

Nova Scotia, is a question of vast importance, and one which should not be too hastily decided.

In estimating the advantages and disadvantages of international exchanges, we have to give special attention not only to our interests as producers, but, also to our interests as consumers, the final end and aim of all our productions.

The first named party do not claim to advance the well-being of the people as consumers, except, in so far as their protective system promises to aid them as producers, therefore we may pass on to the second class. Those who advocate a continental union, lay great stress on the benefits to be derived through it for us as consumers, and at the same time in order to bring it about would put a new burden on us as consumers of products procured beyond the continent to the extent of the relief given on our border.

We ask, what need have we to seek the assistance of any foreign power to aid us as consumers any farther than they are willing to do by furnishing at a low price all the articles we require from them? The people of Canada have the fullest power that the most privileged country enjoys to establish laws for their freedom as consumers. We have but to face the responsibilities of a free trade policy fairly and squarely, and stand by our principles until they become a positive force with a majority of our people. Then, and not until then, may we hope to gain the real benefits of free trade. If we believe that the farmers of our country should enjoy the blessings of this freedom, we have no right to say it cannot be obtained through legitimate channels until an energetic, methodical and patient effort has been put forth to bring it about. That effort has certainly never been put forth.

The tyranny and oppression of the present government in our commercial matters may try the patience of a portion of our people, and drive them into supporting short cuts to obtain freedom, but it would be anything but wise for the more thoughtful of this young nation, to allow the false policy of the present to be substituted for one far more oppressive in a financial sense and most terribly revolutionary in a political sense. And all this to gain—so far as freedom to consumers is concerned—what may be gained by establishing correct principles among ourselves.*

In the year 1886, we (Nova Scotia) imported from the United States \$2,217,403 worth of goods, while we imported from all other countries \$5,631,816 in value. To give freedom to a two million dollar import trade,

*If it be found that the demand by the Upper Provinces is irresistible for a protective unit, having its centre either in Ontario, or a few hundred miles to the south of it in a foreign country, to the manifest ruin of the Maritime Provinces, then they (the Maritime Provinces), should join Nova Scotia in demanding a separation.