

The Public

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Reciprocity With Canada.

The fall-down of "Reciprocity" at the Canadian elections was truly humptydumpty. "All the king's horses and all the king's men," with President Taft's to boot, cannot effect a restoration—neither of Reciprocity now nor of Protectionism in the end.

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Freetraders were wise in supporting Mr. Taft's reciprocity agreement, for it was proposed and had to be defended, as even President Taft did defend it, on Free-trade principles. Protectionism was thus fractured by its friends. Wiser still will Freetraders be if they rejoice in the defeat of this agreement by Protectionists across the Canadian border, for that makes the fracture all the more disastrous.

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A "fake" of the first water was this Reciprocity agreement. Its principal purpose was to pacify newspapers on our side of the border, which with one accord were screaming in pain over the extortions of the protected print-paper trust. Incidentally, it was intended to put the insurgent Republicans into a political hole, by forcing upon them the alternative of opposing important financial interests of big newspapers, while President Taft "slid from under," or of offending agricultural constituencies in the Northwest, where, from Protectionist points of view, the Reciprocity agree-

ment would have "hit hard." The Canadian elections have mussed up all these pretty political plans. Although Mr. Taft did secure a chorus of friendly newspaper shouts with his Freetrade policy for print-paper, and although some insurgent Republicans were temporarily embarrassed, the Canadian elections clear the atmosphere in American politics; not to the satisfaction of Mr. Taft, to be sure, but for the public good. Nor is there any loss in popular value of a single one of the Freetrade arguments that President Taft and the newspapers have advanced in support of Canadian reciprocity.



If Canada had adopted that agreement, our newspapers might have been satisfied to continue their championship of Protection robbery in other than print-paper transactions, but it is hardly likely that they will do so now. Already reports are current that indicate higher prices for print-paper in consequence of the defeat of Canadian reciprocity. So newspapers will probably have to continue taking "pot luck" with other American consumers in this game of forcing excessive price burdens upon consumption for the benefit of monopoly interests in production. They are more likely, therefore, than they otherwise might have been, to grow in grace in all Freetrade directions.



Not only was this particular Reciprocity agreement a "fake" for fooling voters with, but reciprocity itself, as a principle of international trade, is a false principle, and in practice as an international policy it would be dangerous. It is a false principle because it rests upon that fallacy of Protectionism that free trade countries are at a disadvantage in their commercial relations with protection countries, which is obviously unsound in doctrine and evidently untrue of experience. It would be dangerous as a policy of international trade because it doubles the opportunity for special monopoly interests to manipulate for special protection. This danger is exemplified by the Canadian reciprocity agreement. First, there was a joint commission to formulate the agreement. The commission may not have manipulated in behalf of special interests, but its opportunity was good. Then the officials in power in both governments had to be consulted and satisfied with compromises between interests; and by the same token, so had their party supporters in business circles. Then the agreement had to go through Congress, where special interests might pull all sorts of secret wires. And after that, if by any

possibility the agreement had been unsatisfactory to dominant special interests, those interests could fight it all over again in Canada as in this case they did. All reciprocity agreements must pass through those possibilities of corrupt manipulation, the almost inevitable result of which would be agreements that serve such special financial interests as are involved, and at the expense of public interests. Every consideration that weighs against Freetrade weighs against Reciprocity agreements, and many more; every consideration that can be urged for Reciprocity agreements is a stronger one for Freetrade. Only special interests are benefited by Protection, and only the most influential special interests can be benefited by Reciprocity agreements.



None the less though were those Freetraders in the right, both as to principle and policy, who supported the Canadian reciprocity agreement while it was conspicuous as an issue. It would have been suicidal for them to reject a measure of Freetrade offered by a Protectionist President. It would have been unfortunate for their cause if an anti-Protection Congress had defeated the agreement. And, affirmatively, if the agreement had been confirmed on both sides of the border, their cause would have had the benefit of an object lesson for Freetrade. They were striking at a weak place in the fortifications of Protection. But the defeat of the reciprocity agreement by Canada, by Protectionists in Canada, by the reactionary tory party of Canada, should be worth more to Freetrade than its confirmation would have been. The circumstances taken together can hardly fail to break the ranks of the Protection legions and throw them into hopeless confusion. Even as an object lesson, the higher prices of food on the American side, following upon the heels of the Canadian election, must have a salutary effect upon the opinions of American consumers. Meanwhile, President Taft may have opportunity to reflect upon the political advantages and other values of his veto of a home measure for freer trade in wool, and of the veto by Canada of his overtures for reciprocity.



Labor Strikes and Hunger Strikes.

Familiarity with labor strikes has obscured their essential meaning, a meaning which the consumers' food strikes of Europe are now bringing to attention. Economically, the classes in each kind of strike and their interests in the matter are the