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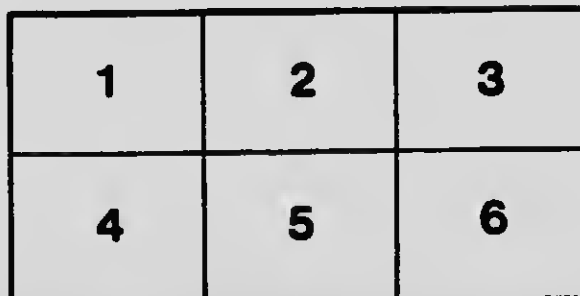
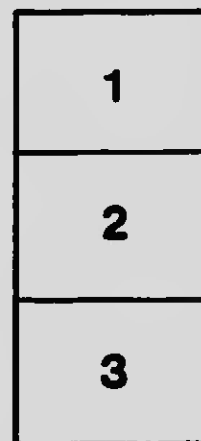
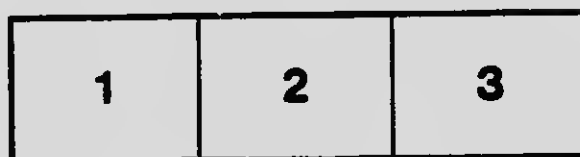
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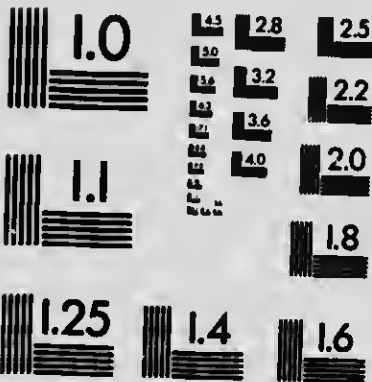
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# British Columbia Legislature

## OPPOSED TO

# Reciprocity with United States

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SPEECH OF  
HON. RICHARD McBRIDE  
PREMIER OF THE THE PROVINCE

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In the British Columbia Legislature on February 15th, 1911, the following resolution, opposing Reciprocity with the United States, was moved by Mr. Hayward (Cowichan), seconded by Mr. Shatford (Similkameen), and carried on a division by 34 to 1:

"Whereas a provisional agreement has been arrived at between Canada and the United States, having in view reductions in the tariff on certain commodities and the free exchange of others;

"And whereas the proposed tariff readjustment will be highly detrimental to the agricultural interests, by the flooding of the Canadian markets with American-grown produce of all kinds;

"And whereas the arrangement will enure to the disadvantage of British Columbia in several important respects, without any compensating advantages in other respects:

"Therefore, be it Resolved, That a respectful Address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, praying that he will be pleased to move His Excellency the Governor-General to take into his serious consideration the effects of such proposed changes in the tariff, and that His Honour be requested to telegraph the contents of this resolution to His Excellency."

The Premier, Hon. Richard McBride, in supporting the resolution, said:

I have undertaken to address a few remarks on the resolution now before the house, and I wish to do so in an entirely non-political way. Lately the press of Canada, both Liberal and Conservative, has given great prominence to this question, and while the press in support of the Conservative party has been almost as one voice in its disapproval of this policy, I am enabled to say that the Liberal press, too, as represented by some of the most prominent Liberal journals in Canada, does not hesitate to express views strongly in opposition to those underlying this bargain made by representatives of the Laurier administration. When we consider that both sides of parliament for years past have strongly endorsed the policy of protection, this is not to be at all wondered at. The Liberals, who for fifteen years have been in charge of the affairs of government, have been as strong in their views as to the benefits of a protective policy as were Conservatives before them, and one might say after a critical analysis that the differences of the parties in this respect are sentimental. Both are now protective; neither is for free trade. So when one considers it from this viewpoint, although I have the honor to lead the Conservative party in British Columbia, the question may be broached in a non-political way.

#### What is Best for B. C.

In the first place I should like to say a word or two in reply to my friend who represents the Liberal party in this house. I followed his very able presentation as carefully as I could, and it seemed to me to be an instance in which an affiliation with the Dominion Government at Ottawa has somewhat impaired his judgment as to what is best for the people of Canada and those of British Columbia more particularly. No doubt the incidents that have happened to the party to which the member for

Alberni belongs within the last two sessions have given him prominence in his party and he felt in duty bound to commend instead of deprecate. I must compliment him on the argument he advanced the other day. I think the Liberals of British Columbia will feel, after that speech, that although the late or rather present titular leader of the party has no place on the floor of this house, in the member for Alberni the Liberal party has a very resourceful and a very apt spokesman. My friend in the first place cannot have failed to note in the press of the Province the almost unanimous voice that has gone out in protest against the Fielding reciprocity bargain. I take it he followed very closely the attitude of the interior as well as the coast press on this question; and in fairness to all interests he must have recognized that there is a feeling of great dissatisfaction throughout the Province of British Columbia. Of course, he undertook to tell the house that there was not much importance to be attached to a matter of that kind, but we have enjoyed so much experience of the work performed for the Province by the various mercantile associations and boards of trade that we must credit them as being bodies of men very useful to the public at large. At times, of course, one may conclude that the pressure brought to bear by them is unwarranted. At the same time we must recognize that these are active, live men of experience and substance who know whereof they speak. The representations of these bodies and all the press prominence given to the subject must have impressed my friend from Alberni with the fact that the people of British Columbia are far from agreeing with his friends in Ottawa, and I am sure that if my friend had risen above party feeling and stated his own convictions in regard to this agreement, the Liberal party in the Province might have been strengthened instead of weakened.

### Changed Conditions.

The Premier continued that it was true that in the tariff of 1879 there was a standing offer for reciprocity, but it must be admitted that conditions in Canada had changed greatly in thirty-two years. The population of the Dominion of Canada in those days was in the neighborhood of four millions. Canada was now understood to have a population of eight millions. Manufactures then were in the neighborhood of \$309,700,000; today they were in the neighborhood of or exceeded \$500,000,000. Here and there were statistics which gave striking evidence of the different conditions in Canada today as compared with those of thirty years ago, our export trade in home products, for example, having mounted from \$60,089,000 in 1870, to \$270,247,000 in 1910, as we became comparatively independent of the United States and found other markets. The member for Alberni was very emphatic in stating that at Ottawa when this agreement was concluded there was scarcely any division of opinion and no criticism from the Conservative side of the house. He (the Premier) had been looking over Mr. Borden's speech and if his friend would consult Hansard he would find that in very pronounced words the Conservative leader had joined issue with the Government on this question, saying that "the negotiations are in short a sequel to the surrender the Government made last year." His honorable friend, who came from a farming constituency, had said that one of the benefits to be derived from this treaty would be cheaper farm machinery, but the decrease granted was not of much moment. It was so small that it would be of little or no consequence. While this provision had been made, all knew what reckless provision had been made at the same time with regard to the free importation of farm animals, produce and fruit.

### No Need for Agreement

There was no need for this change in the tariff. Canada was never more prosperous than at present, and it could not be argued that because of hardships in commercial life, this treaty was necessary. So one could start with the premise that there was no desire in Canada for such a treaty. From what source then did it come? It came from Washington, the stronger party to this bargain. He ventured to say that had the stronger movement come from the Dominion of Canada it would have met with a different reception in the United States. All knew that in the past the Americans had had a larger voice in these matters than we had, and no treaty would have been made unless the people to the south could get advantage out of it. Canada had built up a trade of enormous proportions under protection. In 1879 her total trade amounted to \$153,455,602, while in 1910 it had grown to \$603,211,221, an increase of nearly five hundred per cent., which spoke marvels for the development of Canada. Within the past year or two the trade of British Columbia had increased in like proportion. In 1909 the total trade of the Province in exports and imports was \$43,139,080, and in 1910, \$52,978,439, certainly a most gratifying result, and one that reflected as much credit on British Columbia as it did on the whole of the Dominion. In 1910 the value of agricultural products in British Columbia was \$11,835,253, and in the same year there were imported agricultural products to the value of \$13,646,904. This showed very clearly the great necessity for more agricultural development in the Province, a policy to which this Government was strongly committed. But there was hardly much encouragement for the Government of British Columbia to persevere in its efforts to develop agriculture at home when they found those efforts destroyed by a trade bargain, many of the pro-

visions of which he was sure had not been given the consideration to which they were decently entitled.

#### Britain as Customer

Down to 1910 Great Britain was easily the best customer of Canada. She took from Canada home products valued at \$139,482,000, or fifty per cent. of the home products exported. In the same year the United States took home products valued at \$104,199,000, or only 37.3 of the home products exported. The house could see from these statistics that from a business point of view, Great Britain was by far the best customer we had.

This led him to another and very serious consideration with respect to the result of this bargain. Was it not a fair argument to say that the direct effect on our trade would be its dislocation, and hereafter instead of business coming west or going east, it would be a matter of business transactions between north and south? He did not think there could be any question that this dislocation would make for great loss of trade and traffic in the country. Canada had given very generous assistance toward building the C. P. R., and since then had entered into another generous bargain with the G. T. P. to build up the trade east and west, and substantial assistance had also been given to the Canadian Northern and the Canadian Northern Pacific for the same laudable purpose. It seemed to him that the dislocation of trade which must be expected would have a very serious effect on the efficiency of these roads as great arterial highways, where the industry and trade of the country had an opportunity to grow stronger and greater. While some of these things concerning which he expressed alarm might not come to fruition, at the same time the persons responsible had not given due considera-

tion to what effect their bargain might have on Canadian transcontinental trade.

#### A Grave Possibility

"When we have lived under these conditions for a few years," said the Premier, "the American people may come to the opinion that the bargain should be cancelled, and in what position will Canada then find herself? She may have been compelled, perhaps, in the meantime, to find new markets, and to direct a great deal of transportation to the south of the line, and she will find herself face to face with a situation that will cause general disruption in the business of the nation from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean.

#### Unfair Advantage to U. S.

We know how powerful the congress of the United States is, and how swift to act if it is felt at any time that the commercial interests of the country are being prejudicially affected, and if it did occur to them that commercial conditions would warrant the recall of this bargain, it would be a very serious thing for the whole Dominion.

Coming back for a moment, the Premier pointed out that the United States sends us \$223,000,000 out of our \$276,000,000 of imports, and the hope is expressed by President Taft that this agreement will give them even greater control of our markets. The house takes it for granted that before President Taft would make an official utterance of this kind, he would give the matter most careful supervision. The Premier also quoted from a prominent Liberal paper in Ottawa, the Ottawa Free Press, which said that unless the Dominion Government is prepared immediately to increase the British preference, the situation is a grave one, and in its opinion a reduction of British preference should precede, and not follow, an agreement with United States.



### Fruit Growing Industry

The Premier next directed his attention to the effect of the agreement on the fruit growing industry of British Columbia. He said there could be no doubt that a great deal of the attention British Columbia had attracted abroad had been in consequence of the wonderful development of fruit growing in this Province. He recalled how the late Captain Tatlow had spoken of British Columbia as "the orchard of the Empire," when speaking of the record the Province had first made in competition in fruit growing with other sections of the Empire. The value of the British Columbia fruit crop in 1910 was \$2,500,000, and yet the people were told it was a mere bagatelle compared with what it would be in another three or four years, when thousands and thousands of acres recently planted would be coming into bearing. If they took the fruit growers at their word, and they must do so, and agreed that their work would be greatly hampered by this agreement, how much greater would be the mischief wrought against them when their business approached the condition just outlined? It was well known that persons in control of fruit lands in British Columbia might go abroad and secure ample funds for their development, so strong was their faith in fruit growing, but how shaken this faith would be when the protection which had helped to bring the industry to its present state was taken away. This agreement would bring the Provincial fruit growers into competition with Washington, Oregon and California all older communities, where there were easier conditions for development, where labor was more plentiful, and transportation cheaper. In this Province we had not yet come to full manhood in fruit growing. We were, indeed, in our earliest infancy in this respect.

The Province was not provincial in its attitude on this question. They

had the sympathy of the fruit growers of Eastern Canada, as represented by the convention of Niagara district growers, which met at St. Catharines on January 28th, and passed a strong resolution against the adoption of the agreement.

### How It Affects Lumber

The Premier then turned his attention to the lumber trade. He found that already lumber men in the interior had spoken, but he found that some representative lumbermen on the coast had been unable to see eye to eye with the men from the interior. If one considered for a moment the enormous increase in value that had come to the coast lumbermen within the past few years in connection with their holdings, it was hard to understand how any trade agreement could be entered into that would make them still wealthier. While he had nothing to say in connection with those values they had accumulated within the past few years, figures would show that the largest holdings of timber on the continent were in British Columbia, so there was reason why the values should have advanced, though those in the interior might not have increased as much as those in the coast. The mountain lumbermen met at Nelson on January 30th and passed a resolution strongly condemning reciprocity, not only as far as lumber was concerned, but with regard to all commodities, especially fruit and farm produce. With her strong position as a great lumbering centre British Columbia should have been left severely alone in this regard.

### Fish

His friend from Alberni had referred to the benefit the fishing industry would receive from this agreement. Well, he knew that some of the resources in the United States had become depleted and their fisheries would not meet the demand so that they had some interest in coming to secure a supply in Canadian

waters; but the Premier held that if there was any further demand for the development of our fisheries, as Canadians we should be entitled to some substantial advantage from it, and should not give way because our friends to the south say that their fisheries are becoming depleted, and they must come into Canadian waters. Some said that while lumber and fruit might suffer, there could be no question of the material advantage that British Columbia would gain from this treaty; but if there was any advantage they might depend that ninety-nine per cent. would go to the United States and one per cent. come to Canada.

#### Should Have Been Commission

The Premier stated very emphatically that any proposal to interfere with the trade relations of the Dominion should come about as the result of an inquiry by a competent tariff commission. He instanced an inquiry that had been instituted by the Conservative Government at Ottawa in 1893. Again, in 1896, the Liberal Government had an inquiry into the tariff, and again in 1905, under the Liberal administration. Mr. Fielding had stated to the House of Commons in 1905, that there would be no extensive tariff changes that session, as it was the intention of the Government to have an inquiry into existing conditions by a tariff commission. In pursuance of this policy the Government had constituted a tariff commission consisting of Hon. W. S. Fielding, Sir Richard Cartwright, Hon. W. Paterson, and Hon. L. P. Brodeur. This commission held meetings throughout Canada, including many places in British Columbia. Of course, the work of that commission in 1905 would be of little or no practical value in connection with the tariff agreement in 1911. The rapid changes in Canada during the intervening time would render it

absolutely valueless. If the question were to be seriously broached by the Canadian people, it was essential that a tariff commission should have first investigated the case before the conclusion of any bargain with Washington.

"As the question is one that affects every individual in the Dominion," said the Premier, "is it not a case where the referendum might be used, and perhaps used with some advantage all round? It undoubtedly seems to me that the question is one that so vitally affects individual Canadians that it might be possible to find out just how the people of Canada do feel on the subject by way of referendum; that is, if we cannot have a general Federal election, and I suppose since the Dominion census may be taken presently, we cannot expect the Federal election until after that at any rate."

The Premier continued, with a smile, that the only news he had had of a Federal election was from a Liberal folder which had fallen into his hands, where it spoke of the fight of 1912, and asked "the boys" to get ready to rally round their leader, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Mr. Templeman and others, when that time should come. If he was to take that seriously, and he supposed he must, there was to be no opportunity by which the people could be consulted on this matter, and therefore he repeated that it might be well worth while for the authorities at Ottawa to consult the people through the medium of a referendum. He did not know when Mr. Fielding or Mr. Paterson were here last, but if they came tomorrow they would find an entirely new aspect of what they found two years ago.

#### Relations With Motherland

The Premier continued that there was an expression of opinion to be met on all sides in so far as Imperial relations might be affected by the present tariff bargain. Some critics had gone the length of saying that it would mean a

breach in the present Imperial relations that would widen gradually until it reached serious proportions.

"I would never go so far," said the Premier. "I cannot believe that while we are called upon, under these arrangements, to make many sacrifices, that this will in any degree affect the loyalty of British subjects in Canada, or the strong desire of Canadian people to take all constitutional means to make for efficient arrangements of Imperial federation. At the same time we cannot but conclude that the fact of our entering into closer commercial relations with the United

States will not help out this Imperial problem. Nevertheless, we have the satisfaction of knowing that despite a condition of this sort, with the unbounded loyalty we Canadians possess for Britain and British institutions, for flag and king, we can still persevere in our efforts to weld more closely together the Mother Country and the Colonies, to the end that perhaps within a few years we shall see some advancement made in Imperial federation that will put the British Empire on that high plane she has easily the right to occupy and enjoy.

