

## Freer Trade Must Come

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those, who, through the operation and manipulation of the present high tariff now enjoy special or other privileges at the expense of the consumer, i.e., chiefly the farmer and wage earner. I say "special exception," but I am of the opinion that the benefits that would accrue, even to that class, through widened markets and freer trade, and consequently increased business, and enhanced general prosperity, would more than offset the advantages they now derive from the protection they enjoy at the expense of the masses. The cry that free trade would tend to annihilation is unworthy a place in the discussion of this question. A contented and prosperous people never seek to change their national allegiance, as Canadian history, and indeed all history shows. If there were the slightest basis for this cry the United States government could easily force the required conditions by simply removing its duties as against Canada. The annexation sentiment that had a considerable hold in Upper and Lower Canada previous to 1854, practically disappeared during the years when the former reciprocity agreement between Canada and the United States was in operation. Not only should the reciprocity agreement of 1911 receive prompt ratification, but in my opinion agricultural implements should be placed on the free list or at least have the duties thereon very materially reduced, and the British preference should be increased to 53 per cent. without delay.

P. S. Austin, Ranfurly, Alta. Regarding the ratification of the reciprocity agreement, every man, and woman as far as that goes, in this district, is sincerely trusting that parliament will ratify the agreement during the present session. Every effort should be made to have in

corporated with the free list, agricultural implements. I am satisfied that there will be no peace between the farmer and the statesman until some are admitted free. In connection with adjustments in tariffs the British preference should be increased to fifty per cent. during the present session. In fact, could I use my franchise in the matter, I would vote for 100 per cent increase. That is the size of my patriotism. Canada is preeminently a farming country, and the conditions under which manufacturing is carried on here makes the cost of the manufactured articles come too high. Either let the manufacturer return to the soil (plenty unemployed out West), or move his plant where cheaper labor and raw material can be secured. Of course that will be O. K. for the Canadians.

John R. Symons, Pense, Sask. There is no doubt much serious questioning among some of our brother farmers as to whether or not our big delegation to Ottawa did go too far in their demands for (1) reciprocity with the United States, (2) the placing of agricultural implements on the free list, (3) a 60 per cent. reduction in the British preferential tariff coupled with direct taxation.

Granting that these are standpoints which should be considered in establishing commercial relations, let us now turn in application to our demands at Ottawa.

(1) Reciprocity in natural products with the United States. Possibly all will allow that there is no difference in natural conditions of sufficient importance to be a bar to reciprocity—we are willing to allow that social conditions in the United States are equal to our own on the average, and since the agreement is reciprocal, the United States is imposing no condition which we need resent. From a protectionist standpoint, then, all can agree to this proposal.

(2) Placing implements on the free list. As this is not necessarily to be reciprocated by the United States, from a protectionist standpoint this could not be agreed to. But this does not mean by any means, that the home market of implements is to bleed the user unmercifully as in the past. He must be compelled to be satisfied with a fair profit in return for his advantage in the home market. In so far as Britain is concerned, there is no difficulty.

(3) A 50 per cent. reduction in the British preference. Taking into account our three standpoints, every protectionist farmer can agree to this equally with the free trader. Granted this reduction, there would still be ample protection for the home manufacturer (say, too much, since many articles are protected by from 20 to 50 per cent.) and there is no objection from standpoints two and three.

We may conclude then, that there would be no inconsistency in every farmer heartily supporting demands 1 and 3, with free trade in agricultural implements at once with Britain, also with the United States, so soon as they see fit to meet us.

My own position is that the extreme free trader and the extreme protectionist are both wrong, and that in endeavoring to create or moderate economic conditions (and with them social conditions), the position of "the other fellow" must be taken into account.

D. D. McArthur, Lauder, Man.—As a born Canadian and a British subject, I would like briefly to express my views on the agreement which is now under discussion at Ottawa. And first let me affirm that party politics have nothing to do with my stand on this vital question of tariff reform. Although I have my party leanings, I have heretofore on more than one occasion voted in support of candidates of the opposite party. To my mind party politics is to-day one of the leading curses of the age. It is a national calamity, for an intelligent electorate to give place to their own judgment and act on the findings of political leaders, who may be seeking self-aggrandizement rather than the good of the people they serve. I view with alarm the earnest endeavor put forth by certain politicians of both parties, at the present time to stir up party feeling in support of the privileged classes. I earnestly trust that the farmers of Canada will not allow themselves to be influenced by partisanship to their own detriment. Let us stand by the principles we have been advocating for years past. As farmers we are organizing ourselves in self defence. We are united in our general principles. We have not forgotten our united prayer presented to the Tariff commission a few years ago,

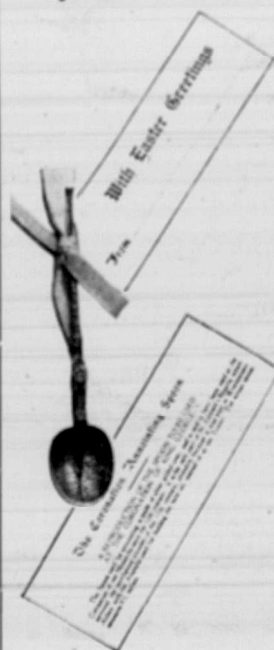
for "tariff for revenue only" and free trade in agricultural implements. Neither is it ancient history, the united stand which our farmers of the three provinces have taken in connection with tariff reform, in their annual parliaments. The climax of enthusiasm was reached in these conventions when the question of free trade was pronounced upon. Furthermore, I affirm that in our local association gatherings the subject of tariff reform leading up to free trade, has always been of primary importance. It may be further noted that in all our private or public discussions in this West, it was all but impossible to ascertain the political leanings of the advocates of the above reform. The late tariff agreement is in accord with our wishes so far as it goes. It is extremely disappointing to us inasmuch as it does not include agricultural implements on the free list. The finding of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' convention is in line with this view; so is the unanimous verdict of the directors of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association. The stand taken by Mr. Sifton on the tariff agreement is surprising in the extreme. Oh, how suddenly mighty politicians become converted! I surmise there may be a cause, "Western Canada to become the backyard of Chicago? Annexation! Lower prices for farm produce!" Such rot! He adds that the government have had no mandate from the people to warrant such an agreement. Did the delegation which met the "Tariff commission" a few years ago, all over this West mean nothing? And did the delegation to Ottawa last December mean nothing? When reciprocity and free trade were the leading planks in their platform, a delegation which represented a large majority of the electorate of the Dominion. Furthermore were the numerous appeals of Western delegations, which waited upon Sir Wilfrid during his recent tour of this West, urging tariff reform, to be of no avail? Is it not a fact that for forty years a large majority of the voters of the Dominion have been looking to the United States to meet Canada with a view to lowering or eliminating tariff walls? And is it not a fact that Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier visited Washington on different occasions in order to secure freer trade relations between Canada and the United States, but were unable to secure concessions? The tide has turned, Washington invited negotiations, and were, so far as we can see, extremely fair in their propositions. A mutual agreement was arrived at by the leaders of both governments. Let the people of Canada turn this agreement down and we are down and out as far as the American markets are concerned. To the unbiased, intelligent farmer it appears to be a monstrous assertion to affirm that the opening up of a market that gives us access with our produce to ninety-six millions of people, would not be advantageous. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that prosperity to the farmer spells prosperity to the various industries throughout the Dominion. Further, I affirm that an increase in the British Preference to say 50 per cent. for the time being, and ultimate free trade with the home land, is the expressed wish of a large majority of the Consumers in Canada.

James Speakman, Penhold, Alta.—Under favorable conditions we could easily increase our production so as to pour larger volumes than now along our present channels and still have plenty for any demand that may come from the south. Some of our opponents are curious people. They don't want reciprocity which might enable us to sell some cattle in the States, and ought to sell in the British market. But when we tell them that the Argentine Republic by a well organized dead meat trade with Great Britain is rapidly killing out our live stock and that they ought to organize a chilled meat system, they turn a deaf ear.

Some of the objections are amazing. Why should millers squeal when under the reciprocity agreement wheat and oats are free, while flour and oat meal remain protected? They say our wheat will go into the hands of American millers and Canadian mills will suffer. Why should they? Will the reciprocity agreement hinder Canadian millers from having all the wheat they want if they will pay the market price for it?

The opposition of the manufacturers would also seem amazing at first sight, for the reciprocity agreement treats them very tenderly. But they smell a rat.

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The famous statement of the apostate liberals in Toronto reveals it. In clause 7 they say, "Canada would be forced to extend the scope of the agreement so as to include manufactures and other things." There's the rub and they are quite right. We farmers intend to have freer trade all round.

The opposition of transportation companies is understandable. The present conditions give them a monopoly in carrying our goods East and West so that they can fleece us at their sweet will. The reciprocity agreement besides opening up some trade to the south will give us competing lines for our East and West trade, so that Canadian lines may have to reduce their freight. A good thing for the whole community but a sad trouble for the shareholders. Here at least we come up against a sincere reason for opposition and it is my impression that much of the present noise comes from this one source, for in my work as U. F. A. director, I have come across a good deal of underground connections between the railway companies and the heads of other monopolies who were railway shareholders.

The loudest, and to my mind the most groundless objection, is the annexation cry. Principal Peterson of the McGill University, whom I knew as principal of University College, Dundee, Scotland, when I was indulging in some chemical

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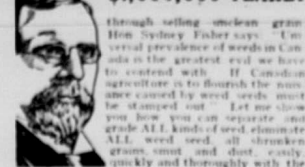
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