

# Buy Canadian

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Marco Polo is considered one of the first, maybe the original, true explorer.

The Venetian-born merchant travelled the Silk Road into the heart of China between the years 1271 and 1295.

At the time, most of the Eastern world was unknown to Europeans.

Polo travelled to what was then known as 'Cathay', in northern China.

He made a good impression and was welcomed to the royal court of Kublai Khan.

Polo made a lot of good, to him, discoveries during his travels.

Later in his life, a book titled, 'The Travels of Marco Polo,' detailed his experiences in the Far East giving Europeans their first comprehensive look into China, Persia, India, Japan and other Asian societies.

During his travels, Polo returned to Europe with a lot of new ideas as well as new products he had found. It gave Europeans new ideas and opened the concept of trade with a faraway place.

Trade between neighbours, businesses, towns, regions and nations has always been part of society.

You have something your neighbour needs, and he has something you require. You trade back and forth to produce a supply for a demand.

It's a very simple economic way of doing things.

'I'll take some of those coconuts you have because we can't grow them here, and I'll send you some wheat you need to make bread and keep your people fed.'

Tariffs are not new. Many nations impose tariffs from time to time.

The usual reason is to reduce the importation of goods and services by increasing their prices and for the protection of domestic producers.

There can be a lot of good in that if you're the producer and foreign products are flooding the market and out-selling your market.

Tariffs are also used to raise revenue and exert political leverage over another country.

U.S. President Donald Trump has now imposed tariffs against Canada, China, and Mexico - its biggest trading partners.

What will it do for the U.S.? Probably nothing except raise the cost of goods they need.

Trump seems to have some kind of bone to pick with Canada. I'm not sure why.

We have always been good neighbours and for the most part, have supported them in international efforts.

Of course, Canada will respond with tariffs of its own. That will of course hurt U.S. manufacturers who sell plenty of products here.

?You see these empty, old, beautiful steel mills and factories that are empty and falling down,? Trump said in October 2024, when on the campaign trail. ?We're going to bring the companies back. We're going to lower taxes for companies that are going to make their products in the USA. And we're going to protect those companies with strong tariffs.?

Trump is dreaming on this one. The manufacturing base in the U.S. dried up years ago, and new companies emerged in different industries.

Investors aren't going to start pouring billions and billions of dollars to once again start building widget factories.

Whether they like it, most manufactured products and electronics in the U.S. now come from China.

Consumers are going to get angry very quickly when they need to purchase a new refrigerator only to find the cost of an already expensive item just went up 25 per cent because of imposed tariffs.

There used to be a gas station in western New York that advertised on radio all the time.

?We don't sell gas from the Middle East,? the ad always said. ?We get our gas from Canada, our friends to the north.?

That meant something to the average American.

I was in a local liquor store this afternoon when a discussion broke out at the cash register. One man buying a product was reading the label to make sure it was Canadian-manufactured.

Another customer was carefully reading the label because she said she would not purchase a product if it had any ingredients that weren't grown in Canada.

If Trump wants to play his ridiculous game, it's going to backfire and he's going to shoot himself in the foot. A protectionist attitude never works when it comes to the economy.

That attitude only closes foreign markets and stops a company from expanding into a larger market.

I'm not sure what the average American thinks of all this, but from the man-on-the-street interviews I've seen, they seem to have no idea what tariffs on their three largest trading partners will accomplish.

In the meantime, buy Canadian and support our businesses.

Sooner or later, someone in the States will fiercely lobby the federal government demanding reasonable access to Canadian lumber exports.