

The Commercial

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COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

Prospects for freer trade relationship with the United States do not appear to be improving any. The new tariff bill, which was introduced into the house at Washington on Monday, is not encouraging to Canadians who are favorable to the extension of trade with the United States. The new tariff shows heavy increases in the duty on most commodities which are imported from Canada. One of these is the lumber schedule, which places \$2 per 1000 feet on rough lumber and 50 cents additional on planed stuff. A large number of United States firms and companies own timber lands in Canada, or purchase logs in Canada, for sawing in Michigan mills. It has been proposed that we should cut off supplies of logs for these Michigan mills, by placing an export duty on logs, in case the United States restored the duty on lumber. The new United States tariff bill, however, provides that in case any export duty is placed on logs, the duty on lumber shall be increased 25 per cent. ad valorem. An export duty on logs would therefore mean that the United States market would be entirely closed against our lumber. Perhaps, however, it would be advisable for us to impose the export duty on logs, and see which country will suffer the most by the transaction. This lumber schedule is a very unfair thing. They want our logs, to keep their own mills running, but will not admit our lumber. This is altogether too one-sided to be allowed to continue.

The lumber schedule is only one feature of many which are equally unfavorable to this country. On wools such as are imported from Canada, unwashed, the duty has been placed at 11 to 12 cents per pound, and much higher for washed and scoured wools. One cent per pound is placed on lead contained in lead ores, which will seriously affect some of the British Columbia mines. Agricultural products are generally subjected to heavy duties.

The new tariff bill is to have a reciprocity clause attached to it, but this has not been presented yet. It is believed, however, that this reciprocity clause will be of no benefit to Canada. The clause will merely permit the lowering of the duty on certain classes of goods, in return for like concessions to the United States. The principal lines of goods on which the duties may be lowered by reciprocity treaties will, it is understood, be sugar, champagne, silks, gloves, mineral waters, chicory, chewing-gum and crude tarrar. The president will be empowered by the bill to enter into treaties by which the duties will be materially lowered on importations of these goods from countries which make concessions to United States cattle and other products.

Evidently we can have very little hope of securing the opening of the United States markets on reasonable terms for our exports. We will have to confine our efforts, therefore, mainly to extending our trade with Great Britain, where we have a free and open market available for vast quantities of our surplus products. Should it not, therefore, be our aim, in revising the tariff, to reduce duties wherever practicable, upon imports from Great Britain, in return for the free market which we have in the mother country.

When the protective policy was first introduced we were told that it was necessary to protect ourselves against the United States, as that country taxed Canadian commodities heavily, and made a slaughter market of Canada. Such a one-sided arrangement, it was urged, should not be allowed to continue. The trade returns, however, show that our imports from Great Britain, are taxed much more heavily than our imports from the United States. While the blow was ostensibly aimed at the United States it has apparently fallen upon Great Britain. In the proposed revision of our tariff this situation should be kept in mind.

NOT IN OUR LINE.

The Commercial does not carry on a private detective agency. The information which we have to impart may be found in the columns of this journal. It is free to any one who wishes to obtain it, by begging, borrowing, stealing or purchasing a copy of the paper. We are pleased at all times to give any information within our power, regarding general trade matters, but cannot undertake to furnish private information regarding the standing of business firms or individuals. The information which The Commercial has at hand is of a general nature, relating to the business affairs of the country at large, and not of a specific character, relating to the standing of particular firms and individuals. Where information of a private nature is desired, we refer our patrons to such well-known and responsible agencies as Bradstreets or R. G. Dunn & Co.'s. We must decline to give information of a nature relating to the financial standing or private affairs of business men.

THE ARGENTINE.

The Buenos Aires correspondent of the Minneapolis Northwestern Miller gives a rather discouraging account of the condition of agriculture in that country. He states that at the meeting of congress then in session, a large grant of money was voted to provide seed grain to settlers, on account of the loss of their crops. Another bill passed by congress, provides for the distribution of no less than \$10,000,000 among settlers who are land owners. Referring to this vote to assist the farmers, the correspondent says:

"I can safely assert that it has not come one moment too soon. The situation in the colonies is simply heartrending. Numbers of families have not a single thing to their name; they have not the means of sustenance, their crops have been a failure, and the locusts have devoured all their vegetables.

To add to their misery, a drought has set in, and what maize was saved from the ravages of the locusts, has now been scorched up. In Santa Fe, the situation is the worst, as the legal authorities have been placing embargoes on some of the poorest colonists, who are then almost left to starve in the middle of one of the world's granaries.

It appears that several provinces have suffered severely. In Entre Rios, the crop area has been reduced during the past two or three years, owing to a succession of bad crops. The last crop was under 1,500,000 bushels of wheat, while in 1892, the last good crop year, it was 12,000,000 bushels. The agricultural population of the province is said to be rapidly decreasing. Regarding those who remain the Review of the River Plate says:

"About one-half of the number are tenant farmers, not only in arrears with their rent, but practically without means of livelihood, and deep in the books of the local tradesmen, for necessities supplied. To supplement this, let it be noted that 2,500,000 acres are mortgaged to the banks."

The province of Santa Fe is said to have suffered equally as severely. Regarding Buenos Aires province, the correspondent says:

"During the wheat harvest, heavy rains fell and did terrible damage, and everything has gone against the farmer; what things have now turned out bladders full for the farmer in Buenos Aires, as his maize, which, until a few weeks ago, looked promising, is now nothing but stalk and is utterly withered, and the locusts are overrunning the province, and we are experiencing a severe drought. From the south the daily information is to the effect that leagues and leagues of camp are being burned up on account of the pasturage being as dry as tinder. Unfortunately, several wheat fields have also been destroyed by the devastating element."

According to this picture, our wheat growers need not fear the competition of the Argentine farmers very much, though possibly such unfavorable seasons may not continue in the future. According to the best information, however, Argentine is a country of great uncertainties for the farmer.

LOCKING UP MINING LANDS.

It is certainly a matter for regret that the Ontario Government should have locked up such a large area of territory supposed to be in the mineral belt, just at a time when active development of this mining territory is starting. It cannot but have a damaging effect upon the development of the territory. The principal of granting individuals or companies the exclusive privilege of prospecting any area of territory, is entirely wrong. The granting of 64,000 acres of land, in the case referred to, certainly appears to have been a very unwise transaction. The withdrawal of such a large area of territory from exploration and inspection, places individual prospectors at a great disadvantage.

It is true the company which has obtained the exclusive right to prospect this large area of territory, for three years, has agreed to spend a certain sum each year in prospecting the property, but the amount agreed upon is trifling in comparison with the dis-