

sidered "discretion the better part of valor," and retired in disgust.

Let us examine a few facts in connection with this woollen industry. If we take the volume of woollen goods imported into Canada for home consumption for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1908, we find there was an average duty of 29½ per cent. collected thereon. This represents the margin which the consumers of woollen goods in Canada pay for the protection and encouragement of the woollen industry. From the Statistics Bulletin II. of the Manufactures of Canada, published in 1907, we find the output of the Canadian woollen industry in 1905 was \$5,871,735, and there was employed therein 4,274 workmen, receiving in wages \$1,196,375. From this output, and the above rate of duty, 106 woollen manufacturers are given, as a margin against foreign competition, the sum of \$1,717,000 per annum, or over \$16,000 each. With such a degree of protection, if the woollen industry of Canada cannot stand, it is the plainest possible proof that it is simply a burden upon the Canadian people, and should be tolerated no longer. Of course, at such an argument the manufacturers will at once set up the hue and cry that the industry must be protected, in order to secure the employment which will furnish an additional home market to the farmers' products. This is one of the most fallacious contentions ever presented in favor of the continuance of any industry. If the people of Canada would take this \$1,717,000 per annum, and with it pension the 4,000-odd employees to the extent of the wages they receive, they could do so, and still have half a million to the good. These 4,000 men could then be returned to labor on the soil, where their exertions would go towards increasing the output of the means of livelihood, and thus ameliorate the condition of the whole body of our people, as the question of the cost of living is still the vital question with the large percentage of the people of Canada.

Mr. Biggar, in his argument, calls for a duty on wool, in order to build up the sheep industry; yet those farmers who are foremost in the sheep-breeding industry are ready and willing to stand up, as they now do at our fat-stock gatherings and Institute meetings, and declare and demonstrate that the business of sheep-keeping is the most profitable branch of the live-stock industry of Canada to-day.

In the face of this fact, I am indeed surprised that any of these farmers will condescend to appeal for a duty upon wool, when they know, or ought to know, that the protection system, as a whole, is the greatest burden which at present rests upon the pursuit of Canadian agriculture, the burden which, along with other conditions, is largely responsible for the constant movement of our people away from the soil.

The argument which I have applied to the woollen industry can be applied with equal force to other lines of industrial life, which are basking in the sunshine of our Canadian protective system, forming their gigantic combinations, and reveling in the wealth which that system enables them to reap, at the expense of the consuming population of Canada.

Take, for instance, the prices which have followed the recent merger in the cement business. A twelvemonth ago we could buy all the cement we wanted for \$1.20 per barrel, but to-day, after a combination has been effected, which was to cheapen production and reduce prices, we are paying from \$1.90 to \$2.00 per barrel. True, an investigation might be instituted under Mr. King's "Combines Investigation Bill," but who, in this case, is going to institute proceedings, and even to do so would be to venture the uncertain attack upon a powerful enemy, right in the midst of its own entrenchments? Surely the cement industry is now sufficiently well grounded that it can stand upon its own bottom. If the duty of 12½ cents per cwt., or 40 cents per barrel, and 20 per cent. on the cotton bags, does not enable cement manufacturers to enhance prices, then cut it out, for the paltry sum received in duty is of no particular moment. If the duty does enable them to enhance the price, then it is the best reason why such a necessary article of general use should be given to the general public at a very reasonable price.

Let us return, however, to the consideration of the real interests of agriculture. No one now disputes that this is the great industry of our people. Not only so, but its constant condition forms the very basis of the healthy pulse-beat of the Canadian people. Never was any fact brought home with greater emphasis to any people than when, in 1907, the wheels of Canadian agriculture slipped a cog, and old Mother Earth ceased for a time to produce its customary fruits. The effect upon the country was electric. Business life staggered; our merchants began to stand at their shop doors with a longing eye; the trade of the country fell by nearly \$80,000,000 in the year; the Government had to draw in its sails; banking institutions had to apply the brakes; and everyone prayed for a return of the increased receipts from agriculture, and the consequent return of the country's progress. In view of this striking fact, is it not the supreme duty of the Government to make the conditions surrounding

the pursuit of agriculture as favorable as possible.

In so far as its efforts have been directed towards the improvements in the means of communication, by which our products are transported to the markets of the world in the finest condition, it has certainly done yeoman service; but when we realize that, broadly speaking, there is no such thing as protection to the products of the Canadian farmer, the prices of which have, in the past, been very largely regulated by the prices prevailing in the open markets of the world, have we not a right to ask, in return, that farmers, in the purchase of the articles, commodities and machinery they require, be allowed to consult, without restriction, and profit by the prices of those goods prevailing in the open markets of the world? Would not that be simply making the request that agriculture, the very mother of the industrial life of Canada, be given the privilege of buying its raw material at the lowest possible cost? What are the facts?

Agricultural implements and machinery are subject to a duty of from 15½ to 25 per cent.; carriages and wagons, 25 to 35 per cent.; harness and saddlery, 30 per cent.; leather—tanned, curried, and finished, 15 to 25 per cent.; pumps and windmills, 20 per cent.; wash machines and wringers, 20 to 35 per cent.; axes and tools, 22½ per cent.; boilers and engines, 20 per cent.; foundry and machine-shop products, 25 to 35 per cent.; iron and steel products, 20 to 30 per cent.; metallic roofing, 20 to 30 per cent.; cottons, 25 to 30 per cent.; woollens, 30 per cent.; hats, caps and furs, 20 to 30 per cent.; furniture and upholstered goods, 30 per cent.; boots and shoes, 30 per cent.; men's and women's custom and factory clothing, 15 to 30 per cent.; bread, biscuits and confectionery, 20 to 35 per cent.; canned meats and goods, 17½ to 30 per cent.

These, and a hundred other articles, which constitute the raw material of the Canadian farmer,

he refers. Nevertheless, the situation is before us, and it is greatly deepened through the conditions of which I speak.

Mr. Biggar, in his article, seeks to cure the disease by asking the wool-growing farmer to co-operate with manufacturers in aggravating the cause, not that, by this increase in duty, foreigners would be forced to pay an additional tribute to the treasury of Canada, but simply to enable the wool-growers to increase the price of wool to our own manufacturers; and these, in turn, be empowered to charge the general public that much more for their woollens. Such is the unvarying tendency of all protective duties. They teach the beneficiaries to look to further public favors, rather than to ask an open, fair field, in which they would be compelled to work out their own salvation by relying on the ingenuity of their own resource.

One of the great characteristics of the present age, and more particularly upon the American continent, is the thirst after great wealth, and the successful scheming of the few to concentrate in their hands the wealth that should belong to the many. Across the border, to the south of us, these conditions obtain to such a degree that it is now said that nine-tenths of the wealth of the country is in the hands of one-tenth of the people. As a final result, we are now witnessing an almost life-and-death struggle for mastery between the American Government and the huge combinations of capital which have been built up under its influence. Indeed, the signs are not wanting that the great body of American people have become so entirely disgusted with their high-protection system that, at the earliest opportunity, they may give it an overwhelming defeat.

In the face of a knowledge of these conditions, and in view of the friendly representations recently made at Washington, would it not be manifesting a broad, a national spirit, that our sneer-

men, farmers and others should endeavor to strengthen the hands of the Government, if the time be opportune, not to be a party towards further burdening themselves, but to obtain access to the market which, in many respects, is the very best in the world, and lying right at our very doors. But no! Some of our manufacturers (I am glad to say not all) would have them shrink from the very thought.

Why should these manufacturers not imitate the noble attitude of Elbert Hubbard, who, in writing for the Oliver (hilled Plow Co., says "The Canadian manufacturer is very much better situated than the American manufacturer, for two reasons: First, the United States have no merchant marine; and, second, the American tariff has so barred



Duke of Kingston 2nd.

First-prize junior two-year-old Shorthorn, and male champion, Royal Show, Liverpool, 1910. Sire King Christian of Denmark.

show how he is being aided by the beneficent customs tariff of this country. On the other hand, if we scan the tariff schedules, we find that at every convenient turn our manufacturers are allowed to obtain their raw material at the lowest minimum cost. Yet some of these same manufacturers are standing around the public crib, and with a scorpion eye still demanding from the great consuming public an additional pound of flesh.

As the result of these conditions, which have had the effect of stimulating so many lines of manufacturing industry, these manufacturers have become wealthy, have joined their forces in effective combination, and are now such strong competitors in the labor market that it has become well-nigh impossible to secure the necessary help on the farm. To such a degree is this the case that the greatest problem which presents itself to the Canadian people to-day is the problem of retaining our people on the soil.

As the result of this scarcity of labor, together with the great rush for the cheap lands of the West, the agriculture of Ontario (upon which the country is largely dependent for many of our staple live-stock products), is so paralyzed that its reduced production in these lines of goods is being acutely felt in the greatly-increased cost of living.

There is no doubt that Mr. Flavelle, in his timely and able open letter, is right in saying that the large body of Ontario farmers do not sufficiently grasp the possibilities of their favorable situation. It seems almost impossible to arouse many from their present lethargic field of view. They, in their attitude, are almost a deadly handicap to the notable exceptions to which

the products of the world in many instances, and the countries that we bar, in turn, bar us."

Influences at work in Canada show that corporate interests, organized capitalists, and promoters of various sorts, are constantly on the alert to secure from a silent public favors for themselves by which they may gather wealth at the public expense, and the customs tariff of this country enables them to do so. As a result, combinations are everywhere being effected. We also find the increase in the cost of goods going on simultaneously with the organization of capital on a large scale, and the formation of trusts, mergers and combinations of one kind and another. It has been asserted by the Monetary Times that the formation of mergers and combinations in 1909 constituted an outstanding feature in the industrial and financial situation of Canada during the year. Since the commencement of the present year, scarcely a day has passed that mention has not been made in the public press of some new combination or another.

No objection can be taken to the formation of these large aggregations of capital as such. There is no doubt that these large concerns should be able to cut down expenses and produce more cheaply than smaller plants competing against each other. But the whole outcome is that the goods which these turn out are continually becoming dearer, rather than cheaper, showing conclusively that, whatever else is happening, the great body of consumers who make up society are not getting the benefit they should receive through the consequent reduction in the cost of the production of goods. And it is the duty of the Government, being the custodian of the general interests, to see