

The Colonist.

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THE TARIFF COMMISSION.

The tariff commissioners have been now for some little time pursuing their inquiries. They were for some days in Toronto, and we venture to say that the Commissioners, who are all free traders, are already beginning to find that protection has a stronger hold on the people of this Dominion of all parties and all occupations than they had any idea of.

Every manufacturer examined wanted, not only the protection he now enjoys, but still more protection in the shape of lower duties, or no duties at all, on the raw material of his manufacture. On the 17th and 18th there appeared before the Commissioners, bakers, powder and yeast manufacturers, manufacturers of enamel, tin and copy ware, bicycle makers, gentlemen engaged in the manufacture of shirts, collars and cuffs, dry goods men, vinegar makers, compositors, crockery ware manufacturers, the makers of cheap bags, fancy goods manufacturers, jewelers, watchmakers, a manufacturer of sapollo, piano action manufacturers, coach makers, pork packers, proprietors of rolling mills, marble workers, foundry men, gold-leaf makers, paper and envelope makers, and coopers.

The range of industries represented was wide and, as the reader sees, some of them were very important. The evidence given by most of the manufacturers was important. That presented by the pork packers was particularly so. The gentlemen interested in that industry showed very clearly that it was created by protection, and that its existence depends on the continuation of that protection. They also showed that the farmers of the Dominion are deeply interested in the prosperity of the pork packing industry, for it is they who raise the hogs and grow the food that fattens them. Here is an extract from a statement made by Mr. Fearman:

"Gentlemen, twenty years ago I started in this business in Canada, when we had free trade in these lines, and I am sorry to say that I started just twenty years too soon. I managed to conduct my business (and I had built an establishment and put in expensive machinery) for two years, and at the end of that time I was a much poorer man than ever I was before. The Americans were flooding the Canadian market with hogs of all kinds, and so undersold me that I had to finally abandon the entire business. I disposed of my buildings, tore out my plant and machinery and sold it. At that time the Chicago packers were sending in carloads of dressed hogs to this market by rail. They would be out on the snow, where the farmers would come along and buy them. Then there came a change. The protection tariff was placed on all pork packing products, and business thrived. The farmer who used to purchase his hogs from the United States markets began to produce them, and to-day we have drovers out all over the country picking up the hogs from the farmers, so that it has become a most productive business to them." He then enumerated the growth of the export trade, and in reply to the ministers stated that the Danes, who were active competitors in the English market with Canadians, had a co-operative, or protective tariff of some kind, he could not definitely state what, but knew it existed.

Before the pork-packers retired they wanted to know from the Commissioners whether there is any probability of the duty on hogs and meats being changed into the next twelve months. Their reason for asking this question was explained to the Ministers. It is, that this is the season of the year for buying hogs from the farmers to be cured during the winter season, and that if

any change was in contemplation the packers would certainly not stock their cellars with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of goods which, by next season's tariff legislation, may be greatly depreciated in value. No answer was given to the packers to this—very important question. Mr. Fielding said he was not surprised that they were anxious, and added, if he were in their position he would be anxious too. The question was one which the Ministers were not in a position to answer.

This is one example of the injury which instability and uncertainty as to the action which Government may take does to trade. Another such example was given in the course of the day's proceedings. In March last Mr. R. McDonnell went to Pittsburgh to see about getting a plant for the manufacture of soft steel. He intended to form a company for that purpose in connection with the rolling mills, but, on account of the impending elections and the subsequent change of Government, the matter had been postponed for the present. Mr. Paterson asked the rolling mill proprietor:

"What object had you in holding off to see what the Government would do? What difference would that make?"

Mr. McDonnell's reply was: "I went to form a company here. Of course we would have to have big capital—nearly a quarter of a million of dollars—and the gentleman I spoke to said: 'Well, we don't know what the present Government is going to do.' We could not go on with our scheme if the duty were lowered."

From this it appears that Canada has one industry the less because men who had money to invest and were willing to invest it, if things remained as they were then, would not undertake to establish a new industry while matters as regards the tariff were in a state of uncertainty.

The Commissioners will, before the inquiry is ended, or we are greatly mistaken, have their eyes opened as to the state of public opinion in the Dominion with respect to the tariff. They will find that the practical free traders are very few indeed, and that to eliminate the principle of protection from the tariff will be for them a very risky operation.

AN UNFAIR COMPARISON.

We see that some of the supporters of the present Government when commending the terms of the Manitoba settlement compare them with the provisions of the remedial bill. This is hardly fair for it should be remembered that the Dominion Government offered terms of settlement which differed very materially from the system that the remedial bill, if it had become law, would have established. The terms which Sir Donald Smith was sent to Winnipeg to offer the Manitoba Government and which that Government rejected would have made the Manitoba school system almost identical with those that are now in operation in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The majority in those provinces are as strongly in favor of the un denominational system of schools as the inhabitants of Manitoba can possibly be, yet they voluntarily and without pressure of any kind made an arrangement with the Roman Catholic minorities that was satisfactory to both Protestants and Catholics, and which has worked well for nearly, if not quite, twenty years. There is no school question now in either of those provinces or in Prince Edward Island, which was similarly situated as regards education, and in which an arrangement almost identical with that effected in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was made.

When the course pursued by the Conservative Government is considered, Sir Donald Smith's offer should not be lost sight of. That offer having been made by the Dominion and rejected by the Manitoba Government, makes a comparison between the terms of the late settlement and the provisions of the remedial bill manifestly dishonest.

A SINGULAR MISTAKE.

The Westminster Columbian professes to be under the impression that the Colonist has become an ardent admirer of the Hon. Mr. Tarte. Our contemporary is either joking or has misread the article from which it quotes. All that we said in that article was that in British Columbia the Minister of Public Works has been afforded a glorious opportunity of distinguishing himself as an administrator, and we also expressed a hope that he would avail himself of that opportunity. As to whether he is likely to do so we did not say one single word. Our contemporary does not seem able to understand how a newspaper can notice the doings of a public man of whose policy it does not approve in terms of courtesy. The Hon. Mr. Tarte while he was in this Province was, in a sense, the guest of its inhabitants, and he was diligent in making inquiries into matters connected with their welfare. It would, therefore, have been needless to allude to subjects of controversy or to question his sincerity or the earnestness of the zeal he displayed to do what he could to benefit the Province. There is a time for all things and when the Minister of Public Works was here to see what he could do to promote the welfare of the inhabitants of the Province was not the time to

make disagreeable allusions to his antecedents or even to question the soundness of the policy of the Government of which he is a member. We are rather proud to have it said that the most sensitive and the most touchy member of the Liberal party could not find in the Colonist while Mr. Tarte was here a single expression relative to the Minister personally that he could take objection to. We advise our Westminster contemporary to read the article which it reproduced over again. If it does so intelligently it will not find in it one word expressive of admiration of Mr. Tarte or of the principles or the policy of the party of which he is one of the leaders.

GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS.

A good deal too much is generally said of the connection between good times and bad times and the Government of the day. Government generally has very little to do with the state of business in the country. Good times come without any help from Government, and bad times overtake a nation in spite of every effort that Government may make to prevent the visitation. Consequently Government generally does not deserve credit when a country is prosperous, neither does it deserve blame when business is depressed. The prosperity of a country depends almost entirely upon the industry, the intelligence, the energy and the thrift of its inhabitants. When the people work hard and are careful how they spend what they earn, they will thrive even under bad and unwise rulers; when they are lazy and unenterprising, when they depend upon Government or anything else except their own honest exertions, they will remain stationary or retrograde, no matter what Government may do to help them.

But there are, we freely admit, times when Governments can do a great deal to retard the progress of a country and to counteract what its industrious and enterprising citizens may do to advance its interests. The position in which the United States was a few months ago shows what a Government can do by inaction and wrongheadedness to retard the prosperity of a nation. The United States had what all intelligent men admit to be a vicious system of currency. Its Government issued a vast amount of paper obligations without taking proper measures to redeem that paper when redemption was demanded. Every one knows in what condition an individual would be who acted in this way. He would, to say the least, be in difficulties, no matter how much property he might own. His affairs, for the want of necessary ready cash would get into a muddle and his credit would suffer. This is precisely what happened to the United States. When its affairs were in this condition a party arose and became very influential, which advocated the paying of the nation's obligations in silver, which had depreciated as much as 50 per cent. It was known, too, that there was very little gold in the treasury, and that that little was disappearing at a rapid rate. It is no wonder that, under such circumstances, business men and men who had saved money became alarmed. People generally know pretty well by this time what happens when alarm in business circles becomes general. Men who have money are afraid to part with it. The consequence is money becomes "tight." Those who are doing businesses that require a constant expenditure of money can only get it at a very high rate of interest, or cannot get it at all, and then comes a series of business crashes which unsettles the minds of all who are in business. When business in the United States came to this very bad pass the President of the United States came to the rescue. He told the people in effect that they need not be afraid, that the Government of the United States would continue to redeem its obligations in gold. He used the credit of the nation to borrow gold to keep the redemption fund in the Treasury from being exhausted. He did this, time and again, and was bitterly vilified by the silver party for resorting to such a measure to keep up the credit of the nation and to restore confidence among business men. And confidence was in a measure restored. Thousands were by the Presidents determined stand and courageous action saved from ruin. It was believed that as long as he was at the head of the affairs of the Republic, Government whenever it was called upon to do so would redeem its paper in full, would pay one hundred cents in the dollar in gold. Here we have an instance of Government interference being in a high degree beneficial to business. But it must be remarked that the trouble was brought on by governmental mismanagement.

But confidence was far from fully restored. The silver repudiationists were at work in the country and they threatened to put an administration in power which would authorize the Government and every other debtor in the country to meet their obligations with silver dollars worth about fifty cents each. The struggle between the party which was bound to keep the money of the country honest, and the party which declared their intention to debase it was a severe one, but fortunately for everyone the sound money party won.

As soon as the people knew they were to have an honest Government for at least four years more, what might naturally be expected happened. Business revived. Factories which had been closed resumed work. Working men and working women who had been idle obtained employment once more. It is said that between 375,000 and 400,000 have already been put to work since the election or had their hours of work increased. An American contemporary says: "Business improvement to this extent never occurred before in any equal time in the entire history of the country," and continues:

Markets, banks and Treasury immediately felt the impulse of the great trade revival. The better class of stocks advanced before the election in anticipation of McKinley's victory, thus "discounting," in a great degree, the effect of that triumph, but they went up farther and are held firmer since. Bank deposits, loans and clearings quickly reflected the change in the situation. The Treasury gold reserve, which was \$114,000,000 on November 3, is now up to \$127,000,000. Gold importation has stopped for the time after an inflow of over \$75,000,000, and possibly it has ended for the year.

This great change has taken place not on account of what the Government has done, for it has not had time to do anything, but simply because the people believe in it. They know that it is safe for them to rely upon it. They know that there will be no more tampering with the currency, and they believe that whatever change is made will be in the direction of security and stability. But there has been no mystery in all this. The change is in accordance with laws—unchanged laws—that are everywhere in operation and are as plainly seen in the course of ordinary business as in the conduct of the affairs of the State.

AN UNINTENTIONAL OFFENCE. The Rossland Miner blames the Colonist for having published a letter from Rossland, which it says was a "veiled attack on the management of the War Eagle mine." We had not the remotest idea that the strictures of our correspondent were directed against the managers of that mine. As no names were mentioned we did not know who our correspondent was aiming at. We believed him to be judicious and careful and we consequently had not the slightest suspicion that his charges were made against men of well known integrity and good reputation. If we had thought that his letter would have injured a legitimate undertaking or cast a reflection on the character of honest and enterprising men we would not have published it. Nothing could be further from our intention than to do anything that might be really injurious to Rossland or to anyone who is honestly engaged in developing the mineral resources of the district.

The Miner is mistaken when it says that "the editor of the Colonist has been in Rossland." The editor of this paper has not had the privilege of paying that very interesting town a visit, and its business manager, Mr. W. H. Ellis, who has been there, did not see the letters complained of until after they were published.

PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT. To the Editor:—To develop British Columbia's great resources a vast amount of capital will be needed. It is impossible to form any estimate of the millions that will be required to open up and operate the gold and silver mines, to convert the copper and iron ores into metal, to manufacture the millions upon millions of feet of merchantable timber, to clear the farm lands, to construct the railways, highways, and build the cities and towns, with all the appliances of high civilization. We saw how, following the construction of the Northern Pacific railway, 400,000 people and an immense amount of capital flowed into the State of Washington in a decade. We saw, in our own province, how men and money followed quickly upon the construction of the Canadian Pacific. We are witnessing to-day a great influx of population and capital into the Kootenay district because of the success attending two or three gold mines. We require no proof, except what is afforded by observation and experience, to convince us that if we could once set on foot the general development of the province we would inaugurate a period of prosperity, the like of which we have never witnessed. Let us suppose that while the riches of the southeastern corner of the province are being exploited, another stream of capital could be directed into that wonderful auriferous region of which Lilhoet is an outlier and Cariboo the threshold. Let us suppose that with this there could be started a stream of immigration to occupy the fertile valleys of the interior and the boundless cattle ranges by which they are flanked. Let us contemplate another transcontinental railway, backed with abundant capital and reaching out for the growing commerce of the Orient. Let us think of what the full develop-

ment of Vancouver Island alone would mean. Every town in the province would feel its business pulse quickened by these things; every farmer would find the price of his produce advanced; every laborer would be able to secure abundant employment. I wish to avoid the language of exaggeration in these letters, but I state the simple truth when I say that imagination can hardly picture the full result of the development of the resources of our province.

Dr. Calhoun, commissioner for the state of Washington at the World's Fair, is authority for the statement that there is in that state more standing timber than in all the states of the Union east of the Mississippi; and the Puget Sound Lumberman, in an article on the timber supply of the Coast, after speaking of the vast resources of Washington and Oregon in this respect, said that British Columbia contained very much more than both those states combined. Our province has more coal than Pennsylvania, and better than any other of it than all the rest of the Pacific coast put together. Probably it is quite accurate to say that in respect to its supply of coal and iron, British Columbia is without a rival in the world.

In respect to its area of arable and pasture land, it would probably surprise many people from the East to be told that there is a wider area of this in British Columbia than in the three Maritime provinces, but there is no doubt whatever that this is true. As to its wealth of gold and silver, no one can pretend to set a limit. It is known that its auriferous area is at least three times as great as the total area of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. If you join the southeast corner and the north-west corner of the province by a line drawn upon the map, the line will represent a distance of 1,200 miles, and it will not cross a river valley whose sands do not carry gold, or a mountain range in which a prospector may not reasonably hope to find paying mineral, and for fully half its length it will traverse a region destined to be the scene of unprecedented hydraulic mining.

We admit all these things to each other and yet when some one suggests that the provincial government should adopt a boldly aggressive policy in order that the people who live in the province now, and who have their all invested here, should get the benefit of the opening of these matchless resources to settlement and the capital, the cry is raised that we cannot afford it; the truth is that we cannot afford not to.

The province stands in the position of a man, who has discovered a gold mine, sunk a shaft on it, cross-cut the vein and found that there is plenty of ore, and the ore assayed and found it runs high and keeps getting better all the time. What would we think of such a man, who having learned of these things about his property, would be afraid of putting in a plant to get out the ore? On every principle of statesmanship, good politics and sound business, it will pay the province "to put in the plant" needed to realize the riches abounding within its borders.

These riches will be fully developed one of these days. But why wait? There is no particular satisfaction in knowing that we have a province of such boundless possibilities if we do not get some good out of them ourselves. Some day a railway will cross the province through the rich grazing lands and along the rich valleys of the central plateau, thence through the gold fields of Cariboo and on to the great prairies, and so on across the continent. Everyone knows that such a road would mean the settlement of millions of acres of land, the investment of millions in gold mining, the building of new towns, the establishment of many new industries. Everyone knows that that would mean much to Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Nanaimo and all the coast. Everyone knows that without it the interior cannot be developed. I take this as one illustration of Railway extension on Vancouver Island is another. Competing railway connection with the Kootenay country is another. The opening of trails across the northern part of the province from the head of navigation on the Skeena river is another. Others might be mentioned, but these will suffice to show what I mean when I speak of "putting in a plant" to get out the riches of the

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These things will cost money, but you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs any more than you can take a great province like ours and open it to colonization and capital without spending money. In some of the things I have mentioned the co-operation of the Dominion government may properly be sought, and I have reason to believe that an appeal to that quarter will not be made in vain. UNLOOKER.

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