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## THE WEEK:

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WE have more than once congratulated our readers on the fact that the main issue in the pending struggle is so largely impersonal; that the electors of Canada are called on to decide a question of politics rather than of politicians. It must be confessed, however, that if it should prove possible to connect the Liberal leaders, or any of them, with "the plan of campaign" unveiled by Sir John A. Macdonald in his speech at the Toronto Music Hall, the personal element would at once come very prominently to the front, in connection with the charge of disloyalty which has been so strenuously urged against the policy of unrestricted reciprocity, though not hitherto directly against the chief promoters of that policy. Upon this question of the complicity or otherwise of the leaders of the Opposition with Mr. Farrer's pamphlet depends the chief significance of Sir John's discovery. Without some strong reasons for suspecting that complicity it might be questioned whether it comported with the dignity of the Premier of the Dominion to devote a large portion of the speech, to which the country looked for fuller light upon the great trade question, to the task of proving the personal disloyalty of a mere journalistic writer, however clever. Be that as it may, there is certainly little room for difference of opinion as to the conclusion that was displayed. It is true that the ideas of both statesmen and people in regard to the limits of freedom of speech and of the press have been greatly enlarged within the last century or two, and he must be a strange Englishman or Canadian who does not rejoice that we live in the days of Victoria, not in those of Elizabeth. It is conceivable that a Canadian might here and there be found, though such are certainly very rare, who honestly believes that Canada would be better off in Political Union with the United States. We do not suppose that any Canadian Government would think of denying to such an one John Macdonald did not refuse permission on a certain occasion to George Francis Train to advocate annexation on Canadian soil. Wise policy as well as sound political principle recognize it as better from every point of view to grant free discussion in such cases, relying on the inherent vitality of truth and loyalty, and their ability to take care of themselves. But the course pursued by Mr. Farrer is not of this above-board kind, though we suppose it also is entitled to contemptuous toleration. When one living in a country and enjoying the protection of its

laws and the benefit of its free institutions uses his opportunities to spy out what he may regard as its weak points and actually advises a neighbouring nation to attack it at those points, it is not easy to conceive a lower depth of political baseness. Not only so but the recklessness of consequences involved in such a course is criminal. To impose a prohibitory tax upon Canadian fishing vessels, to abolish the bonding system, and to cut the connections of our railroads at the points of entrance into the United States would inevitably lead to retaliation. Retaliation would mean commercial war, and commercial war between two neighbouring peoples already mutually irritated over fishery disputes would bring very great danger of war with rifles and gunboats. One shudders at the thought of the awful consequences to which the machinations of one clever but unprincipled writer, were his influence on a par with his literary ability, might conceivably lead; to which it would, indeed, directly tend, for the idea that a people of the stock and spirit of the Canadian races could thus be forced into abject submission and a distasteful political union, is too absurd to be entertained for a moment.

BUT the question with which the people of Canada are mainly concerned at the present juncture is not that of the turpitude of Mr. Farrer's course, as boldly avowed by himself, or of the consequences which might follow, were his advice to be acted on by American politicians, nor is the public specially concerned with the question whether and to what extent the *Globe* newspaper should be held responsible for the private opinions and doings of its chief editorial writer. But all Canadians are or should be profoundly interested in the question whether Mr. Farrer's pamphlet in any way represents or reflects the opinions and policy of the leaders of one of our great political parties, or of that section of them who have adopted unrestricted reciprocity with the United States as the special ground on which they appeal for the confidence and support of the electorate. It is clear, as we have intimated, that only a strong suspicion of the complicity of Mr. Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright or other leading men in the ranks of the Opposition could account for Sir John Macdonald's elevating the words of a private journalist to a position of so much importance in a campaign speech. Some colour is certainly given to such a suspicion by the prominent place which Mr. Farrer appears to have held in the councils of the Liberal leaders and the part he has taken in what it can scarcely be amiss to regard as informal negotiations between the Canadian advocates of unrestricted reciprocity and some influential United States politicians. But, on the whole, the Canadian people will be slow to believe that the leaders of the one political party are less loyal to their own country or less sincere in advocating what they honestly believe to be for its permanent advantage, than the other. The avowals of Mr. Laurier, Sir Richard and other Liberal chiefs are explicit and unequivocal in this regard, and there is, happily, nothing in the antecedent records of any of them, so far as we are aware, at all inconsistent with unqualified belief in the sincerity of such avowals. The many readers of THE WEEK who admire Mr. Goldwin Smith's personal courage and manliness as well as his great literary talents, however they may differ from some of his political sentiments, will regret that the *Empire* should have been betrayed into an attempt to connect him, as at least one cognizant of the fact, with Mr. Farrer's production. Mr. Goldwin Smith's frank assurance to the contrary was scarcely needed, but will be accepted as the end of all controversy on that point. On the whole, then, there is every reason to believe that the exposure of Mr. Farrer's disloyalty will be remembered but as one of the painful personal incidents of the campaign, and will not materially affect the verdict of the people on the main question.

THE London *Spectator* of February 7th has an article on "Canada and the United States," which seems to be based on a singular misapprehension of the state of political parties in the Dominion. The article was written on the receipt of the news that Sir John Macdonald had dissolved Parliament and appealed to the electors on a policy embracing, amongst other friendly arrangements with the United States, a far-reaching measure of commercial

reciprocity. Thereupon the *Spectator* proceeds to say that while most Englishmen would in the last resort declare that the matter must be left to the people of the Dominion, it suspects that not a few will view this movement with dissatisfaction and uneasiness, believing that in the end it must result in the absorption of Canada in the United States. After stating various cogent reasons to show that such a result would be nothing less than a calamity, the writer turns to the prior question and asks: "Is it, however, necessary to assume that reciprocity means absorption?" The answer, supported by forcible arguments and pertinent instances, is that there is no reason to suppose such an assumption necessary, and that, indeed, "all the examples seem to point the other way." This is so far satisfactory. But what strikes the Canadian reader as extraordinary in a journal supposed to be so well informed as the *Spectator*, even in reference to Canadian politics, is that it should thus identify Sir John Macdonald's policy as the one having suspicious tendencies in the direction of annexation, entirely ignoring, seemingly, the fact that Sir John's appeal to the electorate is based directly upon the plea of loyalty to British connection, and that the very reason-for-being of this premature dissolution is that he may thereby checkmate the unrestricted reciprocity movement of the Liberal party, and that mainly on the ground of its annexationist tendencies. In short, the *Spectator* is apparently in blissful ignorance of the existence of a Canadian Opposition, with a far more advanced reciprocity policy than that of Sir John's Government, as the single plank composing its present platform. Fancy the feelings of Sir John Macdonald and his ultra-loyalist colleagues at being seriously suspected of dissolving Parliament in order to carry out a trade policy which will couple together Canada and the United States "by a bond far stronger than that which ordinarily links one independent nation with another." Is such to be the reward of loyalty? But the *Spectator* is no doubt better informed before this time, for one of the characteristics of the present struggle is that it is attracting attention to an unprecedented degree both in England and in the United States.

THOSE (Englishmen) who dread such a result (annexation) do not do so out of jealousy or dislike of the United States, nor, again, because they are influenced by a selfish feeling that Canada, if she remains attached to England, may prove useful. Their feeling is influenced by a very different set of motives. They see that Canada is developing a worthy type of nationhood and they believe that the destruction of the Dominion as a separate political entity might deprive the English-speaking world of a community which in the future may prove capable of affording valuable political lessons.

These words of the *Spectator* will find a response in the breasts of all true Canadians of both political parties. It is because they aspire to a distinct national life, and because they feel conscious of having already made some progress towards a "worthy type of nationhood," a type different in many respects from that of the Mother Country as well as from that of the great Republic, that they are resolved to cherish their autonomy against all influences and all comers. That in so doing they have difficulties many and serious to face, difficulties internal and external, difficulties racial, financial and geographical, they know but too well, but they know too that in the force of character, capacity for hard work and independence of spirit, which their environment in the "Scotland" of the new world is so well adapted to foster they have the potency and pledge of ultimate success. The policy of restricted reciprocity advocated by the Government and that of unrestricted reciprocity advocated by the Opposition are alike admissions that the prosperity of the Dominion is to a less or greater degree dependent upon the freedom of its commercial intercourse with the great nation to the south. This admission frankly made is not a confession of weakness. It is but the recognition of a natural law in the domain of trade. The same thing is true, in greater or less degree, of every nation. When the reciprocity sought is asked for, not as a favour but as a matter of business, and in return for a fair equivalent, there is no humiliation in the asking. Any proposal to make a surrender of national self-government, or national aspirations, a condition in a mere trade arrangement would be resented as an insult by every Canadian of