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The Tariff Commission

The Tariff Commission, appointed for the purpose of visiting the different parts of the country and collecting information which shall be useful to the Government in the proposed remodeling of the present tariff, will shortly start on its round of visitation. The principal centres of population will be visited and opportunity will be given to those interested to appear before the Commission and present their views and any knowledge they may possess bearing upon the subject of enquiry. These facts have been publicly announced and the people have been advised to be prepared with any statements which they may wish to make before the Commission. This is all very well so far as it goes, but it is not likely to secure what is ostensibly aimed at. The manufacturers, no doubt, and any others who are directly interested in the promotion of Canadian manufactures will be prepared to promote their own personal interest by urging their views upon the Commission. These people want a tariff that will give them protection from foreign and British competition and enable them to secure for their products the highest practicable prices. The comparative fewness of their numbers and the direct and large financial interest they have in maintaining a protective tariff enable the manufacturers to organize and to bring influence to bear upon Governments by a strong presentation before tariff commissions of the facts and arguments on which they base their demands, as well as by other means of a less legitimate character. It is easy to see, however, that there are large classes of people in this country whose immediate interests are directly opposed to those manufacturers whose business prosperity is conditioned upon a high tariff and whose demand for protection is never satisfied until the tariff wall is raised to a prohibitive height. The condition that means prosperity and wealth to the smaller class means increased cost of living to the larger. The great mass of consumers, including especially the large proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, whose immediate interests are served by a low tariff and cheap goods, are of course not organized in reference to the tariff question as the manufacturers are, and their interests, if presented at all before the Commission at its various meetings, will be presented in a much less strenuous and effective way than those of the manufacturers. It may be a good thing for a country to establish some manufactures even on the condition of some addition to the general cost of living. But it is a serious question whether Canada is not carrying beyond the point of utility the principle of building up manufacturing interests by protection. The Liberal party in opposition declared strongly against a policy on this subject, which it now supports. Is it that the policy of a low tariff has been found to be a mistaken policy—bad for the country—or is it that it has become inexpedient from a party standpoint? Perhaps the Government intends now at length to cut down the tariff to a revenue basis. Perhaps if the farmers would present their interests before the Tariff Commission with all the force and effectiveness that will characterize the action of the manufacturers, that might come to pass. But everybody knows that will not be done and no one expects that the protective walls will be materially lowered.

The Great Naval Battle.

Commander Akiyama of the Japanese Navy, who participated in the battle of the Sea of Japan, has prepared an extended statement dealing with the details of the battle. He prefaces his statement by declaring that good gunnery depends mainly upon the division officers, and asserts that the Russian officers were lamentably lacking in training. In the early part of the battle the Russians scored but one hit to three landed by the Japanese. Under those circumstances it may be said that the Japanese had three or four guns in action to every one of the Russians, and there was, therefore, nothing very remarkable about the disparity of losses. The commander says that Admiral Rojestvensky should not be criticized for electing to take his chances at Tsushima. On the contrary, it was the wisest course open to him, Isu-garu Strait is a long and narrow one, the season was foggy, and there were more chances of obstruction. Distance and coal were against Soya, and the time consumed in reaching that entrance would have

betrayed the design, and his plight on emerging from Soya would have been much worse than he might reasonably hope for at Tsushima. Commander Akiyama insists that the great mistake of the Russians was in marshalling their vessels in double column line ahead. From the moment of going into action in this formation, the Japanese regarded victory as assured. Apart from the impossibility of maintaining an orderly formation when pursuing such tactics for defensive purposes, there was the fact that only a few of the ships could bring their guns into effective action against the Japanese fleet attacking end on. The latter ships were able to concentrate their whole fire upon the leading Russian ships, and in return received only a limited fire. Had the Russians adopted the strategy of imposing the brunt of action upon their battleships, while the rest of the fleet broke through and steered direct for Vladivostok, the commander believes they would have achieved a partial success. Instead of doing that they followed the plan of mutually aiding one another, and thus, when the head of the battleship column got into trouble, the others steamed up and thrust their heads into the lion's mouth without being able to accomplish anything compensatory. Discussing the questions of sinking battleships and armored cruisers by gun fire, the commander expresses the opinion that the fact that the Russian ships were exceptionally low in the water contributed materially to the result. The Russians carried large quantities of coal, stores and ammunition, and thus weighed down and in a rough sea, suffered badly from hits near the water line that ordinarily would not have been fatal. The commander says that the battle did not, as some claim, prove the superiority of arms to armor. He points out that the newest armor on the Russian ships, and notably in the case of the 'Orel,' was not pierced. Akiyama declared the high seas aided the Japanese gunnery, and accentuated the lack of training in the Russians; that the abatement of the wind and sea at night, permitting favorable torpedo attacks, and the lack of the pursuit movements of the Japanese undertaking the second day of the battle, were notable elements in making the victory complete. Akiyama defends Nebogatoff's surrender from severe criticism. Nebogatoff was surrounded by 27 ships, including the most powerful of Togo's fleet. Had the Russian refused to surrender, his ships would have been sunk forthwith. Five or ten minutes would have sufficed to finish the unpleasant task. Any other course would have condemned to needless death 2,000 officers and men. Accurate estimates of the total Russian casualties are impossible to obtain, but they are under first estimates. The rescued and surrendered exceed 7,000, and making due allowance for those who escaped in the 'Almaz,' 'Izumrud,' 'Orel,' 'Aurora,' 'Jemtebug,' and the auxiliaries, the number actually lost is somewhere between 2,000 and 3,000.

The Peace Conference.

The Peace Conference has been in session at Portsmouth, N. H., since Wednesday last. No one perhaps is as yet in a position to say definitely what the result of the Conference will be, but the present situation, so far as known to the public, gives little encouragement to the hope that it will be peace. It is hard to say how much of what is reported in the press despatches in reference to the proceedings of the Conference is trustworthy. The statement in reference to the terms submitted by Japan appear to be generally received as correct. These terms as published include reimbursement by Russia for the expenses of the war, whatever upon inquiry they may be found to be, and the cession to Japan of the Island of Sakhalin. These are the two main conditions. The terms presented by Japan include also:—The cession of the Russian leases to the Liaotung peninsula comprising Port Arthur and Dalny. The evacuation of the entire province of Manchuria, the retrocession to China of any privileges Russia may have in the province, and the recognition by Russia of the principle of the "open door." The cession to Japan of the Chinese Eastern Railroad below Harbin, the main line through Northern Manchuria to Vladivostok to remain Russian property. The recognition of the Japanese protectorate over Korea. The granting of fishing rights to Japan in the waters of the Siberian littoral northward from Vladivostok to the Behring Sea. The relinquishment to Japan of the Russian warships interned in neutral ports. Finally, a limita-

tion upon the naval strength of Russia in Far Eastern waters. In regard to the two main points noted above—the indemnity and the cession of Sakhalin—M. Witt on behalf of Russia is reported to have declared firmly in the conference that they cannot be accepted. It is understood, however, that the commissioners have agreed to lay aside for the present these main conditions and proceed to the consideration of the other points named in Japan's terms. This may indicate some hope on the part of Japan that Russia will reconsider her refusal as to the payment of indemnity and the cession of Sakhalin. But if Russia determines to remain firm in her refusal upon these points it seems certain that common ground cannot be reached, and the war must go on. It may be that Japan would accept something less than full reimbursement for the cost of the war, but that she will insist on a large indemnity seems certain, and that she will insist upon the cession of Sakhalin is as little open to doubt. While there has been no request for an armistice, there appears to have been a practical cessation of hostilities in Manchuria, but if it becomes apparent that the Conference is to be a failure it may be expected that hostilities will be resumed with vigor.

Crops in the United States

It is reported that the crop of the present year in the United States is likely to break all records in respect to the largeness and value of the harvest. It is possible, however, that the present year's wheat crop will be somewhat smaller than that of 1901, which aggregated 748,000,000 bushels. While it is yet too early to pronounce positively in regard to the corn crop the indications are said to be that it will exceed by a large margin the record-breaking crop of 1902, which totaled 2,523,000,000 bushels. Along with the expectation of an immense grain crop there is a prospect that prices will be unusually high, and the farming interests of the country will of course benefit accordingly. According to figures emanating from State capitals on August 5th, 370,000,000 bushels more of corn will be raised this year than last in the States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin. The entire crop of corn last year, taking official Government figures, was 2,467,000,000 bushels. The record crop of all years was 2,523,000,000 bushels, in 1902. Hence, if the other States of the Union do anything near as well proportionately as the twelve mentioned, this year's corn yield will tower high above that of other years. These same twelve States are expected to produce 114,000,000 bushels more wheat than they did a year ago. Of the winter wheat States, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Ohio, Nebraska and Missouri make a fine showing in increases. Enough of the crop has been gathered and threshed in good order to make these figures semi-final.

Japan in Sakhalin

Japan has succeeded at comparatively small cost in taking possession of the Island of Sakhalin. The Island was formerly a Japanese possession, and it is hardly likely that Japan will consent to give it back into the hands of Russia. The Island is of considerable extent, but of little value for agriculture. Its fisheries however, are said to be valuable, and its possession is important from a military point of view. The Russian Government has used Sakhalin as a penal colony, and this fact will influence Japan in her treatment of the population of the conquered territory. It is said that there are now between twenty and thirty thousand Russians there. All prisoners except political are to be deported to Russian territory. Those prisoners who have been enlisted as members of the volunteer militia will be given certain privileges. The political prisoners who desire to emigrate will be allowed to do so. These provisions are to apply to all prisoners without prejudice as to their nationality, race or origin. The Japanese Government will assume that all persons except those who are to be deported are citizens of the island and will be allowed the privilege of declaring their allegiance to Japan. Many petitions recently have been circulated in America, signed mostly by citizens of Jewish extraction, asking the Japanese Government to grant freedom to those victims of political oppression now on the island.