

What Protection Means.

Whoever you are out on these Western plains, we imagine you have found it a pretty costly business this of just living and paying expenses. You have found that your heat and light, your clothing and your food, with few exceptions, cost more than they did in the country from which you came. In seeking for a cause, you have heard it said that our national policy of Protection is responsible for the conditions of which you complain, and on the contrary you have heard that in the system of Protection lies the only hope of national prosperity. And so you are in doubt. To replace your doubt by conviction on at least one or two points is our hope in writing this page.

EVERY MAN A PRODUCER.

If you consider the occupation of the people in your neighborhood you will find that nearly all are producers in one field or another. If they are not adding to the material wealth of the community, they may be enriching it in another way. If any one is ministering to the nation's wealth or comfort, peace or happiness, he is yielding good service; if, on the other hand, he is a non-producer, or if he produces that which works evil in the community, or even if his contribution is made in such a manner as to bring hardship upon others, he is an encumbrance and a real source of danger. You will probably classify farmers, miners, fishermen, lumbermen, manufacturers of useful products, teachers, preachers, editors of worthy newspapers, as producers of real value in a nation, and you will put false preachers, party heelers, brewers, and tramps in the class of undesirables.

EVERY MAN A CONSUMER.

If you consider once more you will observe that everybody in your neighborhood is a consumer of products obtained at home or abroad. The farmer is compelled to use the output of the factory, and the workman in the factory is compelled to use the product of the farm. And so there is constant interchange. To effect this exchange of commodities there is a whole army of middlemen. These include the railroad companies and the wholesale dealers, whose work has already been dealt with in these columns, and to whom we can refer but incidentally just now.

THE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS.

As a producer of wealth you naturally desire to get as much for your wares as possible; as a consumer you wish to pay as little as possible. If you are a farmer you wish to increase the price of flour and to reduce the cost of farm implements; if a manufacturer your policy is the reverse of this. But if you are truly patriotic, and not sordidly selfish, you will have no desire to enrich yourself through acts of injustice to your fellow-men. "Live and let live" is the first law of life in a civilized community.

HOW SOME INTERESTS ARE FAVOURED.

It will be within your recollection that it was the custom a few years ago for one section of the middlemen—the railroad builders—to claim special privileges because they were entering upon such a risky venture as opening up roads in a new land. Hence they claimed and received bonuses in money and lands. Even to this day, even though there is no longer any risk and though the land is by no means new, the custom of asking and getting something by way of bonus is still in force, and probably will be so long as there are greedy magnates and needy politicians, for you must be aware that it is an invariable rule for railroad builders to return to the governments from whom they receive bonuses a part of the gift. This becomes the foundation of personal fortunes or the nucleus of an election fund.

Now, just in the same way there have arisen demands from certain producers for special consideration. For example, the manufacturers of farm implements in Ontario claim that it is difficult and impossible in a new land to compete with the giant manufacturing concerns of the United States, and that they must be protected from competition. Hence the consumers—that is, the farmers in the Western provinces—must pay from twenty to thirty per cent more for an implement than it is really worth. Similarly the lumberman in British Columbia tells us that he cannot compete with the American mill-owner and hence the consumer on the plains must pay an additional twenty per cent. for his building material. And so it goes all along the line.

There are seekers for special privileges on all sides. And the strangest part of it all is that most of them get just about what they ask.

SOME ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAVORED INTERESTS.

To show how much truth there is in their claim that they require coddling in order to carry on their business, it will not be out of place to give one or two illustrations. Everybody in Canada knows the Massey-Harris Co. It is one of the companies that benefited most by the protective tariff, and it is chosen for the reason that its operations were and are carried on very largely in the Western provinces. Just how much wealth the various members of the firm have made out of the business it would be difficult to estimate, but the donations of one member in the form of colleges and public halls are just an evidence of the small surplus left over after a wide range of relatives were provided for, and the large fortunes of the other branch of the firm indicate that the policy of Protection worked fairly well for the manufacturers at least. And this says nothing at all of the manager of the concern and the arch-conspirator with the government in perpetuating this policy of Protection. It is a consolation to all good Western farmers, whatever their denominational leanings may be, to know that a fine college in the metropolis of the West is the result of their forced donations to the firm we have just mentioned.

A second illustration is taken from the history of lumbering in British Columbia. A short time ago on a visit to Victoria it was the privilege of the editor to drive around that beautiful city. On inquiring who lived in the several palaces of which Victorians are so proud, it was wonderful how often the word "lumberman" was heard. And yet it is not wonderful, for if ever there was a country under God's blue sky in which a lumberman should make money easily it is in our own province of British Columbia. Yet here the other day these lumbermen were protesting that they could not compete with the mill-owners of the State of Washington. What a mockery! With better timber limits, cheaper power, and much cheaper labor, if they cannot undersell Washington by ten to fifteen per cent. they had better confess their rank incompetence as managers of industrial concerns. If anything ever exposed the hollowness of the Protection cry it was this demand of the British Columbia lumbermen. They need no protection. The Washington price is higher than British Columbia need ever charge, to say nothing of the addition that follows the imposition of a duty. If the implement manufacturers of Ontario and the lumbermen of British Columbia wish to rob, let them do so in the manly Jesse James fashion but let them give over this miserable traitorous policy of purchasing the right to rob by securing legal enactment to that end.

At the recent congress in Vancouver, one of the manufacturers—sleek, corpulent, porky—is said to have pleaded to be allowed to live. Just think of it! A man with a mansion, and servants, and an automobile, and a launch, and everything else that a man could desire, except brains and moral worth, this man to whine for a little mercy! What about the thousands of consumers—honest men and true—who toil day and night, who earn their bread with the sweat of the brow, and who yet cannot get a dollar ahead? Think of a half-starved family shivering around the last embers of a fire, and then think of the father, well-clothed, well-fed, ordering them right and left in order that he may warm his poor, cold hands. That is a poor, mean parallel to these men with their whining complaint that they are suffering.

THE FARMERS NOT IN THE FAVORED CLASS.

It is to the credit of the Western farmers that they have never asked that farm products be protected, though farm products are on the tariff list as a blind. They are willing to face the world in this matter. And so they may. If there is any farm product which they cannot raise as cheaply as it can be raised elsewhere they will leave it alone. That is a good policy surely. It would be absurd for our farmers to begin to compete in banana growing. Nature has denied the privilege of engaging in that pursuit. Even so in other fields. If any manufacturer cannot get along without protection from the goods of competitors in other lands he is trying to produce something that nature had never intended him to manufacture in this land.

The fact is, that no one class needs protection in order to thrive. Our best policy as a nation is to settle down to the production of those commodities nature has intended us to deal in. In farming, mining, lumbering, fishing we can lead the world, and with our abundant water power and plentiful

supplies of iron we can enter upon manufacturing of most articles on even terms with the most favored peoples.

THE ARGUMENT OF THE FAVORED CLASSES.

But it is urged by the manufacturers that they should be protected, that is, given a bonus of twenty-five per cent. so that the workmen should receive higher wages. What rank dishonesty! The two bonused bodies in Canada—the railroads and the manufacturers—have had more trouble with underpaid employees than all other bodies combined. The bonus goes every time into the pocket of the manufacturer. Let us make no mistake on that point.

And as to this contention that industries must be fostered for a time until they can compete with the foreign trusts, does not everybody see that this is only another way of asking that we build up a trust on the homeland? For if a tariff is imposed just until a few concerns are safely running in our own country, does not that mean that these concerns have a monopoly of the trades forever?

WHAT OF A TARIFF FOR REVENUE.

But it will be said that though a tariff for protection is not necessary, a tariff for revenue certainly is. Here we are faced with an entirely different problem. To solve it let us make the supposition that we have no tariff at all. How would the country then raise money for administering the affairs of government? In only one way of course, by direct taxation. Now, although in a country that is not educated in methods of finance, this would be most unpopular, nevertheless, it would be the best method in the end, for no government could afford to squander its income if it were gathered directly from the people. This is one of the reasons why both parties at Ottawa to-day favor a high tariff. They wish to be independent of the people in the matter of expenditure. To-day it costs you \$1200 a year to live. Of this amount possibly \$200 represents what you pay as the result of Protection. Now, if you were paying this \$200 directly into the government coffers, would you not watch the expenditure a little more closely than you do? The fact is, there would be no fun at all in running government, there would be no rake off for party workers, if the system of Protection were done away with.

LET THERE BE JUSTICE IN ANY CASE.

At the same time we recognize that our country is not educated to the point of a full Free Trade policy. Then all we ask is that in the imposition of a tariff for revenue, all parties be dealt with fairly. At present the working masses are being robbed in order to satisfy the needs of a few manufacturers. The farmers of Western Canada and the plain workers in cities and towns are not being fairly dealt with, and nobody knows this better than the manufacturers and the politicians.

WHY THE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE PROTECTIONISTS.

It will be asked why both political parties in Canada are Protectionists. We have already given our reason. Let us give another. You know that both parties to-day trust in the long run not upon policies and platforms, but upon adequate election funds. These funds are obtained in the main from railways and manufacturers. If the farmers of Western Canada were associated as closely as the manufacturers of Eastern Canada, if they could be bled as secretly and as successfully, their unanimous protest of the last few months would be heeded.

THE WEST MUST SPEAK.

And now it is for the West to speak its mind at Ottawa as frankly as it has done during the recent tour of the Premier. Notwithstanding the fact that the party press is hiding the truth, it is beyond question that the whole thinking West is a unit in this matter. The arguments of grain growers and others are unanswerable, but unless even a more vigorous protest is made the decision of the manufacturers' association to speak (shall we say in dollars?) when the members meet will result in an increase rather than a diminution of our present burdens.