

The Fallacy of "Free Food" Exposed

CUSTOMS DUTIES NOT THE CAUSE.

Here we find a general increase in the cost of living of thirty-five points, in fourteen years—a period in which there certainly were no increases in the tariff, with the slight exception of a small increase on biscuits, these being then manufactured by Hon. William Paterson, Laurier's Minister of Customs.

In face of the indisputable fact that while for fifteen years we have had a **stationary tariff but continuously increasing prices**, will any man be so blinded by partizanship as to say that the increased cost of living depends upon what Sir Wilfrid is pleased to call "Food Taxes"?

Is it not manifest to anyone possessed of the least understanding that food prices have some principle of growth quite apart from the Customs Tariff?

At the present time it is quite natural that the people should ask Sir Wilfrid Laurier why it was that in the fifteen years that he held office he did not abolish the duties, and lower the price of food-stuffs? If this question had been put to Sir Wilfrid Laurier at any time before his defeat in 1911, we can be morally certain that he would have replied something like this: "I lowered the tariff on food-stuffs in 1897, and so far from the cost of living having gone down from that date, it has steadily gone up, and it is therefore manifest to me that it is vain to expect relief from a further lowering of the tariff."

That would have constituted a perfectly sound and logical answer in 1911, and it constitutes a perfectly sound and logical answer to the "Free Fooders" contentions now.

EVEN IF TARIFF IS REDUCED THERE IS NO CHEAP FOOD AVAILABLE

But even if we concede a single merit to Sir Wilfrid's policy, and admit that there is just the least possible chance