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THE ADVOCACY OF WILD PROJECTS.

Times of depression always furnish an opportunity to many well-meaning persons to get a hearing for the cry that the people perish for lack of knowledge of their particular nostrums for the ills of the body politic. If any one wants to see an assortment of these nostrums let him peruse the editorial and correspondence columns of The Farmers' Sun, the mouthpiece of the Patrons of Ontario. The Sun is a sort of dispensary for a stock of economic lymphs, boluses, salves and emulsions compounded for the good of society in general and of the Canadian farmer in particular, and which range all the way from a plank for

the abolition of the gardeners attached to Government house to the enormous revolution involved in the proposition that we should get rid of existing methods of collecting revenue and trust to the taxation of land values as expounded by Henry George, who borrowed it from John Stuart Mill, who got it from the French physiocrats of the eighteenth century. But whereas Mill proposed to compensate the individual owners of farm land and town lots for the loss of the "unearned increment," Mr. George and his Canadian disciples advocate confiscation, pure and unrelieved, which would certainly be a curious mode of helping the farmer.

Midway between the two extremes of the pharmacopoeia are proposals of various kinds for reforming the trade policy of the country. The most attractive one, the one which apparently finds the largest support, is that for abolishing protective and substituting "British duties." The Young Liberal clubs, which have a knack of solving the profoundest problems right off the reel, have a fancy for the British duties plan, though it is plain that neither they nor the Patron correspondents of the Sun have any very clear idea of what those duties are. They seem to think there is something magical in them, that their introduction into Canadian finance could be readily accomplished and would prove an unqualified boon, and that nothing prevents it but the rascally opposition of the Manufacturers' Association.

The imperial revenue is derived principally from customs and excise duties, from taxes on incomes, from legacy and succession duties, from stamps on bills of exchange, etc., from taxes on land and railways, from Government telegraphs and the post office. Where a customs duty is imposed on an article manufactured at home, on spirits for instance, a corresponding excise duty is levied on the home product; hence, as free traders boast, there is not a shred of protection in the British tariff. Customs duties are collected from tobacco, spirits, beer, wine, tea, coffee, chicory and cocoa, as a general thing. Excise duties are collected from home-made liquors and licenses to manufacture and sell them. The other duties and taxes require no explanation, except that the railway tax is a tax on passenger earnings and the land tax a small affair of the nature of a commutation based on old valuations. The taxation is far from being equitably adjusted. From year to year The Financial Reformer, a valuable publication issued by the advanced Liberals, denounces the whole arrangement as a fraud upon the poor. It estimates that the amount taken by the customs and excise duties from a workingman getting 20 shillings a week is from one-tenth to one-seventh of his earnings; while on incomes of a thousand pounds a year it is only one-twentieth. To understand this we have but to bear in mind that a tax of say sixpence per pound on tea, regardless of cost or quality, necessarily makes a bigger hole in the pocket of the poor than in the pocket of the rich consumer, and so with the duties on other articles of general consumption. The tobacco of the many is taxed 350 per cent., the cigars of the few from 15 to 50 per cent., with other inequalities of a like kind. It is reckoned that the direct taxes contribute 30 per cent. of the revenue, the indirect 55, other sources 15.

Pray how could we adopt this system? Britain obtains