

ing itself in different ways. The prestige of the old chieftain who so often led the Conservative forces to victory was buried with him. Notwithstanding the unquestioned ability of the leader to whom the choice of the party was virtually shut up, distrust, if not positive dislike, has in many Conservative bosoms taken the place of the intense loyalty which made the will of the departed chieftain the law for his followers. This tendency to distrust has no doubt been strengthened in no small degree by the system of compensation and counterpoise to which the present Premier found or fancied himself obliged to resort in the construction of his Cabinet. The resulting mosaic, however skilfully put together, has not caught the popular fancy, even within the party. It is generally felt that the necessity which led to the existing combination was inimical to the choice of the strongest material. Besides the Premier and the Minister of Finance, the number of statesmen of proved and recognized ability in the Government is, it must be admitted, not large enough to beget that confidence and enthusiasm which are the sinews of party loyalty.

We are enumerating some of the circumstances which have conspired to bring about the state of unrest which has given to the Liberal leaders hope, and has stimulated them to make the bold, and, from the party point of view, somewhat dubious experiment to which they are now committed. But, unless we are greatly mistaken, we have not yet touched upon the most potent factor in producing the political situation as it now is. When Sir John Macdonald led his victorious hosts to victory, under the banner of the "National Policy," every student of political affairs knew that the real secret of his sudden triumph was to be found in the world-wide depression in trade and business of every kind which at that time paralyzed industry and created almost universal discontent and distress. The old system had failed to bring or maintain prosperity. It was therefore condemned, and the people were not only ready but anxious for a change. They were predisposed to welcome any new policy which might be skilfully set before them as a means by which the cloud could be dispelled and prosperity restored. The N. P. was adopted, and *post hoc*, whether *propter hoc*, or not, the cloud was gradually dispelled and the sun of returning prosperity began to shine. Shrewd observers were not wanting then who prophesied that so long as the "good times" lasted the system of protection would be popular, but that the next wave of depression, sure to come after a term of years, would dispel the delusion and open up the way for a return to a revenue tariff. The "hard times" have returned, and there are not wanting indications that the prophecy may shortly be fulfilled.

Which of the old parties is destined to lead the people by gradual stages back to the revenue-tariff system, or whether the

change will be effected through the agency of new leaders and a new party, remains to be seen. Much will depend upon the action of the Government, which has promised to investigate the subject and to initiate any needed reforms. If they are wise to understand the signs of the times and to see what is demanded of them they may forestall both their old and their new opponents. If they adhere, as they now declare their intention of doing, to the principle of protection and make but slight changes in detail, and if the Liberals in council can but manage to weld their inharmonious schemes and proposals into a logical and consistent policy, and become united in its support—and these are large postulates—their chances will be, as we have said, much better than they have been at any time during the last ten or twelve years.

SPECIFIC DUTIES.

A good deal of agitation is going on, in favour of the total abandonment of specific duties, and the application of the ad-valorem principle to all articles imported. A few cases of apparent injustice to the industrial classes are sought to be established, and on such slender premises, a radical change of our tariff system is demanded. Without attempting to uphold the justice or fairness of every one of the items of specific duties, and even admitting the necessity of important amendments, it may be clearly shown that the proposed change would result in greater evils than advantages. One of the strongest arguments in favour of the specific duties is its tendency to shut out inferior or adulterated goods.

Among the articles in the shape of groceries on which specific duties are now levied, are:—Ale and beer, spirits and wines, baking powders, rice and sago flour, wax and other candles, chicory, coffee roasted, cider, cocoanuts and preparations, dried fruits of all kinds, nuts, pickles, sauces and catsups, soap common and fancy, starch, refined sugar, molasses, sugar syrups, candies, tobaccos of all kinds, canned fruits, tomatoes, jellies, jams, mustard, lime juice, etc.

It is certainly desirable that pure unadulterated groceries should be imported and sold. The very great difficulty in detecting adulterations in most of the above articles, makes the prohibition or prevention of their importation a sound policy. Under specific duties, the adulterated and cheaper article, pays the same duty per gallon or pound as is paid by the pure and more valuable article, so that the present system encourages the import of the better, and discourages the import of the inferior goods.

In drugs, dyes and chemicals there is a long list of those which are subject to specific duties, or partly specific and ad-valorem. Surely no one will contend that a pound or gallon of impure drugs, dyes or chemicals should be allowed to be imported for a less amount of duty than is charged on the same quantity of pure goods.

Among manufactured articles which may be classed together, and on which specific duties are collected, and sometimes in connection with ad-valorem

duties, are:—Carriages and waggons, mowers, reapers, binders, etc. musical instruments, billiard tables, printed posters, labels and music, plate glass, etc. All these articles are subject to specific duties, mainly because under ad-valorem duties, the culled and inferior carriages, buggies, farm waggons, musical instruments, etc. of American factories would, under a mere nominal ad-valorem duty, be dumped upon Canada, and the country would be flooded with showy but worthless articles. As the specific duties on organs, pianos, carriages, buggies, waggons, billiard tables, etc., are graduated according to their value, it cannot be said of them that the specific duties favour the wealthier class.

In the case of dry goods, especially cottons and woollens, much may be said in disparagement of the present tariff arrangements. Bleached and unbleached sheetings, drills, ducks, etc., are subject to a duty of 1ct. per square yard, and 15 per cent. ad-valorem; gingham and plaids, dyed or coloured, 2cts. per square yard, and 15 per cent.; wadding, batting, etc., undyed or coloured, 2cts. per lb. and 15 per cent.; coloured or dyed, 3 cts. per lb. and 15 per cent.; knitting and hosiery yarn, dyed or coloured, 3 cts. per lb. and 15 per cent.; socks and stockings, 10 cts. per lb. and 30 per cent.; wine ys, 2 cts. per square yard and 15 per cent. It is evident that these duties involve a great deal of trouble in making entries, and some little difficulty in classifying. During the year 1891-92, the cotton manufacturers were allowed to import 42,075,440 lbs. of raw cotton, valued at \$3,389,232, free of duty. The total imports of cotton goods amounted to \$4,330,000, on which the duty collected was \$1,211,518, averaging about 28 per cent. Viewed in the light of a revenue tariff, manufacturers were obtaining by the free entry of cotton, a bonus of about \$948,000, as compared with foreign merchandise of this class, which pays duty on the whole product. The amount of duty collected under the specific rates was about \$46,000. With the continuance of free imports of cotton, the specific duties on manufactured cottons might be very well dispensed with, and ad-valorem duties only be imposed, ranging from 20 per cent. on cheap grades, up to 35 per cent. on fine qualities, and not averaging over 25 per cent. all round.

In the case of woollen goods, the maintenance of specific duties is not only justifiable but judicious. One reason is that inasmuch as Canada produces a large quantity of wool, the manufacture of woollen goods provides for the farmer a better market for their wool than could be realized by exporting the wool and afterwards importing it in the shape of blankets, flannels, cloths, etc. In addition to the wool of Canadian growth, Canada imported in 1891-92, 10,224,086 lbs foreign wool, valued at \$1,694,702, and admitted free of duty. On all cloths and many other woollen goods there is a specific duty of 10 cents per lb. in addition to ad-valorem duties ranging from 17 1/2 to 30 per cent. A strong case is attempted to be made against the specific duties on woollen goods because they bear severely upon cheap cloths and blankets and flannels. This is true enough to a certain extent.