‡ for imposing on these commodities, when imported from the United States, the same duties as were imposed upon them when imported into the United States from Canada.§ This also draws attention to the question of retaliatory duties. Such duties are closely connected with the reciprocity phase of a protective policy. When retaliatory duties have been imposed by Canada, as in this instance, or when provision is made for their imposition|| dependent upon a condition, it has, in general, been the action of the United States which has been kept in view. In these retaliatory duties there is an especial recognition of the influence of the American Tariff.

Although the National Policy had a popular origin yet it may safely be contended that the popular mind was influenced by the seeming success which had attended the American "war Tariff;" then, as now, the extreme protectionists were ready to refer to the "beneficial influences" of the "Morrill tariff." Throughout the discussions which heralded in the National Policy much stress was laid upon the obtaining of "a reciprocity of Tariffs with our neighbors to the south;"** and one leading argument advanced in favor of the National Policy was that it would obtain this "reciprocity of Tariffs."†† The influence of the American Tariff is again seen in the amending of the iron duties in 1887. These changes are admittedly modelled upon the scale of iron duties in force in the United States.§§

But perhaps the most conclusive recognition of the influence of the American Tariff legislation is seen in 1894. It was somewhat late in the session before the Canadian Tariff Act was brought down; and this was widely understood to be owing to a desire to await developments in the American Tariff. In addition to this there is seen, in the Canadian Tariff itself, much evidence of the fact that the American Tariff had been closely studied. Some examples of the approximation in point of Tariff rate on particular items may be seen in the comparative table given in a former portion of this essay.¶¶ Another example may be cited. When the Finance Minister was speaking with reference to the rate on live animals, he said: "Live animals . . . have been reduced to 20

* See *The Toronto Leader*, the Government organ, for March 7th, 1859.

† *Ibid.* ante, p. 15.

‡ 35 Vict., Cap. 12.

§ *Ibid.* ante, p. 15.

E.g., the provision for an export duty on lumber in the Tariff Act of 1894.

** See *Hansard Debates* of March 7th, 1878.

†† *Ibid.* ante, p. 20.

¶¶ *Ibid.* ante, p. 31.

§§ *Ibid.* ante, in comparative table of Canadian and American duties, p. 45.

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