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COMMERCIAL UNION.

HAVING stated the general principles which seem to make a Commercial Union extending over the continent natural and desirable, it remains to deal with some of the objections which have been taken to this policy. They may be summarised briefly as follows. First—It will lead to Annexation or political union. Second—It will be injurious to the manufacturing industries of Canada. Third—It is impracticable; inasmuch as it is impossible to frame a common tariff satisfactory to both countries; and if this were done in the first instance how is this common tariff to be changed from time to time to suit the exigencies of either country? Fourth—It will tend to separate Canada from her connexion with the Empire. These are the chief objections urged against the scheme so far as I have heard them, and it is proposed to deal with each.

First—It will lead to Annexation. This must be considered from two standpoints—that of those who are rigidly opposed to political union with the United States, and those who are not. Belonging to the latter class, and believing firmly that the interests of the Dominion of Canada are more identified with the continent of America than with any portion of the world, this bugbear has no terrors for me; nor would I, and many others who believe with me, resist Commercial Union, if satisfied that the material prosperity of the country were bound up in it, for mere sentimental considerations. But it is for the benefit of those who, for some reasons which are not very clearly defined, have an instinctive horror of political union with their English-speaking brethren on this continent, that the objection is now to be considered.

The onus is upon those making this objection to establish their point. It is sufficient in answer merely to deny the fact and call for the proof. The facts of history are against any such theory. The period when the Annexation sentiment was strongest in Canada was just preceding the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. The advantages of trade with the United States were then deeply felt by the masses of our people, and large numbers at that time believed that the only way to master the evils under which we were then labouring was to seek union with the States. The public men of the Upper Provinces joined in a movement in this direction, and Annexation was a more vital question in old Canada than in the Maritime Provinces. But the Treaty of 1854 put an end to this feeling. As soon as our people secured the advantages of free access to the American markets for their staple products content followed, and all mention of Annexation ceased. The Treaty terminated in 1866. The next year the Dominion was created, and a noble effort has been made by our people to substitute a national life, or policy, in place of American trade. If the conditions were favourable the struggle would be worthy of our best endeavours. But I aimed to show in the former article that it could not be done, the geographical difficulties are overwhelming and permanent. And to-day we find arising in the several sections of this Dominion the same feeling of discontent, and the people seeking the same natural remedy—trade with the United States. It is fair and reasonable to conclude that the advent of a policy of unrestricted trade with the United States would put an end to this discontent, and allay any growing tendency to seek relief

by political union with our great neighbour. But it is not necessary to be sophisticated on this point. A ready and conclusive answer to those who croak of Annexation is at hand. The question comes right down to this: Are the Canadian people afraid of themselves? None of us have much fear of conquest, or a forced union with the United States; therefore, if Canada ever becomes a part of the American Union it will be because a majority of the Canadian people want it. When that period arrives what is to be done? Shall not the will of the majority prevail? With or without Commercial Union, Annexation will never take place unless a majority of Canadians want it and vote for it. What, then, need we fear? Is it said that Commercial Union will hasten the desire in this direction? Why? Only in one way—by making the advantages more apparent. Would this be a disaster? Let us all console ourselves by this thought, in this and in all other important matters connected with our destinies,—the will of the Canadian people will be supreme. If now and evermore the great mass of people are inexorably hostile to political union with the States, then they have nothing to fear, either under Commercial Union or without it. If, on the other hand, it is a good thing, and would tend to advance our interests, then the sooner it comes the better. Let us not be afraid of ourselves.

Second—It will injure the young manufacturing industries of Canada. If this objection is well founded it is a disagreeable confession. It either means that our manufactures are of mushroom growth, and highly artificial, or that we are not equal to our confrères in this important field of labour. I reject both theories. Some industries have been forced into an unnatural existence by means of an unsound trade policy. The collapse of these will not be a national calamity. But there are industries in Canada which are able to compete with the continent, and which would be vastly strengthened and enlarged by opening to them the markets of sixty millions of people. The effect of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 was not to depress the manufacturing industries of Canada, nor has any one a right to presume that unrestricted trade with the continent would have any such effect. However, it may be admitted that the immediate effect of Commercial Union will be to injure some few of the manufacturing industries of Canada, but the other side of the case must also be considered. Manufactures ultimately adjust themselves according to facilities, and no one can doubt that Canada offers facilities which will attract to this country American capital and American enterprise the instant that an enlarged market is assured. Take the iron industry of Nova Scotia. From Pennsylvania to the North Pole, so far as we know at present, the condition of coal and iron lying side by side does not exist in America, save in Nova Scotia. For years past the National Policy has done its best to foster the iron industry in Nova Scotia. Large duties have been imposed upon imported iron. Then came a bounty of \$1.50 per ton on pig. Then special rates over the Intercolonial Railway for coal and coke. Yet with all this nursing the Londonderry Iron Works of Nova Scotia have never thrived, and the Steel Company of Canada is now in liquidation. But who doubts for a moment that in the day that the markets of the whole continent are thrown open large iron works will spring up by the agency of American capital in the counties of Pictou and Cape Breton, where coke can be obtained at the very works themselves at \$1.50 or \$2 per ton? This only serves as an illustration of many other industries which would boom at once as soon as a natural and unlimited market was available. But it must not be forgotten that while manufactures are an exceedingly important factor in the national prosperity they must not be allowed to overshadow all other interests. It would not be wise to sacrifice all other industries for the sole benefit of a handful of manufacturers. Is it nothing that Commercial Union will double the profits of the farmer, who represents nearly fifty per cent. of the entire population? Are we not to regard the interests of the lumberman, the fisherman, the shipbuilder, the miner? Are we to ignore forever all the inexorable laws of trade? Must everything give way to play the game of the petted manufacturer? Surely every reasonable person will answer, No! But we have yet to find any man in Canada who has addressed himself to the task of proving that in the aggregate the manufacturing class in this country would suffer by having opened to them in a day the markets of the greatest industrial and consuming nation in the world.

The other objections must be considered in another article.

J. W. LONGLEY.