

THE BATTLE OF THE TARIFFS

By NORMAN PATTERSON

FUNNIEST thing on earth—three big Anglo-Saxon countries fighting about the height of a tariff. There are three tariffs and six points of view. That is, there are two views to each tariff. Let me explain.

Great Britain has no tariff at all on most things, and a high tariff on tea, coffee, tobacco and whiskey. It is nominally, at least, a Free Trade country, upper case F. and T. Yet there are two views in that country as everybody knows, and each set of supporters are as keen as mustard. The Chamberlainites, or Fair-traders, or Protectionists, or Preferentialists—a rose by any other name would not be different—would like to see some customs duties levied on other things than tea, coffee and whiskey. For example, they would put a tax of five per cent. or so on foreign-grown grain, leaving colonial grain free. They would also put a small duty on foreign manufactures which compete with the larger British industries, especially when these goods came from high tariff countries; a reasonable backslap at high-tariff Germany, France, United States and Japan, but the British people will have none of it. Free trade has made Great Britain the freight-carrier of the world, the greatest Mother of colonies, and so on and so on, and "What we have, we'll hold." My word! yes. The teachings of Cobden, Bright and Gladstone, classified and concentrated, are still taken in large homeopathic doses by the voting majority, and there is little possibility of Free Trade being slaughtered by Fair Trade. Yet, on the surface, the interests in favour of Fair Trade, or Defensive Protection, are beginning to look suspiciously like a bogey.

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ACROSS the Atlantic, in the Double-Great Republic, it is quite different. There Free Trade has never been heard of and Fair Trade has been flabbergasted by High Protection. The tariff wall around the United States is so high that the neighbours cannot even peek over. To see the United States market, a foreign manufacturer must go up in an airship. The people on Mars get a fairly good view of it—but unfortunately the transportation facilities are inadequate and Mars is probably not a manufacturing country anyway. At times there is some talk of taking a few rows of brick off the top of the wall, but it ends there.

The other day a committee of Congress started out to lower the

ET TU, BRUTE!



Bernard Partridge

John Bull.—"And this from you—after all that I and Shepherd's Bush have done for you!"—Punch.

tariff and ended up by raising it a few points. To-day, all conditions considered, it is more like a continuous row of steeples than it ever was. Theodore Roosevelt might be King of the United States if he wanted to, but it is doubtful if he could lower that tariff.

Canada is vitally concerned in the United States tariff. Canada has a lot of coal, lumber, wood-pulp, eggs, butter, cheese, barley and wheat which would find a ready market at certain points along the border-line if there were some way of scaling the cliff. Canada, therefore, is anxiously watching the progress of the Reciprocityists and Lower Tariffists. The voice of the reformer is so weak that Canada has no hope of seeing an immediate change. President Taft states that he desires to give Canada a fair deal in a Reciprocity Treaty. But

ORGANISED DESPONDENCY



The London Chronicle (Liberal) Has the other side of the Question

however pleasant Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. Fielding may have looked after last year's episode, they are likely to go into the forthcoming consultation with pockets padlocked and muscles tense. Theirs is a fifty per cent. tariff, while ours is a twenty-five, and it is hard to lay a board level on top of two posts, one of which is twice as high as the other.

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AS in the United States and Great Britain, there are two views among Canadians as to the Canadian tariff. Some think it slightly too high, some think it slightly too low. Everybody in Canada is convinced that the United States tariff is much too high; almost everyone is convinced that the British tariff is much too low. All agree that ours is pretty nearly right. The difference in opinion is a matter of small percentage. There are some theoretical free-traders, but they are not working hard at their business. The grain-growers of Saskatchewan and Alberta are talking a bit, but they will soon get over that. They are free-traders now; they will soon be moderate protectionists like the rest of us. Moderate protection seems destined for a long residence on this fast-developing portion of the North American continent.

If the United States tariff were to be battered down by a successful and hard-thinking army of consumers, the tendency to a lower tariff would grow in Canada. If Great Britain were to abandon free trade and go in for a moderate tariff the tendency to a higher tariff in this country would increase. Canada is influenced in her policy by the action of the other two English-speaking nations. When they change their policies, we will change ours. As neither seems likely to change at an early date, Canada is not confronted by any serious problem.

There is another influence which militates against a change. Canada is exceedingly prosperous and when a country is industrially, commercially and financially sound, radical changes are unlikely. Our highest tariff was introduced at a time when economic conditions were bad; almost our only modification of the tariff came when similar conditions prevailed. When Canada gets a period of hard times, the tariff will go up ten per cent. or down ten per cent., and which it will do is an even bet. Just now there are no hard times in sight, so that the betting may be deferred until Canada is at least ten years older.