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Hon. William Paterson on Reciprocity Agreement

Talks of the Great Benefits that Canadians Will Derive from Closer Trade Relations with the United States--The Remarkable Growth of Foreign Trade Under Liberal Rule--Question Now in the Hands of the People--The Loyalty Cry.

Milton, July 22--Halton County Liberals are preparing for the impending Federal struggle. At a convention held in the Town Hall here this afternoon, attended by delegates from every community in the county they selected with splendid unanimity Mr. Walter Harland Smith of Trafalgar township to be their standard-bearer at the next Dominion elections. In addition to choosing their candidate they listened for an hour and a half to Hon. William Paterson Minister of Customs, and one of the drafters of the reciprocity agreement with the United States.

"Hon. Mr. Paterson at the outset congratulated the convention on its having made a choice of a candidate for the House of Commons who would have an opportunity to prove his mettle in the contest, that would arise sooner or later. He said further: 'I trust that unanimity prevails. I think that as Liberals with such a standard-bearer you ought to give a good account of yourselves, and I also think that as Liberals you need not be afraid or ashamed of the course of the Laurier Government. Ever since the elections of 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908 the Government has been strongly attacked and denounced as a government of incompetence and worse than that. It has been denounced for alleged irregularities, which they attributed to certain members of the Cabinet. Serious charges were laid against Ministers of the Crown, but, needless to say, these were not correct. We pursued the course we thought was in the best interests of the country.'

THE GREAT ISSUE

Turning to the reciprocity issue, Hon. Mr. Paterson pointed out that ever since the announcement of the reciprocity proposals many who had previously denounced the government then praised it. Said the speaker: "One of the great complaints urged against my colleague, Mr. Fielding, and myself is that it would be a shame to do anything which in any way might interrupt the present period of great prosperity in Canada. The Conservatives sang their song, and in singing it they uttered their old charges. It is evident to both political parties that Canada is very prosperous now. The Conservatives admit it; they can't help but admit it. But if the Liberal Government can see a way whereby this prosperous state may be enhanced and the general commercial conditions of our country improved, then they should say 'Let us go on with this improvement.'

The speaker said that the Conservatives invariably attributed the present prosperity of the country to their National Policy. "Suppose I admit for argument's sake that their National Policy is responsible for prosperity, then why not let the Liberals go on and work out this policy? They seem to get more out of this policy than the Conservatives were ever able to."

SECRET OF LIBERAL SUCCESS

Providence has been kind to the Canadian people, but had not the sun shone on the fields and the rain fallen on the fields when the Conservatives were in power? "Providence has blessed the people of Canada," continued the speaker, "and the people of Canada should not forget this; but will you tell me how it is that under Liberal rule of fifteen years there has been an increase in Canada's total trade from \$240,000,000 to over \$800,000,000, while under the eighteen or more years of Conservative rule there was an increase of only \$66,000,000? I know of no explanation of this except one: that is that the Liberal Government have known better how to improve the blessings and opportunities Providence has given us than our Conservative friends. Ever since we came to power we have endeavored to the best of our ability to enhance the prosperity of this country, and today our adversaries, being judges, actually admit Canada's unparalleled progress."

UN ELECTION SOON

The obstructive policy of the Conservatives at Ottawa at the present time came in for comment. The speaker said: "Our Conservative friends are acting queerly just now. Whether of not they will force a dissolution upon us it is for them to say, but it cannot be long before there will be an appeal to the people. It can't be long in the constitutional order of things. And when the appeal is made it will be made on the reciprocity agreement looking

toward freer trade relations between Canada and the United States.

IN THE PEOPLE'S HANDS

After humorous allusions to the cartoons of himself and Hon. Mr. Fielding which had appeared in the various newspapers and saying that none of them contained any striking likeness to either of them, and that so far as his own case was concerned it must have been the fault of the subject, Hon. Mr. Paterson briefly reviewed the history of the negotiations between Canada and the United States in regard to reciprocity for the past forty years. In concluding this review he said: "We were but the instruments of the Canadian Parliament. It is in your hands to say whether or not Canada shall have freer trade relations with the United States. Fielding or Paterson cannot take your rights away not by one jot or tittle. Our opponents today are obstructing legislation, making long weary speeches not with a view to giving information, but just consuming valuable time. What their object is I don't know. They threaten to prevent the granting of supplies necessary for the carrying on of the government. What will be the outcome? If they don't appeal to the people we will. We Liberals are never afraid of an appeal to the people. When the time comes for a general election constitutionally then there will be a redistribution of seats in the country, so it is possible that some Provinces may lose some of their seats. Others may gain seats."

LOYALTY CRY AN INSULT

The Minister of Customs then proceeded to discuss the various points of objection taken to the reciprocity agreement. One was: Let well enough alone. Prosperity was manifest on every side but this was no argument against adopting measures calculated to improve the present conditions good as they were. The second point was that having freer trade relations with the United States would tend to weaken the ties that bind Canada to the Empire. Said Mr. Paterson: "This agreement implies an insult and should be considered in that light. But have you ever noticed who are making this special objection? Most of them are men who are investing millions in the

United States to move the United States crops and develop United States resources. They are uttering this insult and they fear that the firm principles of loyalty amongst our agriculturists might suffer should they sell an extra steer or hog to the United States."

The third point of objection was that reciprocity might injure Canada's preferential trade relations with Great Britain. Criticizing this stand, the speaker said: "They denounced us for establishing preferential trade relations with Great Britain; now they denounce us for doing something which they think will injure those relations. Such men are very hard to please. We have the same liberty now to establish trade relations with the mother country as before. But the British people in the last few elections have said no. They want free trade with the world, and do not want to grant special privileges to the colonies. But we have shown our loyalty to Great Britain our shield, our guide, our defender, by reducing the duties on stuff coming in from the mother country. Our Conservative friends tell us we should not give preference to Great Britain unless we get preference from them. This present agreement with the United States does not in any way tie our hands. We are free as ever to enter into preferential trade relations with Great Britain."

GOVERNMENT'S DUTY

Hon. Mr. Paterson then dealt with the objection to the effect that Canada should not endanger her commerce after spending such huge sums of money on her railways and canals and in improving her transportation facilities generally. Answering this he said: "We believe that when the great agricultural interests have done their part in production it is the Government's duty to provide for them the best markets in which to sell their products."

After pointing out that the agreement was not a treaty and that there was nothing compulsory about it, and that if one man should oppose it, he should not prevent his neighbor who wanted it from availing himself of its benefits, the Minister of Customs concluded with a glowing tribute to Sir Wilfrid Laurier saying: "He reflects glory upon you as his supporters."

GREAT MEN FAIL TO AGREE

Acting Premier Flemming and Hon. Mr. McLeod Discuss the Valley Railway Negotiations and Arrive at Different Conclusions

(Hon. Mr. Flemming in The St. John Standard.)

Hon. J. K. Flemming, acting premier, arrived in the city yesterday from Ottawa, where a conference was held last week with reference to the Valley Railway. Speaking of the result, Mr. Flemming said the negotiations were very satisfactory and great progress was made, many points being discussed and determined. WHILE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE PUBLIC THE DETAILS AT THE PRESENT STAGE, HE FORESAW NO SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES AHEAD TO PREVENT DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS ON ALL POINTS BEING REACHED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

IN REPLY TO A QUESTION AS TO WHO WILL BUILD THE RAILWAY, MR. FLEMMING SAID IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY DEFINITELY. SOME FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WERE NECESSARY BEFORE A DECISION COULD BE ARRIVED AT.

Referring to the fact that the time for beginning construction, four months from the date the act was proclaimed, expired on July 20, Mr. Flemming said as a result of the negotiations a number of amendments would have to be made to the act passed last year. The standard of construction had been changed and there were other important alterations. If a contract were entered into before the legislature met, it could be provided for by an enactment on the part of the provincial government to promote the necessary legislation.

"I can repeat with more faith and greater emphasis the statement I made in Meductic in March last, that I believe before the end of the present season work on the railway will be under way."

(Hon. Mr. McLeod in The Fredericton Gleaner.)

Hon. Mr. McLeod previously made a statement regarding the St. John Valley Railway. He said: "While at Ottawa we had a number of conferences regarding the St. John Valley Railway with representatives of the federal government. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ST. JOHN AND QUEBEC RAILWAY COMPANY WERE AT OTTAWA AND WE HAD GENERAL CONFERENCES WITH THEM AND THEIR COUNSEL, MR. FRASER, AN OTTAWA LAWYER, AND BETWEEN US WE AGREED UPON A CONTRACT SO THAT NOW IT HAS BEEN AGREED UPON SO FAR AS THE COMPANY AND OUR GOVERNMENT ARE CONCERNED, ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT BEEN EXECUTED AS YET."

"So far as the Provincial government is concerned, the work could be started if we could have it so. Our position simply is that we are prepared to carry out in the form of an agreement the verbal agreement reached at the conference at St. John. When that is done by the party of the second part there is nothing in the world to stop the work going on. MR. GOULD IS EQUALLY ANXIOUS THAT THE WORK START AT ONCE AND IS PREPARED TO START CONSTRUCTION WORK AS SOON AS THEY MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DO SO."

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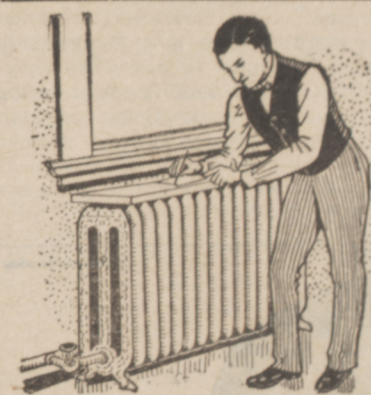
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