

The Advocate.

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HEAD OFFICES

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THAT FRENCH TREATY.

The French Treaty has been ratified, and by no less a majority than 79. Mr. Laurier and nearly the whole phalanx of French Canadians in the House voted with the majority. On the part of this country the following concessions are made: First, the *ad valorem* duty of 30 per cent. on sparkling and non-sparkling wines is abolished. Second, the duty on common and castle soap is reduced one-half, and, third, the duty on nuts, almonds, prunes and plums is reduced one-third. These concessions still involve a loss of revenue amounting to \$800,000 direct on the basis of importations from France in 1892. The article of the treaty relating to the concessions to Canada is as follows:

The following articles of Canadian origin imported direct from that country accompanied by certificates of origin shall receive the advantage of the minimum tariff on entering France, Algeria or the French colonies:

Canned meats.
Condensed milk, pure.
Fresh water fish, eels.
Fish preserved in their natural form.
Lobsters and crayfish preserved in their natural form.
Apples and pears, fresh, dried or pressed.
Fruits preserved, others.
Building timber in rough or sawn.
Wood pavement.
Staves.
Wood pulp (cellulose).
Extracts of chestnut and other tanning extracts.
Common paper, machine made.
Prepared skins, others, whole.
Boots and shoes.
Furniture of common wood.
Furniture other than chairs, of solid wood, common.
Flooring in pine or soft wood.
Wooden sea-going ships.
It is understood that the advantage of any reduction of duty granted to any power on any of the articles enumerated above shall be extended fully to Canada.

Sir Charles Tupper, who negotiated the treaty and went so far as almost to pledge its ratification by his government, in a letter urging its adoption states that an explicit declaration has been obtained from the French Department of Commerce that all classes of canned fish shall enter France at the minimum tariff. He also expresses the opinion that the lumber schedule will be of great advantage to Canada and that it will be possible to do a large trade in lumber with France. Sir

Charles may be right and we trust that he will prove so, but we fail to see why our wine-producing industry should be exempted from the advantages conferred by the National Policy and should be deliberately sacrificed to the interests of a foreign country.

PROHIBITION AND THE REVENUE.

Two or three times in recent years promoters or finance ministers of Canada have made deliveries on the question of Prohibition. They have sometimes referred to the revenue as one of the matters to be dealt with as a consequence of Prohibitory legislation, but in no case has a minister urged the necessity of the revenue as a reason why the liquor traffic should not be suppressed. On the contrary the ministerial view, as expressed to delegations and in parliament, has usually been to the effect that if the enactment of a law would result in the suppression of the liquor traffic, the revenue would be easily made right. No other position then than this is possible for a reasonable man. For the revenue derived from the liquor traffic is only a small part of what the consumer pays for drink. The people who drink could much better afford to pay their nine millions of taxes on twenty or thirty millions worth of merchandise than on liquor costing them that much. In both cases they pay the nine millions to the revenue and other millions to the trader, but in the one case they would have the merchandise and be so much better off.—*N. John, N.B., Sun.*

Our contemporary talks very glibly about the revenue being easily made right. Perhaps if a fourth of its own revenue were cut off it could easily make it right, but how, if the remainder of its property were greatly reduced in value, and its remaining sources of revenue materially reduced, at the same time, would it then be easy to make its income right? We are disposed to think our worthy but inconsistent contemporary would find the task excessively difficult and discouraging. And that is the condition into which this country would be plunged by Prohibition. Not only would there be a grave loss to the revenue, but expenditures would have to be increased for police purposes, a hundred and fifty million dollars' worth of property would be thrown upon the market, a hundred thousand people would be pitched out of employment, the demand for barley and hops would almost disappear, the price of other cereals, now about as low as the cost of production will allow, would take a further drop consequent upon the decline in the local demand, and there would be a decline of values all round, to say nothing of the tens of thousands of families that would be thrown upon the world.

After all these sacrifices had been made Prohibition would not prohibit. This much the *Sun* admits when it tells the Rev. E. J. Grant, chairman of the temperance committee of the Southern New Brunswick Baptist Association, that, living in a Scott Act county, he "has learned that a good deal more than legislation and machinery is needed to make a Prohibitory law equivalent to the suppression of the liquor traffic." Still fur-

ther does our contemporary admit that Prohibition is impracticable when it says later on in its article: "But those who have observed the condition of affairs in the Scott Act counties will probably say that the failure to enforce, so far as there is failure, is not so much due to the limited area under the law as to the character, sentiment and conduct of the people within that area." That is the point, Prohibition is impossible because of "the character, sentiment and conduct of the people." If the *Sun* had added "reason" to the other attributes of the people its argument against Prohibition would have been complete.

Our contemporary also says "the people who drink could much better afford to pay their nine millions of taxes on twenty or thirty millions worth of merchandise than on liquor costing them that much." That is a statement extremely easy to make, but terribly difficult to prove. Many people kick and vigorously now at the payment of duties, and the Lord only knows what they would do at the clapping on with increased depression of another twenty-five per cent. all round, especially as many of the many who complain the loudest of the burden of taxation are of the very class that shout and shout after the manner of the St. John *Sun*.

THE INTER-COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

We must confess to a certain amount of scepticism regarding any ultimate benefit that will be derived from the much-made-of inter-colonial conference at Ottawa. However, it has been held and the various delegates have gone their different ways. It is not that we feel any doubt as to the good intentions of the colonies represented, but we have the gravest doubt as to the attitude of the mother country on the all-important trade question. British statesmen far reticent when they formed a customs union with every member of the empire. They point to the fact that their outside trade is larger than their inside imperial trade. That may all be, but it is hard to see why outside parties should be aggrieved at an internal family arrangement for commercial reciprocity. No foreign country that has not now a protective tariff against British products would be materially affected thereby. But the old lady is notoriously conservative in trade matters, and therefore it is hardly possible that the following resolution, which embodies the most important conclusion arrived at by the conference, will have any weighty influence upon her policy:

"Whereas, the stability and progress of the British Empire can be best assured by drawing continually closer the bonds that unite the colonies with the Mother Country and by the continuous growth of a practical sympathy and co-operation in all that pertains to the common welfare.

"And whereas, this co-operation and unity can in no way be more effectually promoted than by the cultivation and extension of the mutual and profitable interchange of their products;

"Therefore resolved, That this Conference records its belief in the advan-

ce of Customs arrangement between Great Britain and her colonies by which trade within the Empire may be placed on a more favorable footing than that which is carried on with foreign countries;

"Further resolved, that for the purposes of this resolution the South African Customs Union be considered as part of the territory capable of being brought within the scope of the contemplated trade arrangements."

THE CUP THAT CHEERS, ETC.

WHILE our Prohibition friends shrink at the mere thought of people being allowed to slake their thirst with whiskey and water or a glass of beer, they have never a word to say against the vile compounds that are frequently imported under the name of tea and sold at any where between 25c. and 50c. per pound. The worst kind of trash could formerly be imported under the style of tea, and as long as the chest in which it was enclosed was covered with characters that no decent man could understand, it went into consumption. If a man drinks ever so little, according to our Prohibition friends, he hastens his death. How many women do they think have been helped to their tombs by drinking cheap and inferior tea? Did they ever stop to consider? Or, stopping to consider, did they ever take the trouble to find out? Yes the other day in the Imperial House of Commons it was openly charged, and not denied, that excessive tea drinking brought in its train disease, despondency and idiosyncrasy. But it can hardly be thought strange that no denial was forthcoming when an insight is had into the abominable compounds with which the cheaper kinds of tea are adulterated.

An incident recently occurred in the New South Wales Parliament that is worth recording in this connection. One of the members, a Mr. Neill, "drew from his pocket a sample of tea, and handed the same to Sir George Dibbs for the edification of the authorities." Ten days later the Premier assured the Assembly upon the authority of the Government analyst, that the tea contained "distinct traces of lead and antimony, to say nothing of wooden chips and shavings, and was, in fact, quite unfit for consumption."

The sample, it appears, came from a bulk shipment of nearly a thousand chests, most of which had found its way into the "festive teapot" before the parliamentary exposure. The lead discovered by the analyst has been described by a Sydney merchant as "coloring matter," and he says that if you picked out from the tea a piece of stalk you could write your name with it, almost as though you had a blacklead pencil in your hand. It seems that the common plan of coloring on the plantations is to "involve an infusion of lampblack into the leaves, or else churn the leaves along with lumps of blacklead in a revolving barrel." A great deal of this mixture is, it is said, landed in Sydney every year.

If landed in Sydney, why not in Canada? There is no earthly reason why dishonest Chinese merchants should have