

ing out of these Commercial Union proposals. But it is by no means certain that the British Government would not object to the conclusion of an arrangement between Canada and the United States, such as has been talked of. Commercial Union and protection are quite different things. In the one case a duty is placed upon imports of certain articles, regardless of the country whence they come. In the other case Great Britain would be directly discriminated against, for the benefit of a foreign nation. In adopting a protective policy in this country, it was represented to the Imperial authorities, that Canada was merely trying to protect her markets from being flooded with United States manufactures, and that the duties were so arranged as to bear lightly upon imports from the United Kingdom, whilst coming heavily upon imports from the United States. These intimations were of course given with the idea of pulling the wool over the eyes of the British people, and they seem to have succeeded to a great extent, for we find statesmen in the British Parliament excusing the protective policy of Canada on the ground that "it was directed against the United States." In view of the attempts made to lead the people of Great Britain to believe that we were only seeking to keep out United States manufactures in adopting a protective policy, the adoption of a policy in favor of Commercial Union would certainly be a great change of front. Such a policy would give the lie direct to all our professions of a desire to encourage trade with the Mother Country, to the restriction of that with the United States. The late increase in the iron duties has drawn a great deal of attention in Great Britain to our trade policy, and although the Imperial Government refused to interfere with Canada, on the ground that it was the policy of that Government to allow the Canadians to exercise full control over their fiscal affairs, yet it was shown that there was a strong feeling throughout Great Britain against the increase in the duties. The attempt to carry out these Commercial Union proposals would tend to further exasperate the British public, and give the Imperial authorities just reason to complain against, if not to interfere in our trade affairs.

Looking at the question from an Imperial point of view, there appear to be good reasons why the British Government should object to Commercial Union

between Canada and the United States. In many ways Canada is a considerable tax to the British people. The Home Government is bound to defend this country from foreign encroachment, and thus a great responsibility is incurred, which may even embroil the Empire in a costly and destructive war. British capital has been invested freely for the development of this country. The Imperial authorities have always been considerate in favoring Canada, especially in matters of trade, and Canadian commerce enjoys the protection and fostering care of the British flag in all parts of the world. We are thus spared the expense which, as an independent nation, we would be obliged to incur, in providing a fleet for the protection of our commerce, and for the maintenance of ministers and consuls in foreign countries. With all the advantages which this country enjoys from political connection with the British Empire, it is but right that we should endeavor to give something in return. To acknowledge our indebtedness to the Home Government by discriminating against the importation of British manufactures, for the sole benefit of a foreign country, would be the height of ingratitude.

The foregoing course of reasoning may be considered as somewhat sentimental, and sentiment as a rule does not count for much in trade affairs. We are not, however, confined to such an aspect of the case. In a more practical sense, Canada has everything to lose and little to gain from the adoption of a policy which must, in the natural course of events, lead to the alienation of that feeling of good will which now prevails between her people and the Mother Country, and which would be all but certain to ultimately lead to the complete severance of the political ties now connecting us with the Empire. Canada, and the Northwest in particular, is almost entirely dependent upon Great Britain for an export market. The United States does not want our agricultural commodities, for the reason that that country has abundance and to spare of about every article which we produce in surplus quantities. Great Britain is our only natural market, and the United States is our great competitor to supply that market. It should therefore be the chief trade policy of Canada to cultivate friendly commercial relationship with Great Britain. The opposite policy is simply suicidal. Supposing that by the adoption of a policy of discrimination

against the Mother Country, such as Commercial Union proposes, we should exasperate the British Government to such an extent as to lead to the placing of restrictions upon imports from Canada, and what would be the result? It would certainly be most ruinous to this country, whilst scarcely affecting Great Britain. The British people could procure about as cheaply elsewhere, almost everything which they now purchase from Canada, and the loss of their export trade to this country would be but a drop in the ocean of the aggregate. On the other hand, Canada would be left entirely without a market for her surplus products, and the increased trade in certain products with the United States would not begin to compensate for the loss of our markets in the United Kingdom. Canadians who are now agitating in favor of Commercial Union, should consider this aspect of the case, and bear in mind, that the Imperial authorities would be fully justified in retaliating upon this country, should Canada adopt a policy of discrimination in trade affairs against the Mother Country. It does not require extraordinarily clear insight to arrive at the conclusion, that Commercial Union with a foreign state, to the discrimination against Great Britain, is altogether incompatible with the relationship existing between Canada and the Empire. The adoption of such a policy could not but result in an estrangement between Canada and Great Britain which would bode no good to this country.

This Commercial Union question is one in which the Northwest, as an important portion of Canada, is peculiarly interested. We have next to nothing which we could export largely to the United States, but we will soon have a large surplus of various agricultural commodities which we expect to find a market for in Great Britain. In fact the hopes of the people of the Northwest are centred upon their ability to export their various products to the British markets. We require British immigrants and British capital to develop the great natural resources of our fertile prairies; British markets to take our exports of wheat and flour and butter and cheese and beef and provisions; and we also require cheap British manufactured goods, to enable our farmers to compete with all comers. This blind Commercial Union agitation, which is being worked to mislead the farmers of Eastern Canada, is hostile and obnoxious to the interests of the Northwest, as is also the policy of the Ottawa authorities in heaping up the duties upon everything which we are obliged to import, thereby increasing the cost of living and rendering our agriculturalists less able to compete with other countries not so heavily handicapped.