

No. 7.

Sir F. Bruce to Earl Russell.—(Received October 10.)

My Lord,

Washington, September 23, 1865.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a copy of a valuable Report from Mr. Consul Wilkins on the proceedings of the Trade Convention at Detroit, and on the causes which have influenced this country in the course they have pursued with reference to the Reciprocity Treaty.

Your Lordship will see that they are mainly of a political character.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

FREDERICK W. A. BRUCE.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Consul Wilkins to Sir F. Bruce.

(Extract.)

St. Louis, September 7, 1865.

I HAVE endeavoured to ascertain the proper value to be attached to the Convention which met at Detroit in July last, and in which the deliberations regarding the Reciprocity Treaty with Canada assumed great prominence.

It has been my full intention to have reported, for your Excellency's information, the results of my observation, but I have been unable to do so because I have been disappointed in meeting those persons on whose information I thought I could rely in order to form a safe opinion.

Moreover, I had been promised copies of the proceedings of the Convention in a pamphlet form, which have not yet been issued. I therefore do not delay any longer in expressing to your Excellency my opinion that that Convention has assumed, both in the British and American press, an importance not due to it.

Your Excellency must clearly understand this last remark applies especially to those States west of Detroit, which, during the negotiations for, and ratification of the present Treaty, had little commercial influence, and whose representation in the Federal Congress was but small to what it is at present.

The present condition, therefore, of the valley of the Mississippi States is its normal condition as regards the present Treaty.

These States are composed of the cities which are the shipping points, and the agricultural districts tributary to them.

As regards either, I most confidently affirm that no opinion whatever has been formed on the merits of the question by the public.

A short time since I had a conversation with a member of Congress, and a remark which he made to me seems very pertinent, which was to this effect: "that people do not know what is good for their own interests until they have felt the want, and that it might be that the powerful interests in New York State might prevent a re-negotiation or a continuance of the Treaty, and that its abrogation would probably make the West think for themselves."

The best evidence I can give of the truth of this remark is that a member of the Chicago delegation complained to me of two things:—

1st. That he, for one, and he believed many of his colleagues, went to that Convention entirely unprepared to discuss the bearings of so important a question to the West as that presented by the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty; and,

2ndly. That if they had been prepared, no basis had been agreed upon on which the Representatives of the different sections of the country affected by the Treaty should vote. Therefore, it could scarcely be expected that national feeling should be correctly reflected by any resolutions which were then acceded to.

The Convention was originally called by the Board of Trade at Detroit, moved thereto partly, I am informed, by persons who had invested capital in Canada across the Detroit river, and who knew that the abrogation of the Treaty would affect their individual interests by probably causing the Canadian Legislature to impose a tax on the imported raw material used in the manufactories.

The mercantile and shipping interests at Buffalo and a portion of New York State believe that the existence of the Treaty is adverse to them.

Indeed, so strongly is this feeling marked, that for years past the cry of aboli-