

The Toronto World

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Printing Prospects by statistics. One of the chief reasons for the opposition against the array of facts which demonstrate the fact that the "blue ruin" statement is that inasmuch as the prosperity of the country has to be proved by statistics it does not exist. There must be something in this cry, for when uttered and repeated in the House, as it has been, the Liberal members express great delight. They have not only their mouths like a lion's roar, or a favorite quill of tobacco. What does it amount to? The condition of the country has not been represented as deplorable. The farmers are raised, the merchants are selling, markets are paralyzed; poverty is increasing; trade is languishing; disaster is threatening. Such are the statements again and again reiterated by the Opposition press. To have such a statement alone would be taken as proof of their correctness, our silence would give assent to them. To disprove such false statements it is necessary to rebut them by reliable ones, to put indisputable facts against phantasms. To most assertions by assertion would be vanity, the only effective way to suppress error is to establish the truth. In matters of trade the only way to manifest its condition is by statistics, showing its volume in given periods as recorded in official documents. Mr. Laurier's sarcasm about proving the country prosperous by statistics seems to imply that there is some other way of showing the state of trade. Perhaps he would, in like case, write a sonnet upon exports and a lyric upon imports, and a song about bank deposits, with an epic in blank verse upon mortgages, freight movements and other trade items. This plan would suit a fervid imagination equal to fancying free trade as a revenue tariff as identical. But plain people, business men, when they want to know if their own business is prosperous, and to what extent it compares with previous years, get right down to figures, and nothing but figures will satisfy them. Mr. Laurier says if we were prosperous it would not need to be proved. Yes, it would. Men of sense don't rely on impressions or suppositions; they may "feel in their bones" that their affairs are prosperous, but they wish to have it demonstrated in a balance sheet. The taunt, therefore, against us for proving by figures that the country is doing well is a very idle one, somewhat foolish and wholly irrelevant. The Opposition dislike statistics; this is natural; men never do fancy the whip that scourges them, nor admire statements which prove their theories to be baseless and false.

The most distinguished living economic writer says, "It is by the use of statistics that political economy has acquired the character of a fixed science. Adam Smith availed himself largely of statistics, hence the solidity and utility of his works." So Sir William Petty over a century ago wrote, "Instead of using comparative and superlative words and intellectual arguments, I have expressed myself in terms of number, weight and measure, the only arguments of sense, and considered only the facts which have visible foundations, leaving what depends upon the opinions, appetites and passions of particular men to the consideration of others."

There is a passage also in one of Lord Brougham's speeches to the effect that statistics based upon carefully collected figures carry conviction where mere rhetorical phrases will not reach. The Opposition then, in objecting to statistical demonstration of the actual condition of the country, are merely quarreling with facts the force of which they cannot overcome.

A compromise suggested. The trouble between the city and Street Railway Company has been narrowed down to this. Each is willing to leave it to the court to decide which party shall be finally responsible for doing the disputed work in connection with the conversion of the system to electricity. But they are not agreed as to which of them should pay the cost of the work pending the decision of the court. Therein lies the difficulty just now. The company wants the city to proceed with the work and sue it (the company). The city, on the other hand, prefers being the defendant in the forthcoming litigation. As long as both parties maintain this attitude there will be a deadlock and no work will be undertaken by either. How would it do for each party to do half the work and let the court make the final adjustment?

Building Prospects, 1923. These prospects for the year of building operations this year that will do much to revive that business. It is one of the normal conditions of a growing city to have periods of boom and collapse. We had in recent years had a number of such booms and collapses. As long as both parties maintain this attitude there will be a deadlock and no work will be undertaken by either. How would it do for each party to do half the work and let the court make the final adjustment?

These who are at all surprised at the information given by the minutes of the negotiations for reciprocity must have defective imaginations. When a fact and a rat are about to meet it is no great feat to predict a scuffle. When the late Mr. Blaine was asked why of "pious memory" the former Finance Minister it was inevitable that their views of reciprocity would clash. Mr. Blaine wished for "commercial union," the very policy Mr. Foster was elected to oppose. Mr. Blaine evidently had been elected by the private "commercial union" ambassadors from Canada, who have been making themselves very busy, and very absurd, at Washington for a length of time. It shows how little of statesmanlike discernment the late Secretary had to propose a policy of Canadian discrimination against England.

He showed also remarkable lack of knowledge of this country in asking, "Has not Canada some other mode of taxation than customs, such as income, land or direct tax?" This strange question was put as a hypothetical reply to Mr. Foster's statement that commercial union with the States would diminish the revenue by \$8,000,000. But the question is valuable as being a practical admission by Mr. Blaine that reducing our tariff must necessarily involve an income or a land tax. This admission requires no magic powers to make, for it is as obvious as that two and two make four. Still, it is well to have so plain a statement from a distinguished authority, for many in Canada who wish to dispense with many millions of customs receipts seem to imagine that the vacuum created will be filled "somehow," the somewhat process not being specified.

The lowering of our excise tax on spirits, liquors and beer, which commercial union would involve, as detailed by the Finance Minister, we commend to the consideration of our temperance friends. We commend also to their attention the graphic statement of an American paper, that "thousands of men were drunk on imported liquors, and the capital was a scene of wholesale debauchery."

Mr. Blaine pointed out, what we have done repeatedly, that unless the duties on British goods entering Canada were raised up to those of the United States, we would have an enormous smuggling business along the 3000 miles of border. Unrestricted reciprocity, we have been told, was the very policy most in favor at Washington. Yet, Mr. Blaine set upon us with weight. In response to an enquiry as to the effect of this policy, Mr. Foster said:

"The trade of Canada would be directed largely towards the United States, as would be the case with the goods from other countries would practically prevent her from purchasing therefrom manufactured goods of the kind made in the United States; that her larger and smaller industries would be exposed to a strong competition from the kind and well-established industries in the United States, with their accumulations of skill and immense capacity for output; that her kind and well-established agricultural products she would only gain access to the market, which, in nearly all lines in this country, is now closed to her. The trade with like products raised in the United States."

To this Mr. Blaine made the very frank and significant reply, "It is a world-wide trade, and the goods of the world are sold in all parts of the world. Precisely so! But Canada has no intention of being a state of the Union, and, until the American authorities get that fact well into their heads, all negotiations for reciprocity will be as abortive as those touching which we have just heard the details."

An article published elsewhere will throw a little light on the subject of Dr. Allen's dismissal from the Health Department. The doctor has the sympathy of citizens at large. His firm stand against the Mayor in regard to cutting impure ice, and his impartiality in dealing with nuisances elsewhere, have found them, whether on the premises of the Mayor and aldermen, or in houses of private citizens, call forth our admiration. The story of Dr. Allen's dismissal has not yet reached its last chapter.

A question for the court. While the courts are being resorted to for an explanation of what the expression "permanent roadbed" exactly means, it might not be out of place to get a judicial decision on another phase of the same question on hand that labor was brought into the city largely in excess of the average demand.

These were: The Parliament Buildings, the restoration of Toronto University, the Wesleyan College, Wycliff College, enlargements to Trinity, the Confederation Life buildings, the Freehold, several new churches for the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist denominations, besides large residences of unusual costliness, such as Mr. Goodrich's in Bloor and St. George streets, also public schools.

It is not in the nature of things to have such a number of billings of this class again erected for the work on hand, and being no longer required in such large numbers, their being left without work added no small factor to the collapse which occurred when all these large structures were completed.

This year there are projects afoot that will find work for many who were sorely pinched last year. There is the new Union Station, with its approaches, the bridges over the Eglinton, the work on the new harbor and the freight sheds at the C.P.R., a large building in King-street to be erected by Mr. Manning—to whose enterprise the city is heavily indebted.

Another project of Mr. Young's, the new Court House, and private residential buildings, the aggregate of which will tend to give an impetus to trade early in the spring.

Those who have attributed the troubles in real estate and building circles in this city to the break-down of manufacturing

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PUBLIC OPINION

A Power in the World

Greater Cleveland has heard the voice of the public, and his opening address shows that he is ready to correspond with the wishes of the people, and that he recognizes the truth of the maxim, "Taxation for the purposes of government is the only right upon which taxation rests." So is it evident that his first step to enter at the public; but there comes the time of reckoning and the strongest combines, the most stubborn oppressor, has to give way to the irresistible force of public opinion.

Our own City Council may be a time to temper with the health of the citizens, but who public opinion is brought to bear they must not act unwisely and well. The Board of Health, strengthened by the support of the citizens in moving and giving forth its warning with no uncertain sound, and public opinion is bound to win the day.

The business man who advertises what he has not, who strives to catch the public by high-sounding platitudes and promises that he cannot keep, who lures the public into his net, as soon as the people learn that his promises were nothing but words, they will not be so easily deceived.

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