

Tariff Sledge Hammering Helps Give U. S. and Canada Economic Headache

BY WALKER STONE

Times Staff Writer
WASHINGTON, June 9.—The United States always has been Canada's best customer, and for decades Canada has been the United States' best or second-best—alternating with Great Britain.

Business men usually try to make their best customers even better ones. But the United States and Canada through the years have

pounded each other on the head with tariffs.

This tariff sledge-hammering has contributed more than a little to the economic headache now suffered by both countries.

The two English-speaking nations of North America are one unit, viewed from the standpoint of geography and economics. Natural trade channels cross and recross the border. But politics defies economics. And

along the most peaceful and least fortified frontier in the world, Canadian and American politicians have erected barricades to commerce.

Intermittently statesmen in Ottawa and Washington have talked about the necessity of halting the trend toward economic nationalism and recognizing by reciprocal tariff treaties the commercial interdependence of the two peoples.

Today this talk in both political capitals is louder and more persistent than it has been at any time in twenty years. Whether the politicians will contribute anything more than lip service remains to be seen. A few observers are hopeful. Others are skeptical.

From 1854 to 1866, the United States had what amounted to a reciprocal trade treaty with the United Provinces of Canada. That treaty

was terminated in 1867 when the Dominion government was formed. Since 1867, repeated efforts have been made to knock down tariffs, and all have met with failure.

Perhaps the inability of the neighbor nations to get together can be explained by the coincidence that the low-tariff political parties in the two countries—the Liberals in Canada and the Democrats in the United States—have been simultaneously in power only for a short period of six months.

That was in 1896-97, when the Cleveland administration was going out in Washington and the Laurier government was coming in in Ottawa.

The nearest approach to establishment of a reciprocity trade agreement came in 1911, when the Republican-Taft administration negotiated a treaty with the Laurier-Liberal government. That treaty

was ratified by the United States senate, but it was rejected by the parliament in Canada, where the Conservatives seized upon the issue to drive Liberals from power.

The election campaign in Canada that followed the signing of the 1911 treaty is bizarre chapter in her political history.

Conservative spellbinders made the Canadians believe they were voting on a question of annexation, not reciprocity. Jingling was at a high pitch

in the senate, referred to the Canadian market as "an adjunct to the American market."

Democratic House Leader Champ Clark said recklessly that he would be glad to see the day "when the Stars and Stripes will wave over all North America."

American statesmen unwittingly played into the hands of the Canadian Conservatives.

President Taft, in a message to

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