

to the people not possessing fiscal freedom and constitutional self-government. Both came after 1841, but unfortunately with them came a sudden and most disastrous blow, the destruction of Great Britain's protective tariff, and the total change in its entire colonial policy of preferential trade and political control. The thunder-bolt fell in 1846, after certain low mutterings which gave a premonition of coming disaster, and the North American Colonies were practically thrown upon their backs.

Fortunately, the Union of Upper and Lower Canada had been effected in 1841, and they at least were in a better position to withstand the shock. But still, business was totally disorganised, prices fell, failures were frequent, an incomplete banking system caused trouble, while the discontent which had smouldered since the Rebellion of 1837 found fresh vent, this time in an avowedly American direction. The abolition of the Corn-Laws was not, of course, effected without protest from Canada. Plain speaking seems to have been the style at this time, for we find Earl Cathcart, Governor-General of Canada (Ontario and Quebec) addressing a despatch (Jan. 28, 1846) to the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which he referred to the probable transfer of the trade of Montreal to New York, possible Colonial alienation from the Mother-Country, and "annexation to our rival and enemy, the United States." The Legislative Assembly followed this up with an Address to the Queen on May 12th of the same year, in which it spoke with a plainness of language bordering upon hostility:

"It is much to be feared that should the inhabitants of Canada from the withdrawal of all protection to their staple products, find that they cannot compete with their neighbors of the United States in the only market open to them, they will naturally, of necessity, begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be of that paramount advantage which they have hitherto found it to be."

This was not very loyal, but it must be regarded as the product of a momentary dread of a great catastrophe which seemed to be hanging over the country. It turned out indeed to be sufficiently injurious, but it also proved to be the commencement of an entirely new era—a period of slow but steady progress, pre-

ceded by a few years of disaster and energetic efforts at recovery. No practical attention had been paid to the protests and in 1849 the Navigation Canadian Laws were also repealed. During these years of change in the Old Land, Canadian duties remained pretty much the same, the average being 10½ per cent., and the free imports into the country forming only 2½ per cent. of the total. For the eight years from 1841 to 1849 the imports of Canada—the two Provinces—amounted to \$117,715,000, and the total duty collected to \$14,040,000. But these importations, small as they may seem to the Canadian of to-day, were too large for the business and population of that time, and undoubtedly helped to swell the troubles of the country.

And the climax came when the famous Annexation manifesto of 1849 was signed and issued in Montreal. It described the position of the provinces in the blackest, and of course, most unfair terms, yet with just that substratum of truth which makes adequate denial extremely difficult. The Secretaries of the Association were men who lived to sincerely regret their youthful folly, and to repent the disgrace incurred—Robt. Mackay and A. A. Dorion—and the signers included some men since eminent in good and loyal service to their country. The statements were drastic enough to please the most confirmed pessimist. Said the address:

"The reversal of the ancient policy of Great Britain, whereby she withdrew from the Colonies their wanted protection in her markets, has produced the most disastrous effects upon Canada. In surveying the actual condition of the country what but ruin and decay meets the eye? Our Provincial Governments and Civil Corporations embarrassed! our banking and other securities greatly depreciated! our mercantile and agricultural interests alike unprosperous! real estate scarcely saleable upon any terms! our unrivalled lakes, rivers and canals almost unused! whilst commerce abandons our shores. \* \* \* Crippled therefore and checked in the full career of public and private enterprise, this possession of the British Crown—our Country—stands before the world in humiliating contrast with its immediate neighbours, exhibiting every symptom of a nation fast sinking to decay."

Jacob De Witt, M. P. P., in seconding one of the resolutions at the meeting