

# THE WOOLLEN INDUSTRY

Address by C. I. ALEXANDER.

**M**R. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN—Perhaps before laying my views before this numerous and influential meeting, it may be as well to explain how I come to take such an interest in the Woollen Industry of this vast Dominion affiliated by so many ties of interest and sentiment to the Mother Country.

For over forty years I have been engaged actively in business, both as a merchant and manufacturer, in Scotland, and it has been my privilege to represent the South of Scotland Chamber of Commerce as President, and as a fellow of the Associated Chambers of Great Britain and Ireland, in which capacity I was sent to advise with Parliamentary Committees on tariff questions, and had the opportunity of meeting the best and brightest minds in the commercial and political world, and here I may state that the free trade policy was the general sentiment of the Associated Chambers, although we are not without a minority who were strongly protectionist—for myself, I was then, and am still, quite clear as to the free trade principle being for the best interests of Great Britain. So that in coming to this side of the Atlantic, I came as a free trader; and for some years before my eyes were opened by the X rays of practical demonstration, I advocated the free trade policy. My object in telling you this is to show you how strong and clear must have been the practical facts which there was no gainsaying, to have converted a bred-in-the-bone Cobden and Bright free trader like myself. I lived in

the States when the first McKinley bill was in force, also under the reduced Wilson tariff, and having had exceptional opportunities of observing the workings of these different measures designed for the advancement of the various industries of that country, I am now of the settled conviction that a tariff that does really protect is under the conditions there and here existing absolutely necessary, and has had the effect of bettering the condition of all classes and raising the standard of living, especially for working men.

Under the reduced Wilson Tariff all domestic industries suffered. Foreign importations increased and domestic manufacturers were displaced; whilst under the Dingley Tariff, foreign importations were checked, and correspondingly domestic manufacturers took their place, and, as a result, houses that formerly dealt exclusively in foreign goods were glad to substitute domestic in their place; and further, under this fostering influence American manufacturers improved in the style and quality of their product, and by ensuring to the manufacturer their home market in its entirety, increased production has enabled the manufacturer to keep prices on such a level as to make their prosperity no burden to the rest of the community.

This point, I want to emphasize and drive home, as it is self-evident to everyone who has ever been engaged in the manufacturing industry.

In other words, instead of a mill having to offer, say, 500 styles to keep the