

Hull Gains; Hitler Loses

Our country yesterday concluded trade bargains with its two best customers, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The deal with Canada renews and enlarges an agreement which has been operative for three years, during which time commerce between the two countries has been greatly increased and—to quote Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King—relations “have never been happier.”

The compact with the United Kingdom is something new, and monumental. For England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Newfoundland and the non-self-governing British colonies—in whose behalf this 20th United States reciprocity trade pact is signed—are all now brought without the orbit of Secretary Hull's program.

It is important as a straight business deal. It will bring immediate benefits to the United States and the United Kingdom and all other countries who conduct their commerce on a guaranteed non-discriminatory basis (which excludes Germany). It will benefit the American wheat farmer, who again has gained equal and duty-free access to the British market—a market that in recent years has been partially closed to him by the six-cents-a-bushel preference which Britain gave to its dominions. It will benefit the American cotton farmer, because it freezes cotton on Britain's free-trade list, thereby ending the threat of preferred treatment of empire cotton. It will benefit American producers of lard and meat and tobacco and a wide range of fruits and vegetables. And, being a quid-pro-quo proposition, it will benefit British producers of leather goods, chinaware, high-grade textiles, whisky and other commodities. And that's not mentioning the benefits that will flow to consumers through lower prices and to those engaged in handling and transporting goods in the ports and on the seas.

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But there is in this deal something of far greater importance than the immediate trade benefits.

For it is not too much to say that if this long-awaited and laboriously negotiated treaty had not been consummated, it might have meant the end of progress toward Secretary Hull's ideal of promoting peace among nations through greater trade and equal treatment among nations.

The world is now locked in a grim conflict to determine how the world's trade shall be carried on. Secretary Hull's program calls for treating all nations alike, and each time he signs a new treaty he adds to the area and population of the world subscribing to that program. Adolf Hitler's program is one of granting and withholding trade favors, of making two-way deals between Germany and others which discriminate against the rest of the world. His is a program of bargains by threat, designed to force the flow of commerce along Germany's political and economic axis. It is a program which leads inevitably to reprisals, and the uncertainties and bitterness of economic warfare—the very opposite of conditions so necessary to a world seeking peace.

Secretary Hull's trade agreements now embrace nations which control 40 per cent of the world's trade. The greatest and latest addition is the United Kingdom. It should now be much easier to win other nations over to the Hull plan. Mr. Hull can now offer other nations a greater inducement to pledge non-discrimination, and Herr Hitler's power to compel them to play his brand of ball is correspondingly weakened.

That being so, yesterday's new agreement, with all its inadequacies and omissions, is a good agreement. It couldn't have been a bad one.