

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WEST

The "Public" of Chicago, in its review of Edward Porritt's "The Revolt in Canada Against the New Feudalism," makes a statement of much significance to the Grain Growers of the West at this juncture in the movement for reciprocity and a lower tariff. "The reader," remarks the "Public," "can see that these Canadian insurgents may perform a real service to themselves and their country, and, by influence and example, to other countries, by being stout and faithful in their revolt against what Mr. Porritt calls the New Feudalism." The movement that began when Sir Wilfrid Laurier was in these provinces in July and August last year and was continued by the remarkable demonstration at Ottawa of December 16 has attracted more attention in the United States and in England than any popular political movement in the Dominion of Canada since Confederation. London newspapers have sent their correspondents out here to make the movement understood in England; and much sympathetic attention has been bestowed on it by British newspapers and British parliamentarians and publicists. Great expectations have been formed in connection with it by the progressive democracy of England; and the remarks we have quoted from the "Public" are proof that the progressive democracy of the United States is interested and hopeful. No popular political movement in Canada ever had such world-wide attention or was accorded so much popular sympathy in other lands. All this carries with it a great responsibility for every man and woman who has so far been associated with this political uprising in the West. It must be made to succeed for the sake of the West and for the sake of the Dominion, and also to justify the hopes and expectations that the movement has aroused in the democracy of England and of the United States.

RE MR. STAPLES' LETTER

We have received the following letter from Mr. John Robertson, Bradwell, Sask.:

"In your issue of the 12th inst. you apologize to your readers for publishing Mr. Staples' letter to your good self. Now, sir, I feel sure that a number of your readers do not consider an apology was necessary in this instance. In fact, I think you are to be congratulated in giving some farmers a chance of seeing the other side of the question and of thinking for themselves. I for one agree with what Mr. Staples says regarding the reciprocity pact, and I think you will find that there is a growing feeling in the West against this reciprocity agreement, notwithstanding the support it has from The Guide."

Anyone who read our statement regarding Mr. Staples' letter will at once see that we apologized only on account of the space it took and the abuse it contained. We are not only willing but glad to publish the very best possible arguments for and against reciprocity. We desire to give our readers the fullest possible information on the agreement.

A STUDY IN CONSISTENCY

On December 15, 1910, the executive of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association passed the following resolution and has asked the Boards of Trade in Canada to endorse it:

"Whereas the railway act gives the board of railway commissioners power to disallow any tariff or any portion thereof which it considers unjust or unreasonable or contrary to any of the provisions of the act, and to prescribe in lieu thereof other tolls in lieu of the tolls so disallowed, only after the tariff complained of has actually come into effect;

"And whereas the act provides no satisfactory method of avoiding the burden of an increased tariff until proved by actual experience that it is unreasonable, the burden of such proof being upon the public;

"And whereas, as no carrier is compelled to lower a tariff without a hearing, the public

should not be compelled to suffer an increased burden without the same opportunity to be heard; he it resolved that the hon. the minister of railways and canals be asked to amend the railway act so as to give authority to the board of railway commissioners, either upon complaint or upon its own motion, to suspend the operation of any tariff or regulation for a sufficient time to permit of a full hearing as would be proper in the proceeding initiated after the tariff became effective, the burden of the proof to be on the carrier to show that the increased tariff or regulation is just or reasonable."

The Winnipeg Board of Trade approved of the above resolution unanimously on April 18. We offer no criticism to such an action on the part of the Manufacturers' Association. The point, however, to which we wish to call attention is that the Manufacturers' Association refuse to give any "just or reasonable" explanation for their demand for a protective customs tariff. Taking them upon their own ground as set forth in the above resolution, there should be absolutely no protection afforded to any industry unless that industry can publicly show "just and reasonable" cause for protection. Yet never has there been such information given publicly. Nor should the manufacturers put up such a wail of sorrow as they do when the farmers demand that protection be eliminated. Let the manufacturers be consistent and they will be liable to receive more consideration. Let them give public proof that they need protection. The people are waiting for that proof.

PLUNDERBUND

A Saskatchewan subscriber sends us an editorial clipping from the Toronto News, saying that it meets his views. The point of the article is that if the manufacturers are selfish in demanding protection, then the farmers are selfish in demanding reciprocity. The following is an extract from the article:

"Curiously enough we learn that the Western farmers and all other farmers who favor free trade are not selfish. They are patriots. If a farmer thinks that the goods that he buys are too dear, he advocates a reduction of duties. He does not think of the industrial activities of the country nor of the men depending upon them for a livelihood. He wants a cheaper shirt or a cheaper hat. He wants a wider market for his products. He wants high prices for wheat and hogs and cattle. The farmer does not employ many men. He pays for unskilled labor, but if he wants lower duties he is a patriot. He is not thinking of his own petty affairs. His whole passion is for the interest of the country as a whole."

This should be read in connection with another expression of opinion recently given in the same journal as follows:

"A preference of several cents a bushel in the British market which is now in sight, but for the unfortunate Washington agreement, would place the Canadian farmer in such an enviable position that the influx of immigration would be enormously increased. Farmers would swarm into the West in millions, the land would be swiftly brought under cultivation and its rising value would be rapidly accelerated."

Thus, The News, which is the most persistent of the anti-reciprocity journals in Canada, and which is particularly strong in its claims of loyalty to the British Empire, advocates a new policy of plunder for the Canadian farmers. The News says the farmers should not advocate tariff reduction in Canada, because it will lessen the manufacturers' gift from the people, but that the Canadian farmers should have a preference in the British market by which they will get a few cents per bushel more for their wheat at the expense of the British working man. Of course the preference is not in sight, but the argument is none the less remarkable. The Canadian farmers, according to The News, should submit to be plundered by the Canadian manufacturers and in turn should subscribe to a contract to plunder the British working men.

RECIPROCITY AT WASHINGTON

The House of Representatives at Washington passed the Canadian reciprocity agreement on April 21 by a vote of 265 for and 89 against. There were no amendments made to the agreement, but according to despatches there was a section added to it which authorized and requested President Taft to make further efforts to secure even freer trade relations with Canada in the form of additional reciprocal arrangements. Thus when the American Senate has ratified the agreement Canada will be able to lower her tariff and receive reciprocal reductions in the American tariff at the same time. It is evident that the feeling of the people in the United States is as decidedly against protection as it is in Canada. These two Anglo-Saxon peoples are tired of having a stone wall between them which benefits only a few Special Privileged classes in each country. The debate in the House of Representatives lasted but six days, which is a good example for the Canadian House of Commons.

We have been informed by a member of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly that our statement in regard to the increase in the sessional indemnity at the last session of the Saskatchewan legislature was incorrect. We stated that the Saskatchewan sessional indemnity was raised from \$1,000 to \$1,100, whereas it was raised to \$1,500. We regret the error made and are glad to make this correction. We also apologize to every member of the Saskatchewan legislature for under-estimating the value which they place upon their own services. The Saskatchewan legislators evidently resent the imputation that when the provincial treasury was opened that they could not grab as big a handful as could the members of the Manitoba legislature. If this matter becomes a rivalry between the two legislatures, we tremble for the effect upon the treasuries.

The steel industry is still insisting upon a renewal of its bounties. The little item of \$17,000,000 is not enough for this "infant" industry. The Liberal members at Ottawa have left the matter in the hands of the government. It seems that the bounty is demanded to save the life of the local Liberal government in Nova Scotia, and not chiefly because it is needed to keep the steel industry alive. The Liberal government has been in power in Nova Scotia for more than thirty years. Surely it cannot claim to be an "infant." If the bounties are renewed it will be in direct opposition to the wishes of almost the entire people of Canada. The government will do well to heed this fact.

Every member of the House of Commons has already decided which way he will vote on the reciprocity agreement, and the people of Canada have expressed their views after being in full possession of the facts. It does not seem reasonable that public money should be wasted by further discussion. No good can come of prolonging the debate. When the House prorogues the members can take all the time they wish at their own expense to "educate" their constituents for or against reciprocity. A gladiatorial contest in the House of Commons to be decided by lung power does not appeal to Canadians.

Hon. George E. Foster, M.P., calls the Grain Growers "organized agitators" and "poor farmers." Evidently he thinks that the Western farmers have no right to express their opinions and to demand what they believe to be their rights.

The Dominion government has definitely announced that there will be no election until after the redistribution of seats following the census. This will give the West a considerable gain in representation which is due this part of Canada.

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