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FINANCE AND INSURANCE REVIEW.

MONTREAL, JUNE 24, 1881.

COMMERCIAL UNION.

It has been known for some time that, owing to the contemplated visit of Professor Goldwin Smith to his native country, the publication of the *Bystander* would be temporarily suspended. In the June number, which concludes the present series, we find in more than one of the paragraphs a reference to what is designated as "Commercial Union" or "A Continental Policy." We have also before us a number of the *American*, a weekly journal published at Philadelphia, which, under the caption of "Mr. Goldwin Smith and his Canadian Critics," criticizes the article on Commercial Union contributed to the May number of the *London Fort-*

nightly Review by Sir Francis Hincks. We purpose noticing the several points which have been deemed worthy of criticism by both writers, and we shall endeavor to do so without "interjecting angry comments," a term which the *Bystander* seems to think appropriate to all expressions of opinion different from its own. The *Bystander* observes that "where there is no argument there can be no reply, and therefore we need not again discuss Commercial Union." The *American* charges the writer with taking advantage of a recent article on the question of Commercial Union not to reply to the advocates of such a union, but to "abuse plaintiff's attorney." We readily admit that the opponents of "Commercial Union" labor under the serious disadvantage of having no arguments presented for them to combat. Since the commencement of the discussion of the question it has never been pointed out by any one of the advocates of Commercial Union, who, with very few exceptions, are to be found in the United States, how the common tariff is to be framed. It might reasonably have been expected that the able critics to whom reference has been made, would have grappled with the remark cited in the *Fortnightly* article from a New York Commercial journal, which pronounced Commercial Union "the idlest of follies," because "it is impossible that the United States would ever admit Canada to any voice in their tariff regulations, and it is hardly conceivable that Canada on its side would submit to a tariff in the making of which it could take no part."

Let us waive for the moment the practical difficulty of a dependency admitting the products and manufactures of a foreign state free of duty, and at the same time levying duties on those of the Mother Country; let us even assume that Canada were completely separated from Great Britain, and we challenge the Philadelphia *American* to submit a practical scheme for the establishment of a common tariff. We desire to correct the *American* on another point. Those Canadians who deprecate the discussion of the future of Canada are at all times quite ready to defend the political institutions which they at present enjoy. What they protest against is the doctrine that the whole policy of Canada should be subservient to what is described as a continental policy. If we construct railways or canals in our own country, we are told that they are "political" works, by the very same writer who assures us that "the question as to the political relations of Canada with England and the United States is one

"which no wise man would wish to bring on before the time." This is precisely what we have all along contended, but we are met by the argument that, inasmuch as our political destiny is to be annexed to the neighboring republic, our entire policy as to the construction of public works and tariffs should be regulated on that assumption. We are told by the *Bystander* that "speculation on the future of England and Ireland is always going on." Can a single instance be cited of a British statesman making a proposition to Parliament, with reference to any part of the United Kingdom, based on the assumption that at some future day there would be a change of allegiance? We are told by the *Bystander* that Commercial Union "is as distinct from the political question as is reciprocity, which Sir Francis Hincks advocates, and which Commercial Union would only complete." The advocates of reciprocity neither proposed nor imagined the possibility of imposing duties on British imports from which those from the United States would be free. We cannot believe that either the *Bystander* or the *American* would venture to argue that it would not be a "political question" if Canada were to propose differential duties against Great Britain.

The *Bystander* and the *American* choose to assume that the expression in the article in the *Fortnightly*, "no effort will be spared by the Republican and Protectionist party to bring about the annexation of Canada," was intended to convey the idea that coercion would be employed. We feel assured that this is a complete misconception. A forcible attempt to annex Canada would be a declaration of war against Great Britain, and in arguing the question, we should never think for a moment of assuming such a course as possible. The *Bystander* tells us that "if the people of the West did not desire an open St. Lawrence they would be in their dotage; so would the people of the United States generally if they were inclined to reject such a federation of this continent as would secure perfect freedom of intercourse and exclude war." This, is simply confirmatory of what was said in the *Fortnightly*. The *Bystander* adds that, "if the United States are ever driven into hostile measures, it will be by a war of tariffs commenced here." An admirable specimen of patriotism truly! It is no wonder that the *American* and other United States journals lose no opportunity of extolling the writer as "a man of large views, of liberal opinions, and trained in the study of the historical currents which move the world." The idea of the United States being "driven into hostile mea-