

in opposition shrewd or bold enough to fire the fuse. "Commercial union" was taken up as a rallying cry, and advocated with a good deal of persistency and ingenuity on both sides of the border, only to be cast aside as a half-way measure when annexation was the logical outcome and was as easy to be obtained as the other. I do not wish to be misunderstood. The Liberal party, as a party, or through its responsible leaders, did not advocate annexation, but Liberals were in favor of Free Trade, Reciprocity, Commercial Union, Annexation; party men, from the present Premier to Prof. Goldwin Smith, running the scale.

Had the Conservatives relinquished power at that time, the relations between the mother-country and her American colony might have been to-day entirely different from what they are. Events in the United States during the past few years have made Canadians—whether of Quebec or Ontario or the West, Liberals or Conservatives—regard annexation from another standpoint. At one time there was a glamour about annexation; and it looked like a short cut to prosperity. Now it has been stripped of its artificial coloring, and appears to be a thing to be avoided rather than embraced. There are, of course, some irreconcilables (Prof. Goldwin Smith, I believe, is one); but the bulk of the Annexationists of a few years ago are to-day perfectly content to forget that they figured as such.

But, while the Annexationists have dropped that cry, they still believe in the virtue of Reciprocity; and, so long as the United States offers a market for Canadian labor, there will always be a political agitation in favor of closer commercial relations between the two countries. Thousands—perhaps hundreds of thousands—of French Canadians have emigrated from the Dominion, and taken up their residence in the mill-towns of New England. Lowell, Lawrence, Nashua, in fact all the manufacturing towns of the Merrimac Valley, are thickly populated with French Canadians. Dr. Joseph Nimmo, formerly Chief of the United States Bureau of Statistics, testifying before a Senate committee in 1890, quoted Sir Richard Cartwright as having declared, in the Dominion Parliament in 1888, that there were then about 1,000,000 persons of Canadian birth residing in the United States, and that, during a period of twenty years, three-fourths of the foreign immigrants into Canada, or nearly 400,000, had crossed the line and settled in the United States. While I believe these figures to be exaggerated, the French-Canadian population of the mill-towns of New England is undeniably very large.