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A GREAT COMMERCIAL UNION.

WE find in the *Canadian Exhibitor* (published in London, England, during the Exhibition recently closed), a brief report of a speech made on a certain occasion by Mr. J. B. Perry, of Toronto, who championed Canada's cause and Canada's policy most effectively. It appears that in the conference room of the Exhibition a paper on "Colonial Tariffs" was read by Mr. Stephen Bourne, who argued that, if we were to have a Federation of the Empire, some general principle as to tariffs must be arrived at: and, further, that Free Trade must be the basis of any satisfactory settlement. Instead of trying to stimulate home manufactures by means of Protection, colonists should steadily develop the resources of their respective countries. In other words, they should leave manufacturing severely alone, supply themselves from the mother country with all products of the mill and the factory, and give themselves wholly to the bringing out to the market of the raw products of the farm, the forest, the sea, and the mine.

These views did not chime in with the patriotic aspirations of Mr. Perry, who replied in vigorous "Canada First" style. For one thing, he thought that the mother country, if it were desired to bind the colonies closer to her, should put a duty on foreign wheat, while admitting colonial wheat free (he might well have said the same thing respecting other produce too). As for the surplus population of "the old sod" finding room to live in and a good living in Canada, they could have all that, provided only that the emigrants *settled on the land*, and became farmers, with a view to which every man of them was offered a free gift of 160 acres. The speaker came out most eloquently in his peroration, thus:—

"Let England be a mother to her own, and cease building up foreign countries by a one-sided trade policy. You boast of the Free Trade principle while other countries are shutting their ports to your manufactures and flooding your country with their goods, leaving you to debate what to do with your multitude of unemployed men. In discussing Imperial Federation, the question of loyalty to the old land is not in the debate. All are loyal. We in Canada are super-loyal. Situated as we are beside our friendly cousins of the American continent, with their market of sixty-five millions open to us if we but say the word, we sacrifice our material progress by maintaining British connection; but our love for old England with its grand traditions remains so strong that we content ourselves with the anomalous position we now occupy. But the importance to England of fostering Canadian loyalty is obvious when you consider our position from a strategical point of view, as now affording an alternative route to your Eastern possessions over our transcontinental railway. It appears to me the time has arrived for a closer union or a loosening of the present tie, and that union must be built upon

mutual help, and on the lines suggested by Mr. Bourne in his able paper."

Mr. Perry appears to have agreed with Mr. Bourne in a general way, but that particular point of the National Policy he refused to sacrifice for any consideration.

However, in this matter something more has to be said than all that has been said at all the Imperial Federation conferences ever held in London, or anywhere else, let us add. The question has been asked: Is there any possible way of harmonizing the commercial interests of Protectionist colonies with those of the mother country? And first we would remark that the problem is becoming more difficult with every year that passes, for the reason simply that in the colonies Protection is every year spreading itself and taking firmer root. Thirty years ago the mother country could have made a far better *Free Trade* bargain with Canada than can be made to-day; thirty years hence Free Trade will have almost disappeared from among progressive nations. Canada, after several swings between Protection and Free Trade, has on due deliberation adopted a National Policy of her own, which she will never give up, though to destroy it is the cherished design of some of her prominent political leaders. Victoria, on the other side of the globe, some time ago adopted a system of Protection, not, however, going quite as far as we have gone in that direction. For years back the contrast has been presented of Victoria declaring for Protection, the people of New South Wales on the other hand declaring that whatever others might do, *they* would stick to Free Trade. And English free traders have confidently held it forth that Protection in Victoria was only a temporary craze there, and that soon the telling example of New South Wales must influence all Australasia to the permanent adoption of Free Trade. But, alas for such mistaken anticipations, the deceptive repetition of Cobden's prophesyings forty years ago, when he advised his countrymen to be quite sure that, if England once adopted Free Trade, continental Europe would quickly follow! The revolution has come in Australasia, but not as expected by the free traders. To-day the protection of home manufactures is imperatively demanded by the popular majority in New South Wales, and will most certainly be carried "ere long," The movement has fairly started, and now nothing can stay it.

A possible solution of the problem might be sketched somewhat as follows:—England to admit all colonial raw produce free, as at present, while putting a good round duty on all foreign produce of corresponding kinds. Raw cotton would have to be excepted, and probably raw wool too, all things considered. But wheat and *nearly all* other food products should be included, for certainly the colonies, if assured of the