

In the trade tables, the numbers of fruit trees of the principal kinds imported are given since 24th February, 1882, and from that date until the end of the fiscal year 1886 we imported from the United States 859,029 apple trees, 154,739 pear trees, 88,860 plum trees, 36,646 cherry trees, and 13,576 quince trees, being an aggregate for the five years of 1,152,850 trees, or enough for an orchard area of 20,500 acres. The declared value of this importation is \$156,503, in addition to which there is a value for other trees of \$41,919, and the total charge of customs duty is \$39,099. The duty paid on all imports of fruit and fruit trees, vegetables and seeds imported from the United States in the six years was \$654,222, or an average of about 18 per cent.

On this subject of the customs tariff on fruits and other articles, I may be allowed to refer to a section of the Tariff Act of 1879, which enumerates certain natural products of Canada and the United States, including green fruit, seeds of all kinds, plants, trees and shrubs, and provides that they may be imported into Canada free of duty, or at a less rate of duty than is provided in the Act, upon proclamation by the Governor in Council, which may be issued whenever it appears to his satisfaction that similar articles from Canada may be imported into the United States free of duty, or at a rate of duty not exceeding that payable on the same under such proclamation when imported into Canada. Now by the United States Tariff Act of 1883, which came into operation on the first of July of that year, the following articles were placed on the free list:—

1. Fruits, green, ripe, or dried, not specially provided for, such as oranges, grapes, preserved fruits, etc.
2. Plants, trees, shrubs and vines of all kinds not otherwise provided for.
3. Seeds of all kinds not specially enumerated, except medicinal seeds.

Those articles have been admitted into the United States from Canada and all other countries free of duty since the first of July, 1883, and notwithstanding the provision of the Canadian Tariff Act of 1879 the duty on similar articles imported into Canada from the United States has been neither removed nor lowered. Our producers have the boon of a continental free market; while our consumers, who vastly outnumber the producing class, are "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in," not "to saucy doubts and fears," as was the thane of Cawdor, but to the tardy market of their own long-wintered country with a cordon of customs posts to keep out the earlier fruits of a sunnier land.

Looked at from the point of view of a consumer, and not without consideration for the large interests of the producer, it seems to me that our Government has made a mistake in failing to meet the legislation of the United States in the spirit of the terms of its own Act. It is possible, I am bound to consider it probable, that the failure to reciprocate has not been intentional, but rather that it has been owing to an oversight of the changes made in the United States tariff whereby the articles referred to were placed on the free list four years ago. Is it for our interest that this attitude towards the United States should continue—that while placing on the statute book a standing offer for the free exchange of specified products we should ignore the acceptance of our offer by the United States? Suppose our neighbors should retaliate, as they threaten to do—as Congress has authorized the President to do—and not only re-impose the old duties on articles which are now free, but, following the recent example of our Government in the case of potatoes and other vegetables, make the rate 25 to 50 per cent. higher than before, or make the duty prohibitory at once, how would it affect the fruit, seed and vegetable growers of Canada? Where could they hope to find a market for the 60 per cent. and over of their export products which during the past six years was taken by the United States? And bear in mind that I am not putting a purely hypothetical case, for numerous instances are on record—notably in connection with the fisheries question—in which the United States Congress prohibited the importation of products of these British provinces in retaliation for the conduct or the policy of the British Government; and I say it is not wise, without excellent cause, to provoke retaliation, or even to seem to provoke it.

The two chief objects of our tariff are: (1) To provide a revenue for the Government, and (2) to give to the home producer a measure of protection against foreign competition. The first of these is served to the extent to which duties are paid on imports less the cost of collection, and the second to the extent to which the home market is secured to the home producer by the exclusion of foreign produce.

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\$

73,045  
22,971  
1,774  
16,623  
36,939  
49,135  
88,670  
84,603  
34,979  
13,818  
74,178  
37,487