

would be folly for the enemies of the N.P. to denounce it as provocative of combines, which are intended, perhaps, to depress wages, when the employees know full well that they are to receive an equitable share of such profits as may be realized.

THE WORKING MAN AND THE TARIFF.

At the Trades and Labor Congress held in Toronto last month, a resolution was introduced favoring the removal of all duties and imposts levied upon the products of industry, either imported or manufactured in the country, except upon such as are levied with a view to restricting the use and consumption of any article or product held to be injurious; and the substitution therefor as a means of raising the revenue required for the government of the country of a single tax on land and natural opportunities. The congress decided not to pass upon the resolution at that time, but to forward it to the various labor organizations for consideration.

The incident has been made use of by the enemies of protection to argue that the labor element of the community are up in arms against the N.P., and that the downfall of it is but a matter of short time, growing out of what they are pleased to call a "formidable revolt" in that direction. The *Globe* says "It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of so formidable an attack upon the so-called National Policy in what ought to have been its very stronghold;" and that to ask the working men "in their own assemblies to take their opinions ready-made from the Red Parlor is the very sublimity of impudence. That the Trades Congress have not been thus bamboozled into playing into the hands of monopoly is evidenced by the action which they took, and which will promote a free discussion of the tariff question in every trades union in the land." The *Montreal Herald*, in its enthusiasm, says: "A few years ago a man who should in a labor lodge proclaim himself a free trader, would have met with nothing but derision. Now the subject is recognized as one in which the working man is intensely interested, and comes before the lodges endorsed by the trusted leaders. With the glamor of the old pictures still deceiving their eyesight, workmen have hitherto refused even to argue the question of free trade."

The trouble with these journals is, that they either do not correctly comprehend the nature of the sentiment which prevailed at the Labor Congress, or they intentionally misrepresent it. There is no subject upon which any discussion could possibly be had which has not been discussed time and time again in the labor lodges, for it is the style of the debaters there to discuss and formulate opinions in the freest and most off-hand manner upon questions which Pan-Presbyterian Synods, National Parliaments, Church Consistories and other debating societies would consider a long time before declaring upon; and from what has been made public time and again of the debates held in labor meetings, no hesitancy or backwardness has ever been shown in discussing the merits and demerits of both protection and free trade. The fact, however, that working men as a class are adherents of protection, shows that their good common sense has usually prevailed, and kept them in the path where their interest lies. It is not true, as these journals would make believe, that in the Labor Congress there

was an overwhelming majority in favor of free trade. If there had been, the resolution alluded to would have been adopted. Like in other classes of thinking men, there are those among working men who entertain the idea that society as at present constituted is not actuated by such principles as tend to confer the greatest good upon the greatest number, and that reforms in certain directions are greatly needed. Such views are not confined, however, to laboring men, nor the discussion of them to labor lodges, for we know that these reforms have been receiving the closest thought of many of the world's best and most practical philosophers; and the discussion had in the Labor Congress was not along the line of free trade as much as it was in the direction of the single tax upon land values, now agitating certain elements of the civilized world. This idea commends itself very strongly to working men; and we know that their agitation of it has already resulted in much good, not only to themselves but to the whole community, except the land sharks.

The object of the free trade journals is to array the working man against his employer. The working man knows that his interests and those of his employer are identified, and it is a common enemy that attempts to array one against the other. No matter how prosperous a working man may be, it is his laudable and proper ambition to become more prosperous, and to continually strive to elevate his condition. No employer blames him for this; for the working man who does not have such ambition, cannot be of as much value to his employer as the one who has. If the N.P. is of value to the employer, it is of equal value to the employee; and he who seeks to create a chasm between the two is a friend to neither. It is possible that there may be working men who, because of lack of laudable ambition become discontented, and may be induced to advocate free trade; but the reason why they are not as successful as they would like to be, lies more in their lack of intellectual capacity than in any thing else. Sensible workmen understand that however much they may desire to witness the success of their single tax idea, it will require long years of discussion, and probably a revolution to bring it about; while the question of wages is one of to-day, and therefore of the utmost importance, while the other cannot be more than an iridescent dream. It was this dream of a single tax that the Labor Congress relegated to the various sub-organizations for further discussion, not the question of free trade.

There is this to be said in this question of wages in protected industries. If a working man votes for free trade because his wages are small, he votes to make them smaller. Protection is for his benefit quite as much as it is for the benefit of his employer. The employer could get along under free trade in Canada better than the working man could. Free trade would convert the artisan into the agriculturist, or else the wages of the artisan would be brought down to the level of wages paid in other free trade countries. Hundreds of thousands of persons are leaving free trade Britain every year, hoping to better their conditions in more favored climes. They do not do this for amusement, but because, under free trade conditions, they are forced to expatriation.

The laboring men of Canada understand this situation thoroughly, and that is why protection is in such high favor with them.