

# A CANADIAN VIEW OF BRITAIN'S TARIFF

By W. FRANK HATHAWAY

**G**REAT BRITAIN'S tariff, and its effect upon British colonies, is ever a puzzle to the Canadian mind.

The total revenue of the United Kingdom in 1901-2 was £143,000,000:

Estate Duties, Stamps, Property and Income Tax returned .....	£57,400,000
Excise.....	31,598,000
Customs .....	31,046,869
Sundries .....	23,000,000
	<hr/>
	£143,044,869

Of this sum (Customs duties, 1901) per Statistical Abstract No. 39, we subjoin the following:

Cocoa, raw, 42,320,724 lbs. at 1d. per lb.	£ 176,366
Cocoa or Chocolate Prepared, 7,561,630 lbs. at 2d. per lb. ....	63,013
Coffee, raw, 283,606 cwt. at 14s. per cwt.	174,342
Tea, 255,824,617 lbs. at 6d. ....	5,793,000
Tobacco and Cigars, 78,400,000 lbs. at 3s. to 5s. 6d. per lb.....	10,567,705
Wines, 15,202,369 gals. at 1s. 3d. to 3s. per gal., and in bottles at 4s. to 6s. per gal.....	1,449,687
	<hr/>
	£18,224,083

Above quantities were for home consumption. A total duty, in 1901, of £18,224,083 on these five articles, whereas no duty was levied on meats, wool, butter, cheese, flour, and wheat.

Considering these taxed commodities, ad seriatim, one asks, Why impose such a light tax on cocoa? It is not consumed specially by the working classes, but rather by the middle and upper classes. Would it not be wiser to impose a duty of 6d. on cocoa, giving the colonies a 50 per cent. preference?

Trinidad, Jamaica, Guiana, Ceylon, and the Gold Coast, which export now over 42,000,000 lbs. of cocoa, would then have a distinct advantage in United Kingdom markets over cocoa imported from foreign nations.

Coffee, the drink of the well-to-do, is taxed one-fourth the rate on tea. Why

should it not pay the same duty as tea—6d. a lb.?

On what ground can any economist defend 1½d. per pound on coffee and 6d. a lb. on tea? If any difference, should not coffee and cocoa be 6d. a lb., and tea 1½d.?

India, Ceylon, and West Indies now export 369,145 cwt. of coffee. Would not a duty of 6d. a lb., with a preference to the colonies of 50 per cent., assist those colonies and divert trade from Brazil and other foreign countries? The duty on coffee and cocoa are alike to foreign nation or friendly colony. Portuguese and Germans in South America are on the same level as the British-bred whites of Jamaica, Guiana, Ceylon, and India. Is it any wonder that the colonies murmur?

*Tea.*—It is incomprehensible why the masses of Great Britain still permit this duty. When the housewife begins to realize that she pays yearly, on account of the duty, an additional \$8 to \$9 for tea, it may cause a change of heart towards the political party that makes the breakfast table pay this annual £5,800,000.

Suppose a duty of 1d. a lb. were placed on butter; the United Kingdom imported in 1901, for home consumption, 409,000,000 lbs. at 1d. a lb.—£1,708,000 duty. Abolish the duty on tea of £5,800,000. What would be the result? Every average family would save £1 12s. 6d. a year in duty paid on tea, and in place thereof would have to pay 12s. 6d. yearly in higher prices for the 150 lbs. of butter yearly consumed.

What would happen if a 50 per cent. preference were given to colonial butter, that is, colonial butter would pay ½d. and foreign butter 1d. The price of butter would advance to a point fixed by the ability of the colonial consumer to get an advance, borne down by a desire of the foreign producer to retain the United Kingdom market. That point would be mid-way between a ½d. and