

The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, TUESDAY MORNING, FEB. 28, 1911.

WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

We are satisfied that the Canadian public has not begun to take in the real significance of the proposed Reciprocity agreement. To the great bulk of the people its meaning is shadowy, its importance little realized, and its tendencies unguessed. There are reasons for this. For twenty years it has been a dead thing in Canada. The great electoral battle of 1891 was fought on that issue really. Then it was settled that we did not want trade relations with the United States that endangered our autonomy and fiscal freedom, that menaced our Canadian Nationality, or threatened the bonds of Empire. Thereafter the Liberal-Conservative party abandoned the trail to Washington, and a few years after the Liberal party publicly did the same, and for fourteen years no public man or party has hinted at return thereto. On the contrary both parties set themselves to build the channels of Canadian trade wide and deep, and to direct its surplus overflow to the steady sea and ever open British market. Our tariffs were made for our own interest, and whilst permitting a large and increasing interchange with the United States, they greatly promoted Empire trade.

But specific assurances were given by the Government and were repeated over and over again up to within the last few weeks. On his Western tour in July and August last, Sir Wilfrid repeatedly told the deputations which met him, asking reductions and changes in the tariff, that there would be a revision but that before any readjustments were made, there would be an examination by a tariff commission, and opportunity for all to represent their views. In the House of Commons as recently as last November, Sir Wilfrid reiterated this promise and defended the reasonableness and necessity thereof. He said:—

"I, Page 50:—I stated that we would have a commission of investigation before we undertook a revision of the tariff. . . . Does any member on the other side of the House take issue with the promise 'I made'? Would any of them advocate rushing into 'a revision of the tariff without previous investigation'? Hon. members may laugh at that, but they will not 'dare to say that they would favor such a course.'"

The result of all this was that when Reciprocity negotiations were re-opened in the latter part of 1910, the country paid little attention. The public had been lulled into security by the Premier's repeated promises and made up its mind that nothing would come of the negotiations, that they were meant only to save appearances, and pay courtesy to the President's invitation. No word was more frequent in apology or defence for going to Washington than this "How could we in courtesy refuse to listen to what they had to propose?" No tariff commission had been at work, no interests had been consulted, and no one dreamed that anything important would be done.

The result came like a revelation, something had been done, and something far-reaching and positively revolutionary. Fielding and Patterson, two estimable old gentlemen, had in fact signed a treaty in the name of the Government, and committed themselves and their party to carry it into effect and maintain it thereafter. This pact revolutionized at one stroke our tariff basis, and tariff rates, our routes of traffic, our direction of trade, reversed our National ideals, and threatened our Empire connections. In the face of the Premier's solemn and repeated pledge, and without consultation with the great business interests of the country, these two men bound their party, compromised their country without mandate or assent, and antagonized most of the great business interests of Canada. They brought the agreement to Parliament, and are today engaged in pushing it through that body with all the power that party machinery so well knows how to do.

What will be the outcome? In the United States Congress it has been triumphantly carried on the current of a sentiment for the annexation of Canada to the United States. The singular spectacle is afforded of the President conducting a whirlwind campaign for the adoption of the agreement as a measure of "far sighted statesmanship," which can afford to suffer present economic losses in special interests for the sake of future gain to the nation. He warns his people that just now Canada is at the parting of the ways, one leading towards British markets and Imperial connections, and the other blazed by Fielding and himself which leads to Americanization via Reciprocity now, and free trade hereafter. He declares that he and Champ Clark—both heavy men—stand on the same plank—the plank of Continental Reciprocity.

We have Secretary Wilson writing a letter to the grangers which seeks to soothe their fears and enlist their co-operation by prophetic visions of coming annexation. And we have Champ Clark, the future leader of the dominant Democratic party, publicly declaring in Congress that he favors this measure because he favors the annexation of Canada, for which he declares they are now ready, and to the accomplishment of which this pact is the chosen means. And we have men after man of note in Congress and the Senate applauding and re-inforcing this declaration and desire. The newspapers from one end of the Republic to the other are joining the crusade, and already rejoicing in the victory as virtually accomplished. Every argument on the line of "far-sighted statesmanship" is being brought to bear to induce the Senate to take the national view,

And in Canada? First in the House of Commons. The Government is pledged to carry the pact. The caucus-bound party in the House will be dragged into support in the main. Not, perhaps all, for there is deep discontent and vigorous kicking. The constituents are being heard from, and the fears of the representatives are being wrought upon. They have two futures—one the haven of appointments and offices if they stand by the Government, and another, the facing of their constituents and the wrath to come at the next election. Besides there are good men among them, that "hate like thunder," as one put it, to vote against the Government, but who have not yet surrendered their convictions so far as to go against the plain interests of their country. These men may form a "cave of Adullam" and complicate matters for the Government. But the party spirit will triumph and with or without this saving remnant the Government will carry their measure through the House.

In the Senate? There is but a weak residue of Conservatives. The mass are Laurier's appointees now as they were Laurier's partisans before. Some may break loose and vote for country. It is too much to hope that this possible contingent and the few Conservatives will prevent the passage of the measure.

There remains two factors, the Conservative Opposition, and the country outside Parliament. The Conservative Opposition may be depended upon to do its part. It will dissect the measure pitilessly, and with ability, and voice its protest through press and platform. It will hold the agreement there until every opportunity has been given to the public, so far as it can give it, to understand it. Its resources in this direction are fairly strong. The thing has to be debated on principle, and then every item in committee. It has then to be put into the form of a bill and passed through all the stages. Yes, it will be fully discussed and dissected in the House. Therein will the Opposition do its full duty.

But all this will be futile unless the country rises to the occasion. The irrevocable first step will sooner or later be taken unless the people make their views known, and publicly demonstrate these views. If the business men and loyal Canadians, who hate this measure as they hate death, will do their plain duty in every city, town, village and county in the Dominion, even this Government will be made to pause, and their supporters in the House to apply the veto to further action. It is up to the country now. Let those who have convictions make them known. Let public meetings be held everywhere and the people's voice be heard. Otherwise worse will befall.

THE ALBERT SOUTHERN.

When Mr. Robinson sought to discredit Mr. Hazen because the rails had been removed from the Albert Southern Railway by the trustee, Mr. W. A. Trueman, he raised a question which is certain to prove a boomerang. Mr. Hazen has done nothing in connection with this matter, which will not bear the closest scrutiny. When he learned that the rails were to be removed he notified Mr. Joseph, who was acting for Mr. Trueman, that the creditors would have to be protected. This was after he had looked into the question and satisfied himself that the province had no lien which it could enforce. These facts were made known to Mr. Robinson during the last session of the legislature, and he was also informed that he might look at the legal side of the case which was on file in the office of the Attorney General. This Mr. Robinson did not do, and nothing more was heard of the Albert Southern until the Leader of the Opposition made his unwarranted attack on Mr. Hazen at Hampton a short time ago.

In reviving the question Mr. Robinson has evidently forgotten that the Albert Southern has not been operated for upwards of twenty years. In point of fact it was never operated with any regularity. It was a railroad which never should have been built and probably never would have been built if Mr. Gagne Turner, its promoter, had not been a member of the Blair Government, with an election pending in Albert. It was a political road pure and simple, and never paid its working expenses, small as they were. Just how it came into being and under what authority the provincial subsidy was handed over is not at all clear, but it is certain that it was not one of those roads entitled to subsidy under the Subsidy Act of 1882, because it is not mentioned in that act. Therefore the lien which the Telegraph claims to exist under that act cannot be sustained.

The financial troubles of the Albert Southern commenced soon after its completion and also brought disaster to Mr. Turner. Finally the road was sold under a judgment obtained by Mr. Turner and was purchased by Mr. W. A. Trueman, who was acting as trustee for the creditors. This was nearly two decades ago; Mr. Blair, who granted the subsidy to the road, was then in power and should have enforced the lien if there was one. That he did not do so is very strong ground for the belief that he did not think that the province had any lien.

Mr. Trueman, as trustee, operated a section of the road for a time, but it did not pay, and the road was finally closed. In the section of the act quoted by the Telegraph means anything, its main object was to secure the operation of railroads receiving provincial aid. Here was a second opportunity for the Government to have enforced its lien if it had one. But no action was taken.

When the road had been closed for some time, and it was evident that it never would be re-opened, an opportunity occurred to sell the rails. They were being removed in small lots by parties residing along the line. Some of them went to Nova Scotia, and were used in bridge building. Others went into bridges in the vicinity. In fact if anyone wanted a rail for any purpose he removed it and nothing was said about it. When matters were in this state the position of the trustee was brought to the attention of Hon. William Pugsley, then Attorney General. He said he had not looked into the question, but referred the questioners to Mr. A. J. Trueman, his law partner. Mr. Trueman looked into the matter, and gave it as his opinion that the Government had no lien. The rails were not sold at this time as the price offered would not have been sufficient to more than pay the cost of removal.

The chief interest in all this is that Mr. Blair did not enforce or attempt to enforce the lien when the road was sold under the judgment obtained by Mr. Turner.

No attempt was made to enforce the lien when the road was finally closed. It is only after twenty years that it was even mentioned and then by a gentleman who himself had an opportunity of enforcing the lien if he really believed it ever existed. In this connection it may be remarked that Mr. Trueman, the trustee who has received the proceeds of the sale of the rails, is a supporter of Mr. Robinson and not of the Hazen Government.

Mr. Robinson does not shine in a very favorable light in his method of dealing with this question. He has made a violent attack on Mr. Hazen, implying wrong doing on the part of the Premier, when, in point of fact, whatever responsibility there may be in the matter is entirely on the shoulders of his political god-fathers and himself. If there ever was a provincial lien on the Albert Southern Railway, it should have been enforced long before the Hazen Government came into power. That it was not, shows that Mr. Robinson himself was either derelict in his duty when in power or he is now playing the hypocrite. He can take his choice.

MR. COPP'S FALSEHOODS.

(Moncton Times.)

Mr. A. B. Copp, M.P.P., aspires to the leadership of his party in the local legislature and in company with his colleagues has been barnstorming the eastern end of the country. His platform utterances at these meetings are such as will rob him of whatever remnant of reputation he may have retained for either veracity or sincerity in the discussion of provincial politics. Not that Mr. Copp was any more reckless of statement or any wider of the truth than were his fellow-barnstormers, but he set the pace and the others kept the stride as best they could.

Analyzing in the light of facts, almost any statement Mr. Copp made he placed in the unfortunate and undesirable position of wilful misrepresentation or inexcusable ignorance. His statement regarding expenditures upon bridges is illustrative of this. He said and reiterated that the Hazen administration is paying more for inspection than is paid out in wages and he was so indiscreet as to cite particular bridges. Now, what are the facts?

Mr. Copp stated at every meeting he addressed that on the Spence bridge, in the Parish of Botsford, \$41 was spent for "inspection"—that's the term and only term he used—and \$52.50 for wages. When that statement was challenged by Mr. Smith McLaughlin, who was foreman on the work, Mr. Copp held up the Auditor General's report and stated positively that he was giving the exact facts and figures from that report. Referring to that report, Auditor General's 1909, page 95, is the record:—

Spence Bridge.

J. T. Forbes, Structural Supt. 1 day \$ 2.00
J. T. Forbes, expenses 3.30
J. S. McLaughlin, foreman, 14 days at \$2.50 35.00
Other labor 52.50
Lumber, etc. 23.21

Instead of \$41 for inspection, the Structural Superintendent received \$52.50, of which \$3.30 were his traveling expenses. Mr. McLaughlin worked every day and also acted as foreman, and he is recognized throughout the whole eastern section of the province as one of the most capable mechanics in the country. Mr. Copp has these facts before him in the Auditor General's report, 1909, page 95; audience and when he stated that "inspection" cost \$41.00.

Another instance, Rockland Bridge. Regarding this structure, Mr. Copp stated that \$127 was paid out for "inspection" of work, totalling only \$122. Again referring to the Auditor General's report, 1909, page 95:—

Rockland Bridge.

Structural Supt. Forbes, including expenses \$ 10.40
Structural Supt. Goodwin, including expenses 17.95
J. R. Taylor, foreman, labor . . . 50.75
J. R. Taylor, team 14.95
Other labor 22.95
C. S. Hickman & Co. lumber . . . 126.24
Charges for superintendence on this bridge were less than \$29, and included, as well, time of the structural superintendent's looking after work on the Upper Rockland bridge, but charged to this bridge.

Yet with these facts before him set down so plainly that any person can read for himself, and the Auditor General's report free to all who will write to the office at Fredericton for it, Mr. Copp, for the sake of a seeming feeling advantage over the government, had the hardihood to stand before an intelligent audience and falsify the records and mis-state the facts. We could thus go through Mr. Copp's entire speech, but it is unnecessary. What do the intelligent, truth-loving people of Westmorland think of their representative?

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