

from the withdrawal of preference on its staple produce find that they cannot successfully compete with their neighbours of the United States in the markets open to them, they will naturally and of necessity begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be of that paramount degree which they have found it hitherto to be."

Another argument was that it was not necessary to enter into an agreement with the United States, as the Democrats were shortly coming into power and they would lower duties without our giving concessions at all. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's reply to this could not have been improved upon. It was to the effect that there was no certainty of the Democrats coming into power and still greater uncertainty about their reducing duties in favour of Canada without equivalent return. But the reciprocity agreement was certain and a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Moreover, the removal of the Canadian duties on natural products would be beneficial to the Canadian consumer. Sir Wilfrid said the agreement was entered into by the opposite political party of the United States and it was the first time an opportunity had ever been given to Canada since 1866 to trade freely with their neighbours. If not grasped it might never recur; if rejected the door might be shut for all time. He pointed out also that in addition to getting the free United States market in natural products that freedom of market was given as a preference over other countries.

As it transpired, the Democrats did come into power, and they did substantially lower duties on articles in which Canada was interested, but this reduction was not on the whole as extended or as beneficial as the provisions of the reciprocity agreement. At all events, the Conservatives are not entitled to any credit for the action of the Democratic party. On the contrary, they are greatly blameworthy for not taking full advantage of the United States reduction in duty, particularly by reducing or removing duty from American wheat, which action would at once admit Canadian wheat free into the American market. Wheat is the great staple product of Canada and its free entry into the United States was one of the principal features of the reciprocity agreement. A government has a fair right to impose customs restrictions on what we buy but it is bad business to dictate also as to where producers shall sell.

Manufacturers' Attitude.

The manufacturers' attitude is easily disposed of. They were simply scared. The Liberal Government had given them full justice, had by their tariff and business policy greatly helped to bring about an unparalleled era of prosperity in manufacturing, but yet they were troubled in their souls. They were compelled to admit that the reciprocity agreement only dealt with a very few manufactured articles of trifling importance, but they feared for their privileges, and were afraid that the Canadian farmer would demand the withdrawal of all protection from manufactured goods. "Hold fast to what we have got," was their motto. Notwithstanding their great prosperity brought about by the development of the country, they could not see that increased markets to the farmers would promote agricultural development and thereby stimulate manufacturing. Moreover, they deliberately trampled the farmers under their feet. There