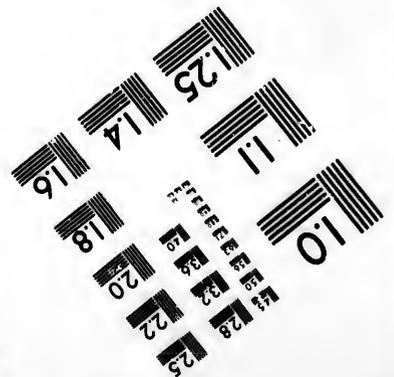
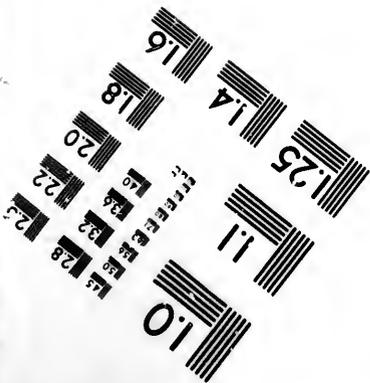
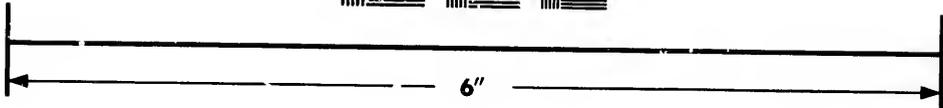
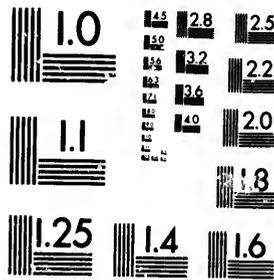


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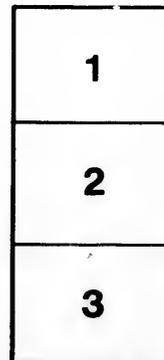
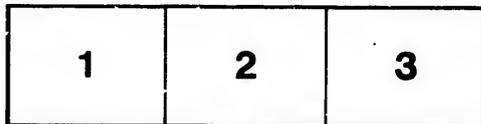
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DOES ANNEXATION FOLLOW?

COMMERCIAL UNION AND BRITISH CONNECTION.

AN OPEN LETTER FROM ERASTUS WIMAN

—TO—

MR. J. REDPATH DOUGALL, EDITOR OF THE MONTREAL
"WITNESS."

MY DEAR MR. DOUGALL:

Absence and pressure of work have prevented me sooner answering your recent letter. Although your communication is a private one, and seeks to elicit my private opinion as to the eventual result of commercial union as affecting British connection, I avail myself of your invitation to furnish you a public reply for the columns of your paper, in order that others beside yourself may be informed of how the matter is regarded from this point of view. The key-note of your letter is contained in the closing sentence of the following paragraph:—

"My object in writing you is, in the first place, to congratulate you on the importance and benevolence of the cause you are advocating with such vigor and ability. and, in second place, to ask you for my own edification if you really think there is standing on your platform for Canadians who are prepared to forsake British allegiance."

In attempting to reply to this direct and pointed question, it is important that there should be no ambiguity, for it is evident, that if such a reply could be framed as would remove doubt on this point, a great step would be taken to promote in Canada the cause of commercial union with the United States. Impressed with the importance of the task which you have committed to me, I beg, first, to say to you, that so far as I can fathom it, the motive which prompts the movement among Canadians here toward commercial union is the good of Canada, combined with the maintenance of British connection. No Canadian can reside for any length of time within the United States, and fail to be impressed with the advantages which would result from a business connection with this country. Every day brings forth evidence of progress in all that contributes to material growth. The liberality, nay, the extravagance of the people of this country seem entirely justified by the constant growth in the sources of income; in the development of great natural resources; the profits from

vast business enterprises, and the steady accumulations in monetary institutions and Governmental revenues; and also in the rapidly increasing population of the best class of immigration, to which the whole world is contributing. With this marvellous procession of circumstances daily in view, it is impossible not to feel that our beloved Canada ought in some way to more largely benefit than she does by the growth, right at her own borders, of a nation so powerful, so rich, and so much in need of all that she has to offer. This feeling is all the more constant because of the knowledge that Canada is richer in natural resources than the United States themselves; that in her forests, fisheries, fields and mines are riches, now almost dormant, that would yield a return of the most satisfactory kind, if once the barrier that divides the two countries were to be obliterated. If this could be done without sundering the tie that binds Canada to Great Britain; if, without sacrificing the practical political independence of our native land, and without imperilling her future in the experiment which in a Government by the people is here being slowly and not altogether satisfactorily worked out, surely this proposition could hardly fail to meet with favor. No mode by which this could be done has ever seemed possible except the admission of Canada into the Union, and the abnegation by her of her political existence. That this was repugnant to the great majority of Canadian residents in the United States, is evident from the fact that no movement of this character has ever been apparent. Between seven hundred and fifty thousand and a million Canadians are in active business in this country; yet no organization, no suggestion, or even individual expressions in the direction of annexation are called to mind. For my own part, though in most frequent communication with hundreds of my countrymen, I cannot now recall a single instance where a political separation was favored; on

the contrary, the almost universal sentiment of Canadians in the States is that of loyalty to the British crown. The growing trouble arising out of the fishery dispute has impressed Canadian residents with its extreme danger, because of the frequent utterance of sentiments very unfavorable to Canada,—sentiments which find expression in the Retaliatory Bill—which, considering the magnitude of the interests involved, was a measure of the most radical character, and threatened most serious results. Almost simultaneously with the passage of this bill, Mr. Butterworth introduced into Congress a measure calculated not only to entirely remove all existing difficulties, settle all outstanding disputes, but absolutely to throw down all the barriers existing between Canada and the United States just as soon as corresponding legislation could be obtained in the Dominion. The possibility of the passage of such a measure seemed at first in doubt, but inquiry showed that its prospects were excellent; that it seemed to have attractions for the leading men of both parties and unquestionably has the favor and hearty support of the President and his Cabinet. The transition from a threatened disruption of the friendly relations existing between the two countries to a condition of permanent peace; the expectation that, through this measure, all the advantages which Interstate communication has yielded to this country could be at once conveyed to Canada with a revelation full of the utmost importance. No thought of annexation or any change whatever in the political status of the two countries prompted the measure, nor, so far as I can discover, has contributed to its advocacy.

Of course those who favor annexation may also favor commercial union, and there are doubtless a large number, especially among thinking citizens of the great Republic, who favor the movement for unrestricted reciprocity in the expectation that a political union may eventually follow. But that this is the impelling motive in those most active in promoting the movement on either side of the border, I for one most strenuously deny. On the contrary, it is evident to those who at all investigate the matter, that one of the most potent influences which would help forward an annexation movement is immediately removed by commercial union. The only argument of any weight which the Canadian annexation can employ is the great material advantages that would flow from a political alliance with the Republic. All the advantages which are possible to a political union would be possible to a commercial union, and hence the cause for a political change is entirely removed. The growth of the annexation sentiment in Canada has certainly been marked. Where years ago it was referred to with bated

breath, its advantages are now not infrequently maintained with vigor and force, even in public places; and the allusions to it in editorials and communications are frequent and pronounced, especially in the newspapers of Ontario and Nova Scotia. But the one stock argument in its favor is the advantage that would come to Canada from the enlarged market which would thus be afforded for her natural and manufactured products. Nowadays no one argues as to the superiority of the Republican system of government over the system of responsible government which Canada enjoys. Few, if any, in Canada believe that universal suffrage is an unmixed blessing, or that an elective judiciary and numerous other peculiarities of the American system, are to be preferred to the system which regulates public affairs in Canada. The sole and only justification that would enable a native of Canada to forswear his birthright or a British subject to transfer his allegiance from his beloved Queen for a citizenship in the American republic, would be the prospective advantage to his pocket-book which would follow a transition so marked and so violent. But if commercial union brings in its train all the advantages that would follow annexation, what justification is there for longer discussing a political union that would be truthful only political suicide? If, therefore, it is desirable to remove the only argument, the only justification that exists for a dissolution of the bond that binds together Great Britain and Canada, then the advocates of commercial union are the strongest advocates for a continuation of that bond. Dissatisfaction in Nova Scotia with the results of confederation; want of success in the middle provinces by the vast mass of agriculturists and all dependent on them; and the excessive tension which prevails in Manitoba, are all relieved by the possibility of commercial union with the United States. If all this and much more in the same direction is accomplished by this movement, surely it is a contribution toward the maintenance of British connection greater than anything else that could be imagined. What other event in the enumeration of possible events can be named which would more fully strengthen the love for one's native land than to see every interest therein prosper? What stronger tie is possible than that which joins self interest to the public good, and makes both motives move in the direction of perpetuating existing political conditions, and sustaining existing connections under which peace, entire freedom and prosperity are possible? The advocates of commercial union claim that all this would result from the adoption of their plan for the settlement of existing difficulties, and on that claim make it clear that British connection is in no respect either weakened or imperilled by its adoption.

COMMERCIAL UNION AND BRITISH CONNECTION.

The principles underlying commercial union are precisely the same as those which existed under the reciprocity treaty from 1854 to 1866. The only difference is, that while the free interchange of articles was limited to the natural products, it is now proposed that no restriction whatever should exist; and that all articles, whether natural, manufactured, or imported, should be as free of interchange between the United States and Canada as they are now between Quebec and Ontario, or between New York and New Jersey. During the twelve years of the reciprocity treaty there was far less talk of annexation than before or since; and all will remember the simultaneous burst of loyalty which met the suggestion in 1866 that Canada could by a repeal of that treaty be forced to forswear its loyalty to Great Britain. If during the period of the prevalence of the treaty no sentiment prevailed for annexation, what justification exists for the assertion that in consequence of its renewal on a broader basis a desire for annexation would follow? The inference from experience is in a precisely opposite direction, and furnishes another argument in support of the claim of the advocates of commercial union that in no respect does it impair or threaten British connection.

The only force to the argument that British connection is threatened by commercial union is found in the fact that discrimination against British goods would be necessary, as compared with the free admission of American products. It is true that this savors of a preference for American over British connection, but Canada has for some years been taxing British goods as much as she would have to tax them under commercial union. The recent advance by the Finance Minister of the duty on iron is a discrimination quite as marked in its practical effect as anything else would be if commercial union were to go into operation to-morrow. Indeed it would look as if the Finance Minister were making preparations for commercial union by raising the tariff on so essential an element as iron to a rate almost as high as that of the American impost, while the practical discrimination against Great Britain in this matter might very well be cited as an experiment just to see how such a movement applied on a larger scale would be regarded. Yet no one accuses the Finance Minister of disloyalty. The average duty in the United States over and above that prevailing in Canada is about ten

per cent. If under Commercial Union the United States should reduce its tariff five per cent. and Canada advance her tariff five per cent. so as to equalize both, the result to Great Britain would be a positive advantage. A larger quantity of goods would be absorbed in the United States in consequence of this reduction than would be lost by the enhanced duty in Canada, while the prosperity and purchasing power of the Canadian people would be so augmented in consequence of better prices, enlarged markets, and increased communications, that a broad-minded British merchant would soon see that free trade on the continent of America would in no respect differ from the free trade with the rest of the world, which he so much loves, and under which he has so much prospered.

My own conviction is, from very careful thought on this subject, that nothing will contribute to a greater degree to a perpetuation of British connection than a close commercial alliance with the United States, and therefore I answer most gladly your question, that there is ample room on the platform of the commercial unionist not only for your good self and all your friends, but for every Canadian who loves his native land, and values as one of his chief blessings a connection with the dear mother country. That you were long ago a strong advocate for commercial union I am delighted to see from an article from your pen which appears in the *Contemporary Review* in 1885, in a very able paper on "Anglo-Saxon Alliance" the following sentence appears, which is so appropriate to the present time that I close my letter with the quotation:

"Canada while she is unwilling to abnegate her British allegiance, is unable permanently to renounce her paramount interest, which lies in commerce with the United States, along whose border her populations form a fringe three thousand miles long and about a hundred miles broad, stretched along a single isothermal, and having in consequence no adequate variety of climates or products. *That plan only would fully solve her problem that would secure to her at once her British citizenship and the freest and fullest intercourse with her all-important neighbor.*"

I claim most respectfully that the plan as implied in commercial union fulfils in the highest form all that your loyalty to England and your interest in Canada hoped might come when you wrote the foregoing lines.

With much regard to you, I am,

Truly yours,

ERASTUS WIMAN.

