

HAIL LAURIER.

A Crowded Hall.

Speeches by Fisher, Laurier, Davies and Welsh.

It was a crush. The Market Hall has seldom if ever held such a large and representative provincial audience as that which crowded every corner of it last night.

The meeting was announced to take place at 8 o'clock, but by 7:30 there was hardly an inch of standing room left.

The Artillery Band had been secured for the occasion and the half hour was spent by the audience in listening, waiting, and applauding the arrivals.

On the platform were the city clergymen, His Worship the Mayor, Hon. D. Laird, members of the Dominion and local legislatures, prominent Liberals and representatives of the press.

A number of ladies were present in the audience. The walls of the old hall were decorated with flags and bunting and bore three large mottoes, viz.: "P. E. Islanders Welcome Laurier the Liberal Leader," "Economy and Retrenchment Necessary to Save the State," "Canada is a Loyal and Free Queen."

Among those on the platform were His Worship Mayor Haviland, Hon. D. Laird, P. C.; Senator Haythorne, Hon. L. H. Davies, M. P.; Wm. Welsh, M. P.; Dr. Robertson, M. P.; S. F. Perry, M. P.; Jan. Yeo, M. P.; Hon. B. Rogers, M. L. C.; Hon. P. McNutt, M. L. C.; Hon. A. Laird, M. L. C.; Hon. A. B. McKenzie, M. L. C.; Hon. Mr. Kitchin, M. L. C.; Hon. Mr. Hooper, M. L. C.; Hon. John Yeo, M. P.; P. C.; Hon. A. M. Allan, M. P.; John Montgomery, M. P.; D. Farquharson, M. P.; F. P. Peters, M. P.; H. C. McDonald, M. P.; P. P. John Matheson, M. P.; J. Richards, M. P. P.; Rev. Mr. Brewer, Rev. Mr. McElhinney, and others.

Hon. Mr. Dadd then arose and after a few introductory remarks introduced MR. SIDNEY FISHER.

of Bronte, Quebec, as the first speaker. Mr. Fisher is a farmer, a gentleman of pleasing and manly appearance, and a speaker of no mean ability.

Mr. Fisher on rising expressed the satisfaction it gave him to know that the audience before him represented not only the city of Charlottetown but the Province generally. He was a farmer himself and he represented a purely agricultural constituency.

He would not detain them from the treat that was in store for them, but he would say a few things more particularly from a farmer's standpoint. Farmers had no interests that were inimical to other interests, and it was the policy of his party not, in order to be self farmers or any one class, to do anything that would be injurious to the interests of others.

He believed the farmers of Canada wanted no protection, but that with fair play and if not overburdened with taxation they could compete in any of the markets of the world. They can compete with the Americans in their own home market. The great bulk of our agricultural products is exported to the United States and that in the face of great barriers raised up against trade between the two countries.

To foster some manufactures that never seem willing to stand on their own bottom the Government of Canada has compelled the rest of the people to pay an unreasonably heavy tax. Last year they boasted of a surplus of two and a half millions of dollars. He believed this was unjust and more than this country could bear.

At the very end of the American census was stating for a change of trade relations the Tory Government gave Congress the best of reasons to raise their duties still higher against Canadian productions. Had our Government adopted a conciliatory policy, the result would have been very different. The Conservative affect to make very light of our American markets, but their own anxiety to find markets to take the place of those they have lost is sufficient contradiction to these pretensions. They are now running two and five in the earth, to the West Indies, China, Japan, Australia and elsewhere for a market. All these markets were as open formerly as they are now, and it was because they had a more profitable market nearer home.

He did not believe any of our legitimate manufacturers feared competition with the Americans; he knew some manufacturers who courted competition and the market of 65 millions instead of only five millions. His party has been accused of his opponents as discriminating against the Mother Country and how hollow were their boastsings. He could say for himself and for the liberals that they were loyal to Canada first and in being true to their nature land they would be most true and loyal to the whole empire.

He would appeal to the young men on whom the prosperity of Canada depended to study well those things and to support the party of his noble friend the liberal leader of Canada.

MR. LAURIER. In coming forward was loudly cheered. He said:—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: It affords me great pleasure to appear before such an audience whose friendship I value so much. There is Mr. Davies, ever valiant, ever true, ever foremost—a man whose name I have found to be a household word in those Maritime Provinces and whose name will yet become a household word throughout the length and breadth of Canada. There is also my excellent friend Mr. Welsh, whose heart and hand are ever ready for a kind action. There is also Dr. McIntyre, Mr.

Perry, Mr. Yeo, and others. It is still a greater pleasure to me to find consensus of the old Liberal School about me—the chairman, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Dan Davies, Mr. B. Davies and others. Still more would my satisfaction have been complete had I visited this island at a more auspicious season to see the richness of its soil and the bloom of its vegetation. I heard of friends Mr. Davies at Halifax in a moment of enthusiastic fervor making a statement for which I was not at all prepared, namely, that this was the Garden of America. The phrase is not by Muskoka recently I was told that that was the Garden of America. Another name pointed to the crest of a hill, and I told the form on the top of that hill was the Garden of America. (Laughter.) And all the time in my own heart I knew that they were all wrong, that the Garden of Canada was on the banks of the St. Lawrence, in my own loved land. (Applause.) Nothing can be so dear, nothing so beautiful as the soil of one's native land, no matter where. You will pardon me therefore in saying—although I know it may be wrong—that the Garden of America is on the banks of the St. Lawrence. But much as I love my own native province there is one thing in which I admit your superiority. P. E. Island is the Garden of Canada so far as patriotism and liberal principles are concerned. (Applause.) I will never forget with what pleasure we heard of the victory of the Liberals here in the last election. The enemy was routed, horse, foot, and artillery; their cannons were packed, their banners were dragged in the dust. And I am sure the heart of P. E. Island has not changed, that it ever beats in the Liberal cause. All that it needs to complete its happiness is complete and unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. And since you are the Garden of Canada I would expect to find here a prosperous people, that emigration had ceased—that every family was complete at its fireside. But is it so? Is it not true that your population has been decimated by emigration, that your land has gone to till lands less favored than their own. And is there not something in such a condition as rotten as in Denmark of old. Such a condition when it continues year after year is not normal. It is not a sound one. What you want is markets. You raise more produce than you can consume. Most of your remaining the meeting in 1878 in the Skating Rink addressed by the late Mr. Pope and Sir Charles Tupper. They promised that in two years you would hear the hum of modern machinery. Sir John was to do the trick. He knew the secrets of Government. He had in his hand a magic wand and he would have us believe that when manufacturers would spring up on every brook, and on every ditch. (Laughter.) There would follow a teeming population of laborers—with cheap prices for the buyer and dear prices for the seller—milk and honey would flow in the land. The people of Charlottetown believed in those promises. I do not blame you. We were at that time in the throes of commercial depression—a depression that prevailed all over America and Europe, which showed that it could not be affected by a change of tariff. The Tories were going to remedy this state of things. But men often become the dupes of their own teachings. Once in the city of Marseille a man met a friend on the street who asked him what was the news. "News? Yes, I have news for you. There is a whale in the harbor. A whale! Why no whale was ever seen in our harbor. "Well, there is one there now," said the joker. "Go and see." So the man started off and he told others as he went, and soon there was a crowd, and by and by others followed to see the crowd, until at last the liar who started the story said, "Well, there must be whale after all; I will go too. (Loud laughter and applause.)" He had been with the Conservatives. They thought they had in their hands the remedy, and by dint of repeating it they soon came to believe it themselves. But now I ask where are the tall chimneys. There is just one in St. John and it is in the hands of the R. C. sever. There is another in Halifax and it is in the hands of the combined institution which produces sugar on one hand and drains blood from the shareholders on the other. Have those promises been fulfilled? I am sure that these are some Conservatives here. It seems to me I see some faces belonging to that party about me (laughter), and while I value the presence of my friends I value more that of the Conservatives. I did not come here to preach Free Trade to the Liberals, but to speak to the Conservatives in the hope that some of them would repent from their sins. (Laughter.) I know it is a hard task for such a humble person as myself to undertake, but I read in history that Providence has used the meekest instruments for the accomplishment of its ends. And after all the scales may fall from their eyes. (Laughter.) If there are any Conservatives here who will say the N. P. has realized all that he expected, I respect every man's conviction, and if I have any reproach for my fellow countrymen of the Conservative field it is because they do not do enough thinking for themselves, and follow too much the dictation of their leaders. I ask every man of every party to look upon the state of existing affairs.

Mr. Laurier then went on to speak of certain taxes. The Conservative Government coming to power put 50 cents and later 75 cents a barrel on flour to help the wheat growers of Manitoba, etc. Flour is not a luxury and taxes should always be placed on luxuries rather than on the people's bread. There can be no need of it because we have more revenue than we want. It is simply putting money out of your pockets into those of our fellow countrymen in the West. Then take coal. Ontario and Quebec have no coal, and Nova Scotia has. Ontario can get its coal from Pennsylvania more easily and cheaper than anywhere else. But the Government put a duty of 50 cents per ton on it to force them to take it from Nova Scotia. This measure is so great that it has put the coal business with the duty Ontario could get its coal cheaper from the United States than from Nova Scotia. Then the Government undertook to carry the coal at a losing rate on the I. C. R., and to-day you are asked not only to carry the coal but to take it; but to put money in the pockets of the Nova Scotia coal owners as well. This is simply taking money out of the pockets of the people of Ontario and putting it in the pockets of the people in Nova Scotia. This is the very opposite of patriotism. It is not by injuring our neighbors that we are to build up this Dominion. It is by reminding him of a certain place where he asked a villager how the people lived here. "Oh," said he, "by trying to sicken strangers how do you do? Why, then, sicken our own people." (Laughter.) This is the policy of the present Government, and such a policy is beneath the contempt of any patriot. We must have reform. Our cardinal principle is

freedom in religion and in matters civil and political. Why not, then, have free trade? We could not of course adopt the broad principle of free trade as in England, but we should have that goal in view, and reciprocity is the next step in that direction. Our friends, the Conservatives, tell us that the best market is the home market. In this we agree with them. They are so often in the wrong that it is a pleasure when we can say that we agree with them, and we never fail to do so. The home market is certainly the best we can have, but unfortunately the home market promised us in former years has not been given us, nor has it given us what we anticipated, but it is in my humble opinion, and it is in that spirit I express it to you, that if we could remove the commercial barrier that stands to-day between us and the United States, then at once we would have a home market of 65,000,000 of people. (Applause.) Mr. Laurier drew attention to the present state of affairs—the barriers raised by the United States and the barriers raised by Canada. Suppose those barriers were taken down, does it not stand to reason that immediately the volume of trade would be doubled beyond what it is at the present moment. Our trade flows as naturally to the United States as the water of some of our rivers into their territory. Here is a list of exports to the United States and Great Britain for the last fiscal year:—

Table with 3 columns: U. S., G. Britain, and a third column. Rows include Fisheries, Animals & other products, and Agricultural products.

Lately we have heard considerable concerning eggs. Prior to the duty being levied on eggs we had established a business of some 14,000,000 dozen a year, which represented \$2,000,000, but now a barrier has been raised and happily up against our eggs and the government are making frantic efforts to create a market for them in England. I hope every Liberal hopes that they will be successful. But the English market will never be the same to us as the U. S. Eggs cannot be transported long distances as they were bricks. It is all very well to talk of G. B. but trade has no sentimentality and I defy the very worst Tory in Canada to refuse to take a dollar bill from the Yankees in preference to ninety cents from England. (Laughter.) Mr. Laurier, for the benefit of Conservatives, quoted from a speech made by Sir John Macdonald before confederation a declaration in favor of reciprocity—an argument for Canada having two strings to her bow—England and the United States, and he spoke in favor of that view. Then he quoted from the resolution proposed by Sir John in 1871 in favor of establishment of the N. P., which concluded with the statement that such a policy would greatly tend to procure reciprocity. But speaking at a later date upon the same subject, he reverted to the same idea. He then advised a retaliatory policy and the reason he gave was that if Canada was to get reciprocity she would only get it in that way. This was said ten years ago. The N. P. therefore was to compel the Americans to give us reciprocity, but it has not had that effect. For my part I would never urge the Americans in any such manner. I would simply treat with them for the purpose of obtaining reciprocity. I say that there are within the ranks of the government itself confusion worse confounded in regard to reciprocity—a confusion which the world has never seen since the confusion of the tower of Babel. Mr. Laurier pointed out the real mistake when they visited St. John had favored a renewal of the old treaty; he quoted from the speech delivered in the parliament by Hon. Mr. Colby, president of the Privy Council, strongly opposing such a policy, and he referred to the support given the Conservative reciprocity candidate in Naperville by Hon. Mr. Chapleau, who endorsed the reciprocity policy. In that action the Conservative candidate had stolen the political clothes of the Liberals, and was elected. In view of these facts, Mr. Laurier asked: Conservatives, where are you on this question? You have some of your leaders one way and some another way. I would not be surprised if next session or before the next election you would see the whole government burning with anxiety to grasp our policy and going back to unrestricted reciprocity, which is now our programme. I have only to say, said Mr. Laurier, that the very moment Sir John Macdonald will take up our policy he will have the support of our party. We have prospered, our country at heart, and such a policy is for the prosperity of our country. (Loud applause.) I do not believe reciprocity free and unrestricted would be disadvantageous to the manufacturers of the country. It would of course be advantageous to the monopolists, but it would be of immense advantage to the farmers on one hand and not injurious to the manufacturers on the other hand, and if I have to choose between the two I say it here, that my choice is in favor of the farmer and the farmer of the country. (Applause.) Why? Because there is no prosperity in the agricultural industry of a country if it is depressed, and if you want successful manufacturers then you must have a prosperous farming population and therefore my choice is made. It is argued that under reciprocity there would be a loss of revenue, but it would be only a much less taken from the pockets of the people. That could be met, for in the hands of a finance minister such as Sir Richard Cartwright there is no doubt that we would be able to diminish the expenditure of the country, and the extravagance carried on at Ottawa would be diminished to a very large degree. Taking first an instance where a large saving can be effected—the franchise act, the revision of which costs \$400,000 or \$600,000 and which has only been twice revised. Then you have a little insight given you as to the works of the departments at Ottawa, through the Right Reverend, where a man could make something like \$200,000 for himself which did not cost him a bare \$200. Then there is the matter lately brought to light as the Quebec harbor money. Where has the \$4,000,000 gone? We look into the harbor and we see the masts and rigging, but we do not see how they came to expend that sum on them. They don't explain how it is, nor can they, but it is being explained that this \$4,000,000 has been a fund for corruption and bribery and had been used by contractors and members of Parliament for the purpose of carrying elections. Now if that money had been applied to those matters there could be a large saving effected. Another question is that of this reciprocity which is the cry of loyalty which is always raised in connection with it. Yet in 1879, when this same N. P. was being inaugurated, I remember that the late papers said, when it had been put forward that it might endanger British connection that if it were to endanger

British connection, so much the worse for British connection. Gentlemen, as you are aware, I am not of your race—I belong to French stock; but I claim I am as loyal as any man in Canada. (Cheers.) I state that my fellow-countrymen of French origin have found more freedom under the banner of England than they could have found under the banner of France. (Enthusiastic applause.) I come here among you as a Canadian, as a British subject, and England is as dear to me as any other country (applause), but at the same time I have no hesitation in saying that my loyalty is like my charity—it commences at home, and much as I love England I have no hesitation in saying that still more do I love Canada—my native land. (Cheers.) And if the day would come, which I hope to heaven will never come, that the interests of my native land would not be the interests of the mother country, if I had to make a choice, I would certainly make a choice in favor of my native land, and therefore it is that I do not reproach Conservatives with having by the N. P. endangered the British connection, if in their hearts they supposed that the interests of Canada was the prime consideration; but the point I object to is when they tempt us with want of loyalty when we try to benefit Canada. (Loud applause.)

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