

beat of the American pulse. I think the American people realize that they have pursued a fortuitous and absurd policy towards Canada for thirty-five years, they are prepared to adopt a new course, to bring about improved relations between the United States and Canada, and they are prepared to do what is fair to consummate that arrangement. My hon. friend (Mr. Gourley) says it would ruin us in twelve months.

An hon. MEMBER. In twenty-four hours.

Mr. CHARLTON. Well, that is rather rapid.

Mr. GOURLEY. That is just a simile, you will understand.

Mr. CHARLTON. Yes, of course. We fortunately are not left in this matter without some criterion to go by, without some experience to guide us, without some developments in that same line, the results of which may be of service to us, may teach us pretty unerringly what the probable outcome of such a policy would be. When the American union was formed in 1787, it adopted the policy of free trade between the then thirteen states comprising the union and that has continued to be the policy of that nation from that date to this. From time to time new states were added; from time to time new territory was acquired; finally the bounds of that nation stretched to the Pacific and to the gulf of Mexico and embraced the Mississippi valley; and yet, with all the diversity of climate, of production, of interests that existed in that country, and they are world-wide almost; with all the apparent reasons for protecting one section against another; protecting the farmer of New England where he had to struggle to produce crops, against the farmer of Illinois who had but to tickle the soil with a hoe and it laughed with the harvest; notwithstanding all these diversities of conditions which my hon. friend would say undoubtedly required the intervention of the tariff tinker and the protectionist; notwithstanding all this, that country has lived under free trade for a century and a quarter, has prospered under free trade; this great Zollverein extending from ocean to ocean and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian boundary, has prospered as no nation has ever prospered. And to-day the domestic commerce of that country reaches the enormous sum of forty billion dollars, sinking into utter insignificance the foreign trade of any nation in Christendom. That is the result of free trade, of the free interchange of natural products; of all products between all the sections of that nation with all their diversities of climate and conditions.

Now, I would like to know why the same conditions that apply to the forty-five states of the American union cannot be extended to the seven provinces of the Dominion with the same result. Of course we cannot carry it so far; we cannot have absolute free trade—at present at least. We must have a tariff on certain things for revenue,

but we can have absolute free trade in the productions of the soil, and to the extent that we reach out towards free trade, to that extent we will share the blessings that that country has derived from the practical operation of this principle.

Mr. CLANCY. That sounds like unrestricted reciprocity.

Mr. CHARLTON. Yes, it does, and unrestricted reciprocity would bring very good material results probably. We are not ready for it but we will go as far as it is prudent and take half of the loaf, and enjoy the prosperity and the blessings that will come from it.

And now with regard to the mutual interchange of natural products which my hon. friend says would ruin us in twenty-four hours, but which of course is a simile. The interchange of natural products in my opinion would produce only the most inconsiderable effect upon the prices in the United States. We want free admission to the American market for our farm products and our lumber and our ores, and for what reason? It is not that we may depress the American prices to the level of our own, but that we may secure the American prices and put the difference between the prices we get now with the duty taken from us and the price we would get then, into our own pockets. That is what we want it for. Our exportation of natural products to the United States is so insignificant and will be so insignificant in comparison with the great bulk of the products for consumption produced in this country, that very little effect can be produced. It. Take for instance the article of eggs. Last year we exported 11,500,000 dozen of eggs and 237,000 dozen of these went to the United States. One hundred and thirty-nine millions and eighty thousand eggs; quite a lot of eggs. We could not increase that export 50 per cent if we were to try. How much would that amount to in the United States. Why, Mr. Speaker, it would amount to less than two eggs per annum for each inhabitant of the United States; one omelette a year. That would have a very disastrous effect on American prices would it not. Why it never would be known; never. I have no time to go into the entire list, but you may go right through the list of farm products that may be exported to the United States for consumption in that country and their relative volume as compared with the production of the United States in the same line of articles would not be greater than in the case of eggs. The whole thing is a bugbear. The American farmer is frightened about Canadian competition which he has no reason to fear at all. The Canadian farmer, he need not be frightened about American competition because he is a producer and an exporter.

Now with regard to the question we were discussing a moment ago; about the concessions we might make to the United States in return for free trade in natural products.