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THE speech on Commercial Union delivered by Sir Richard Cartwright to his constituents at Ingersoll, on Wednesday of last week, is important as well for a singularly masterful treatment of the subject as for its utterance by the real and proper leader of the Liberal party. True, Sir Richard deprecated the making of Commercial Union a party question: it should he thought be considered, not from the standpoint of Conservatives or of Reformers, but of Canadians—willing to weigh the question upon its merits; and he spoke, not for his party, but for himself alone. Still, on account of his prominent public position, infinitely more weight must be attached to his opinion than to that of perhaps any previous speaker on this subject. For as he goes, probably a great party will go; and it appears to us that if that party should definitely embrace Commercial Union as the chief feature of its immediate programme, nothing—if the Americans consent—could prevent the ultimate adoption of Commercial Union by Canada, and therefore probably the return to power of the Liberal party. The major part of the Liberal party are already, without doubt, in favour of the idea of Commercial Union; and with the additional strength the party would gather in the Maritime Provinces, in Manitoba, and indeed all along the border, from the Eastern Townships to British Columbia, by adopting Commercial Union as a measure of Liberal policy, we should expect to see it sweep the country at the next General Election. Nevertheless, the Liberal party should not even for this advantage abandon its traditional Free Trade principles. Whether it remain in Opposition, or as a Government negotiate a treaty of Commercial Union with the States, a tariff for revenue only should be the goal at which it aims. At the comparatively high rate the financial obligations of this country render necessary, such a tariff, judiciously adjusted, will afford all needful protection to every industry worth fostering. This protection, it is true, will avail only against competition from Europe, if Commercial Union be established; but in that case the country will have determined that Canadian industries shall not be protected against the States, and the industries affected must, if they have suffered, be dealt with in some other way.

SIR RICHARD'S observations on inter-Provincial trade, especially between the Maritime Provinces and Quebec and Ontario, are very just. Notwithstanding the construction of the Intercolonial Railway, at a cost of forty-seven million dollars, to which must be added a further annual charge on the country of four million for dead loss on current account, the experience of nearly twenty years has only demonstrated that the utmost trade that can be done between the lower and upper Provinces, with the most favouring circumstances, is very limited; and there is no prospect whatever of any great improvement. The Government has indeed practically abandoned that railway as a means of welding the Provinces together, by subsidising the Short Line through United States territory, which takes the Intercolonial in flank, and restricts its usefulness to the sphere of a local line. Here is an additional evidence, if any need be added to those adduced by Sir Richard Cartwright, that the natural trade of the Provinces is not with one another, but with the States to the south of each group. Sir Richard said little new on the subject of the advantages of international trade between the States and Canada, perhaps considering, as the *Globe* says, those advantages so plain as to need no demonstration. A remark, however, that must commend itself to every business man was that "we have the means of informing ourselves very accurately of the wants of the American market; we are able, to a great extent, to dispense with the services of middle men in carrying on trade with the Americans; whether as consumers or producers we can easily put ourselves in close connexion with each other; and, therefore, it is only natural to suppose that we can adapt ourselves to that trade and develop that market and obtain better prices and conduct our trade at less cost than with any other country in the world," with which we agree, always provided the tariff arrangements of the States—of the proposed American-Canadian Customs Union—do not utterly spoil these advantages by excluding us rigorously from every other market than the American.

OF the political aspect of the question Sir Richard spoke cautiously and wisely. He frankly recognised the many obstacles that must lie in the path of a colony that proposes to discriminate against the Mother Country in favour of a foreign State. While deriding the Iscariotism of loyalists who yesterday denounced the British connexion, if it were going to conflict with the establishment of the National Policy, and to-day reproach the advocates of Commercial Union with being disloyal, because "they fear their craft may be endangered," he spoke with respect of the objections of those who now oppose Commercial Union, as they opposed the introduction of the National Policy, because that like this is in contravention of the policy of the British Empire. He thought, however, that, as the total of Canadian trade is not of much consequence to Great Britain, any loss that might occur through increased trade with the United States (but he believed that, as we grew richer and better able to purchase English goods, there would be a gain instead of a loss) would be more than offset by the resulting increased friendliness with the States. We have never fairly tried the experiment of endeavouring honestly to conciliate the Government and people of the United States; on the contrary, the conduct of a considerable portion of the Canadian Press and people toward the people of the United States in the hour of their sorest need was not of a sort to justify us in expecting much affection at their hands, and as one consequence the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 was abolished. "There exists," said Sir Richard, "not a single English statesman worthy of the name who would not say that the greatest service that can be rendered by us to the British people is by every fair and honourable means to aid in making them good friends with the people of the United States;" no English statesman would hesitate to strain a point (with reference to loss of British trade) to ensure a permanent good understanding with the States; and if the people of Canada could succeed in carrying out this project, they would be likely to benefit the Empire more by that than by any other means. It was not then, he thought, with England that our difficulty will lie. (But here we must remark that Sir Richard takes no account of possible British objections to imperilling the new Imperial route to the East, which is undoubtedly valued as such, and increasingly so every year, but which could not continue so secure to England if, as Sir Richard himself admits, there may be a possible risk of political absorption involved in cultivating closer trade relations with the States.) But however that be, whether England be willing, indifferent, or hostile, as the British Government has, from the time of the Washington Treaty down to the date of Lord Salisbury's latest despatch concerning the fisheries,—as the British Government has practically told the people of Canada that in all matters of dispute between Canada and the United States it expects the Canadians to make the best bargain they can for themselves without counting too much on the assistance of Great Britain; as the Fisheries Question is publicly avowed to be a matter to be dealt with, not in the interests of Canada, but in the interest of the Empire at large; as moreover the British Government, rather than imperil its relations with the United States, abandoned Canada, and forbore to press for compensation justly due for the murders and outrages committed by marauders from the United States in the Fenian raids,—a wholly new principle of action, Sir Richard thought, had been established as between Canada and the United States; and the people of Great Britain have no right to complain if we, for our interest and the interest of the whole Empire, strive to put ourselves on the most friendly relations with the United States. The position of Canada in fact, he regretted to say, is under existing circumstances very little better than the position of a hostage given by Great Britain to the United States. That is not a situation he liked—that is not a situation he thought it desirable to continue, either in the interest of Great Britain or of Canada. Therefore, looking at the question in the largest possible way, he thought it to be for the interest of the whole Empire that we should, if we could, enter into such close and friendly relations with the United States as may remove all possible causes of quarrel between them and ourselves, or between them and the British Empire.

SIR RICHARD appears to favour Commercial Union as the lesser of two evils. It involves risk of Annexation; but without it, owing to the ineptitude of the people, and the mal-administration and extravagance of the Government, it is more than doubtful if the Confederation can be preserved—or is worth preserving. Well, we cannot believe that affairs are as bad as this; the manifestly prosperous condition of the country as a whole at present, excepting perhaps the Maritime Provinces, is against the theory of impending political and economical bankruptcy; and we must doubt the political wisdom of putting the national existence at hazard