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(Continued from Page 1)

try, there is that, where we have conditions in Canada enabling them to compete with the conditions of our chief competitors across the line." Well, it is sometimes easier to make such proposition before one gets all the facts than it is afterward; but assuming it to be true where are we then? You find a competitor over there that has a market closed, or partially closed, by a protective tariff; you find him with an advantage of 110 millions of a market. You find the competitor here with what? You find him with eight and a half or nine millions of a market; and you find him building to a scale to meet the restricted market of his country. Assume even that the other country opens its market; no industry in this country could be sure that such market would remain open for longer than four years. Therefore the manufacturer cannot lay down his plant on a scale to meet the large scale production of his competitor. Therein lies the basis of the protective theory. It is bound up in the very system of nations that we have in this world. When the existing system of nations is abolished, and when the control of markets external to our country is under a common control, then there will be some reason in the theory of free traders.

So, I adhere still to the principle of a moderate protection tariff for our country. Further, I believe generally in a system of reciprocal trade with countries of the world in which we can expect to find a market—a real market—not a mere immediate market for our surplus. That applies to almost every country in the world. But Canada is peculiarly situated. Canada is in a position as to which no just comparison with any other country in the world appears. We lie on the North American continent, alongside a nation with a population of 110 millions, undoubtedly the most highly developed industrially of any country in the world. We are virtually their only neighbors in an industrial sense. The weight of their commercial influence is almost overwhelming. They are a nation that produces everything that we produce and, except for one or two things, produces a surplus, and a large surplus, of everything that we produce. Consequently though we may find a market—we do not now find a market—therefor much that we bring to maturity in this country, such market is of this character: It is intermediate, it only adds to the surplus that that country has of the same products for sale to the outside world. Therefore, the United States becomes a mere intermediary between us and the outside world. My hon. friend opposite shakes his head, but such undoubtedly is the fact. Here in our country, if we permit no considerations of nationhood to exist, or to have weight at all we would have certain portions of Canada trading almost exclusively by the geographically natural route through the United States. There is such trading now, I do not dispute it and there will always be, but I do not think it wise, forsighted policy that the all but universal practice should be for distinct sections of Canada to trade by themselves with those states immediately to the south; such states in turn pressing on their surplus farther towards the seacoast; and those in turn pressing their surplus, so augmented, of the same goods on to the ultimate consumers of Europe and Asia. Would such a condition be for the good of this country? Would it be possible by following that path to build up a nation here? This is the problem that faced the Fathers of Confederation. This is the problem that has faced the statesmen of this country every year since Confederation. This is one of the tendencies that our country must have the virality and the tenacity to overcome if we are to remain a united nation on this North American continent.

Mr. McMaster: Is it not true that in spite of all tariff barriers our trade with the United States has been growing almost from year to year, without affecting our national spirit?

Mr. Meighen: I do not doubt it, not at all; but at the same time we have set ourselves to maintain our east and west routes of trade. We do not divorce one portion of the country from the other as would result if we were to wholly abandon our task, which is the real task of Confederation and let all trade take its geographically natural route. Oh, these things appear so easy to the minds of those who approach responsibility lightly; but when men get into positions of responsibility they do not appear to be matters of quite such light consideration. Many a political leader in this country, including the leaders of my hon. friend from Brome (Mr. McMasters)— one I know whose memory he much reveres—has come through the process of thought and of experience to exactly the view that I have expressed. Therefore, I feel now, no matter what the political consequences may be, that the right course for this country is not to enter into any extensive reciprocal arrangement with the United States.

Enter into such arrangement, and what results? First of all, the power to terminate though it may nominally be mutual, rests in fact with that country. In proportion to the life of the time such arrangement operates, in proportion as well to its magnitude, the whole commerce of our country adjusts itself to the new conditions. The natural routes are found and the they are found then we become practically at the mercy of legislation of the United States for the continuance of legislation upon which the currents of our commerce must more and more depend. We abandoned markets that otherwise we would have cultivated, and are at the mercy of our neighbor to the south. Our trade follows north and south routes, and as a consequence the mere threat of the abrogation of a treaty puts us in a position, most undesirable to say the least of it, with respect to the United States of America. We do not stand in the same relation with any other country of the world; there is not the same condition of affairs at all. I hope the day will never come when the fact of that relationship, unique as it is, will be lost sight of in the determination of the policy of this country.

It has been the habit of certain people to bewail the rejection by Canada of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1911. Canada rejected that Reciprocity Treaty just because of the truth that I have sought to expound to this House. That is just as much a truth, just as vital a truth, today as it ever was, and the spirit of this country is as true and strong today as it was in 1911. I venture to say that if such a treaty comes, in the form it did, or in anything like so extensive a form, before the people of this country again, and they have time and opportunity to see to the centre of it, to know its meaning and to know its purpose, the verdict will be just the same as in 1911, and just as firmly pronounced. Hon. gentlemen argue as though, had that treaty been made, it would have been permanent like the laws of the Medes and Persians. I, as a Canadian, loving Canada, loving our association in this Empire; I, as a Canadian and a British subject, would not welcome the treaty in the least, even though I believed it was going to be permanent. But I know it never can be permanent; I know the permanency of it rests chiefly with the stronger power, the stronger commercial weight—that is to say, with the United States of America. Oh, we have had reciprocity treaties, and this country took years to recover from the effect of their cancellation, and went through a period of suffering that it would never have had to endure if it had not travelled that way at all. As regards the pact of 1911, we would have met today, only under more unfortunate circumstances which would have still more emphasized the unfavorable conditions of this hour, had that reciprocity treaty passed. What is the explanation of the Fordney tariff? What has brought about that feeling in the United States which has driven the government now in office to adopt the measures it has put through, and to propose those now under debate? Is it not chiefly the effect of the importations from this country, the effect there of the large surplus of our agricultural products. Is not the feeling strong, particularly among the farming community, that their farmers have a right to greater advantage in the American market which they themselves have contributed to build? Would that cause have been removed if reciprocity had passed? Would that cause not have been intensified? Would its results not have been accelerated? Are you going to postpone the effect of a cause by emphasizing that cause? They would have had still more of our products if reciprocity had operated at all; we would have seen the adverse feeling grow there just that much sooner.

Have we not had instances enough to awaken the truth in the mind of even the most perverse? We accepted the American offer of free trade in wheat and the products of wheat and potatoes. This was not very extensive; I never had very much hopes from it, I expected just about what resulted. At the time we accepted this offer, there was a stringency of shipping conditions that made the export of our grain by the regular routes very difficult, and there was the main cause of the acceptance of the offer. We were, no doubt, affected as well by a desire to meet what had become, in the minds of people in the West, the outstanding grievance. We sought the more to meet them because at that time we were engaged in a terrible conflict. What resulted? Was there an addition to the prices of those grains? An examination of the figures shows that the very day after this went into effect, the higher local prices for hard wheats in Minneapolis dropped right to the level at which they had been before in Canada. There was no increase in the Canadian price at all. But what I am seeking to show now is this: The operation of that arrangement, by which for admission here the United States gave us admission there of our wheat and our wheat products, deferred as it was by necessary war restrictions and embargoes due to government control of the crops, was in effect only about six months, and then what was its fate? The United States government, exercising its undoubted right, imposed a duty of 35 cents a bushel against our wheat, cancelled the whole arrangement; put a 25 per cent. duty on flour, and virtually barred both commodities.

We are now at the heart of this question. Is there any reason why the same results would not have followed the reciprocity pact of 1911, if it had been accepted? The United States government did precisely the same with our acceptance of their potato offer, with this consequence in each case, that the routes of traffic had to be reversed and there were certain markets that had been cultivated of which we lost the advantage by virtue of the turning of our trade in a contrary direction for a very brief period of time. Nothing fatal is to be apprehended from entering into a very restricted form of reciprocity of that kind, but if we enter it on a big scale, on an extensive scale, this country, as years go on, reaches a position of virtual subjection and subserviency to the legislation of the United States.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) in his speech used language which I really cannot understand. He said that there was a time when we had reason to complain of the conduct of the United States, when its fiscal legislation was unfriendly to us; but that now we have no reason to complain of unfriendly legislation. I do not know, first of all, why this word "unfriendly" is applied to tariffs. I do not feel in the least unfriendly to the United States, because I believe in a fair protective tariff. The United States, when they put their tariff against us, thirty-five, forty-three and fifty; yes, one hundred years ago, acted within their rights. What cause had we to complain? Does anyone know? I do not know wherein our right of complaint existed. The same right which they exercised then, they exercise now; they make their tariff to suit the changing circumstances of the United States of America; they make their tariffs, as they believe, in the interest of their own people. They have nothing to fear of a national character from any reciprocity with us; its continuance or its cessation means relatively little to them; our trade with them is merely an incident to the United States. We must remember they are eleven to fifteen times commercially the magnitude of us. It is a different thing when the figures are turned the other way. We are small compared with them, and if we follow the path of unrestricted reciprocity, we adopt a course that may, indeed is certain to, result in serious detriment to, if not in the humiliation of this country.

I have stated, without equivocation, as clearly as the very limited time I allot to myself will allow, where I stand on this question, I hope hon. gentlemen will admit that at least I have been true to the principles I followed in Opposition before, and in power when in the reins of power I had some share.

I come now to the amendment that is moved in this debate. The amendment recites, first of all the position occupied by hon. gentlemen opposite when they took office. It specifically recites definite, concrete, unmistakable engagements which hon. gentlemen opposite made with the electorate of this country. With those pledges I do not agree. I believe the fulfilment of those pledges would have been disastrous or, at least serious, to this country. I would not have supported their fulfilment, neither would I have given the pledges. But the fact is the present government needed them for the purpose of getting votes in Canada, the votes of those who believed that such was the right policy for Canada to pursue. Is there in this House any hon. gentleman who doubts the truth of the assertion that those pledges were given in the most formal way, in the most

(Continued on Page 4)

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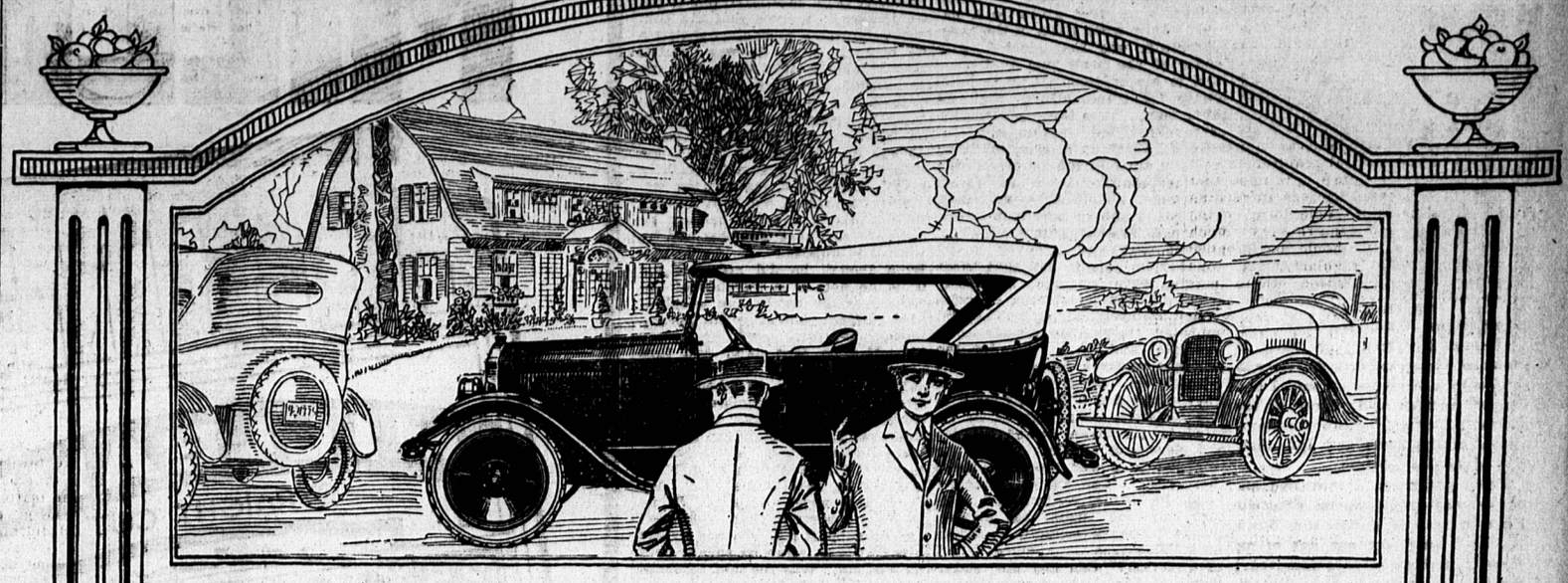

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