

## THE ADDED DUTY ON APPLES

Here we have an example of pure and unadulterated protection. Protection gone mad.

The Finance Minister in his first presentment of tariff changes said:—

“We regard this duty as indispensably necessary for the preservation of the apple growing industry of Canada and particularly that of British Columbia which has been most seriously affected since the outbreak of War.”

All through the several discussions the Minister never varied from this stand. It is not a duty for revenue, in fact the attainment of its object to shut out American apples from the Prairie Provinces and coast towns of the Pacific Ocean will obviously reduce the Customs revenues of Canada, and this at a time when revenue is so needed that new taxation is introduced on a large scale.

### Provincial Politics in it?

This action seems to be the result of a visit of a British Columbia delegation. A suggestion was made in the discussion in the House of Commons that the prospect of an early Provincial election and the dire extremity of the Conservative Provincial Government have contributed to this action just now—the fact which developed in the British Columbia Legislature that the expenses of this delegation were borne by the British Columbia Government out of the Provincial funds, lends plausibility to this view.

There is no evidence that apple growers from any other section of Canada made the demand at this time. The Minister's own words show it to be a purely British Columbia question.

### Is Protection Needed?

What are some of the facts in connection with apple growing in British Columbia? British Columbia apples have successfully competed in the United States, in Eastern Canada, in England and in Australia. Production in British Columbia has increased from 210,000 boxes in 1910 to 780,750 in 1915 by a steady rate of progression. Ten years ago their apples had hardly made a showing on the Canadian Prairies, now they are for sale almost everywhere. The year before last the Shipping Federation sent 30,000 boxes to Australia, and 11,000 to South Africa. They now have an order for 40,000 boxes for Australia this year. Their export of last year must have been profitable or they wouldn't undertake to send out more this season. The British Columbia fruit growers have made a name for grading and packing, in which indeed they lead all Canada. They have commenced to organize on the lines of their American competitors. Further co-operative organization bringing the consumer in the Prairie and other Canadian markets closer in touch with the grower would undoubtedly be more potent in commanding the market than this effort to force their product on incensed and reluctant consumers.

### Western Farmers Show Resentment.

A good proof of what they are up against is the resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, in which the new tax was declared to be:—

“An unrighteous attempt to exploit the prairie farmer for the benefit of British Columbia fruit land speculators, fruit growers, and middlemen, and we advise the farmers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, that if this becomes law and they are to be taxed in this manner, they pay these taxes into the federal treasury by purchasing imported apples rather than pay the same duty together with profit thereon to British Columbia land speculators, fruit growers and middlemen.”

In a discussion in the Provincial Legislature of British Columbia on an item in the estimates to pay expenses of this fruit delegation, this resolution was referred to and doubt was expressed by several members, as to the advantages to be reaped from this increase of duty, because as they said, while now they had the market in the North West, this duty was likely to lead to the entire elimination of their fruit from the North West. What the Finance Minister proposes to accomplish is command of the apple market among the farmers and people of the Prairie Provinces for the benefit of the British Columbia fruit growers. The sense of injustice in the Prairie Provinces will result in no benefit to the British Columbia fruit grower, but an improved demand for his American rival's product and a more complete command of this market by the latter.

### Consumers Affected Have Good Case.

Let us examine the justice of this feeling on the part of the people of the Prairie Provinces. They have been asking removal of duties on their wheat and its products to secure wider opportunities of sale in the United States. They have been refused, they believe, with the result that their receipts for the sale of their wheat have been reduced. They did not ask any impediment to trade which would impose any burden on their fellow citizens,—simply greater freedom for their sales. Now their neighbors ask an impediment to trade which will force them to pay out of their restricted receipts a higher price for a prime necessity of healthy living, and this is granted as hastily as their own request was refused. They say, too, that they alone of all the people of Canada, will have to pay this bill for the benefit of the British Columbia fruit grower. Surely if it is in the best interest of the Dominion to support the British Columbia fruit growing business, it would be only fair, they say, to spread the cost over the whole of Canada and not take it only out of people of the Prairie Provinces.

With these feelings surely their resentment is very human, and naturally, if not in the highest Christian spirit of turning the other cheek when smitten on the one—will not redound to the advantage of the British Columbia fruit grower when he offers his product next season.

It is protection of the narrowest, it is local discrimination, it is class legislation and therefore is wrong and cannot succeed.