

sidering, naturally envisages Canadian, British and, to some extent, world conditions. It is, I think, shorter than usual. Nevertheless, it very properly, in my opinion, gives five paragraphs to trade questions, mentioning what the Government has already done to facilitate a wider international exchange of commodities and what it hopes to accomplish in the same direction. To my mind, nothing else in the world could contribute so much to the peace, progress and happiness of mankind as free international trade; therefore it is with extreme gratification I observe the great English-speaking nations of the world coming closer together on this most important subject. I hope I may live long enough to see at least all the great free nations of the world remove many of the impediments to trade among themselves. I feel so keenly interested in this question that I cannot refrain from expressing a few thoughts upon it.

To me it seems to be elementary to say that in times of peace, at all events, all or nearly all trade, both national and international, is carried on by individuals and corporate bodies, and that these persons or bodies will not begin to trade with one another unless they expect it to be to their mutual advantage. And most certainly such trade will not be continued unless it is to their mutual advantage. Therefore it follows, as the day follows night, that if traders living in different countries trade with one another they are benefiting not only themselves but the countries to which they belong. And from this it seems to me to follow that governments should concern themselves with removing as many obstacles to trade as possible, leaving their nationals who are business men to work out the details to suit themselves. These nationals will certainly not injure themselves; and if they do not hurt themselves I cannot see how they can possibly hurt their respective countries.

Another thing I cannot understand. Others may see the sense of it, but I cannot. With one hand we construct railways, dig canals, bridge rivers, build and subsidize ships, send commercial agents abroad to promote international trade; and with the other we discourage such trade by fining or levying tolls upon the men who engage in it, and at great expense build customs houses and employ armies of men to collect these fines or tolls.

According to my reading of history the first tariffs and customs houses began in a queer way. Long years ago, when the great rivers were the principal arteries of commerce in Europe, strong men, who wished to live by

preying on the industry of their neighbours, built their castles or forts on the banks of the Rhine, the Danube and other rivers, and levied fines or tolls on all the commerce that passed up and down these natural highways. In time this lawlessness became a custom, hence the name "customs houses." After a while kings thought this would be a good way to raise revenue, and they adopted it, at the same time abolishing, or greatly curtailing, the activities of the freebooters. Later still governing bodies took over this method of raising revenue, excluding by law all others, and while the system was still inherently bad, this change removed some of its evils, because the public got the money thus raised, or most of it. However, keen-minded, covetous persons never lost sight of the personal advantages that might be obtained through the manipulation of tariffs; hence the continual pressure and the skilfully devised arguments brought to bear upon all governments to make the rates as high as possible, and so, in practice, give the manipulators and the smugglers another chance.

One of the greatest fallacies which the tariff people inculcate is that it is more advantageous to export than to import. It would be easy, I think, if time permitted, to prove that one activity is the necessary complement of the other; that, in fact, one cannot properly be carried on without the other. Is this fact not significant? In time of war, when nations are trying to injure one another in every possible way, they instinctively feel and know that to blockade the frontiers of the enemy and prevent imports will cripple him more quickly and to a greater extent than will the prevention of exports.

One other thought will terminate my views on this phase of trade. In the long ages when this planet was being prepared for the habitation and use of man, when the seasons and the climates and the vast variety of productions were being arranged for, surely it must have been in the mind of the Creator that His children would freely exchange products with one another to the immense advantage of all; that this exchange would of itself be the most important industry and the greatest civilizing agency in which they would be engaged. If there is anything in this thought, man, because of his covetousness and lawlessness, has done much to thwart the will of Providence and injure himself.

Changing somewhat, but not dropping this line of thought, I proceed. The conquest of the air, the discoveries and inventions of the scientists, have so reduced the size of this earth that no part of it is any longer remote from any other part, and neither nations nor