

RECIPROCITY

Would It be a Good Thing for the Country as a Whole—for the Farmer in Particular?

A Discussion of the Question by

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Let us have a friendly talk about it.

There are three aspects of this question, the constitutional, the economic, the national.

The constitutional aspect refers to the right of the government to force the whole country to accept a reciprocity agreement made by two ministers of the crown without any mandate from the people.

We won't talk about this, although we all would likely admit that such a course is not giving the people a square deal.

The economic aspect of the question will interest us more. This includes the financial side, and you and I are always interested in dollars and cents.

This is the aspect of the question which I want to talk with you about principally.

Yet, to me, the national aspect of the question is more serious than the other two, for even if it could be shown that reciprocity might help us a little just now, but at the risk of later severing our connection with the British Empire, most of us would not want it.

But I may have something to say later about the national aspect.

We will first consider the economic side, and if after such consideration we conclude that reciprocity, as now proposed, will not help us economically from the dollars and cents standpoint, we will not need to consider whether it will hurt us nationally, because we will not want it.

Should not Judge the Future by the Past.

And in deciding whether we want reciprocity now, we must not judge the future by the past. Some people do this.

They would hark back to the former days of 1854 or 1856, and say reciprocity was a good thing for Canada then, therefore it must be a good thing for Canada now.

But not so. At least, not necessarily so.

I believe that reciprocity was a good thing for Canada then, but to assume that it would be a good thing for Canada now is to assume that the conditions now are the same as they were then.