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"COMMERCIAL UNION" AND "RECIPROCITY."

THE symposium of views of Canadian manufacturers regarding "Commercial Union," and "Reciprocity in Manufactures between Canada and the United States," published in the last issue of the CANADIAN MANUFACTURER was read with great interest and excited wide and intelligent discussion in both countries. The publication occurred almost simultaneously with the delivery of a speech on the subject by Mr. Erastus Wiman, a Canadian formerly of Toronto but now living in New York, at the annual meeting of the Canadian Club in that city.

The question of the Commercial Union of Canada and the United States was revived and forced on the attention of the public by the introduction into the last United States Congress by Representative Butterworth of a bill providing for a complete reciprocity with the Dominion of Canada. The preamble of the bill sets forth that controversies exist between the Government of the United States and that of Canada growing out of the construction of treaties affecting fishing interests; and that by reason of the contiguity of the two countries and the similarity of the interests and occupations of the peoples, it is desired to remove all existing controversies, and all cause of controversy in the future, and to promote and encourage business and commercial intercourse between the people of both countries, and to enable the citizens of each to trade with the citizens of the other without restriction, and irrespective of boundaries, as fully and freely as though there was no boundary line between them. The first section of the bill provides that whenever and as soon as the Government of Canada shall, by act of her Parliament, permit all articles of trade and commerce of whatever name and nature, the products of the United States, to enter the ports of the Dominion free of duty, then all articles of trade and commerce of Canada of every name and description, produced in Canada, shall be permitted to enter the ports of the United States free of duty; it being the intention of the act to provide for absolute reciprocity of trade between the two countries. The other sections of the bill provide for the methods by which the reciprocity should be carried into effect. The bill failed to become a law, and Mr. Butterworth declares his intention to introduce it into the next Congress, which assembles in December, and to press for its passage.

The move is undisguisedly in the interest of the free trade or anti-tariff wings of both the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States, and it is being agitated with much fervor by the corresponding elements in Canadian politics, both in Canada and before the Canadian Club of New York, of which Mr. Wiman is president.

Mr. Wiman's arguments seem to be all based on the premises included in the preamble of Mr. Butterworth's bill, particularly the reference to the controversy regarding the fishery question. The importance of this question is unduly magnified, and it is used *in terrorem* to force Canadian sentiment into the acceptance of an ultimatum which could never be attained except through fear that refusal would precipitate hostilities on the part of the stronger United States against the weaker Canada. That the Government or people of the United States entertain any such feelings we do not believe, nor do we believe that sensible persons in Canada believe it.

Whatever there may be in the fishery question, the matter can and most probably will be settled entirely without reference to the question of reciprocity. Upon a careful reading of Mr. Wiman's speech it is evident that he and the free traders generally hope to see Canada coerced into an unwilling and unprofitable commercial union with the United States through fear of the enforcement of the retaliatory measures authorized by the American Congress, but which have been wisely withheld by President Cleveland. We are told by Mr. Wiman that early and prompt action is essential for the adjustment of the differences which, by delay, become more and more serious; that complete and full reciprocal relation in trade matters should be created, which would forever settle the fishery question, which, like Banquo's ghost, rises periodically to disturb the peace; that the present is a most critical period in the history of the connection between the two countries; that it is almost impossible to over-estimate the importance of what might occur in the next few months, "nay, in the next few weeks"; that in the settlement of the fishery question compensation from the United States must take one of two forms—either a payment of money, or a complete readjustment of trade relations between the two countries; that the idea of a money payment must be abandoned on the ground that the American people feel that they were tricked and swindled by the Halifax award, and will not countenance any such mode of settlement again, and that the only remaining mode of settlement is by a complete readjustment of the commercial relations between the two countries, based upon the propositions of the Butterworth Bill.

According to these arguments Canada's choice lies between the devil and the deep sea. We have to accept either complete reciprocity and commercial union with the United States, whether we desire such or not, or have the United States go to war with Canada because we insist on our rights in keeping American fishermen out of Canadian waters.

But a new phase of this fishery question is developed in the proposition said to have been made by Lord Salisbury, the