

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 23, 1893.

HOLD TO THE VITAL POINT.

The tour of the Honorable Messrs. Foster and Angers through Manitoba, if it brings no better results, will certainly enlighten these gentlemen as to the real state of affairs here, and if they are not blind to everything but party interests, they must see that sweeping changes in the past policy of the Conservative Government are necessary to secure to the prairie province even a portion of the justice and consideration to which its people are entitled from our Dominion legislators.

The key note of the addresses of the two Ministers throughout this province was loyalty to Canada as a Dominion, a loyalty to be carried into trade policy as well as into other fields. Why so much preaching from this text is considered necessary by the honorable gentlemen is not clear to Manitobans generally. The province has much less need of instruction in that way than any other province of the Dominion. Of course, a few years ago Manitobans were called rebels and annexationists for daring to ask for rights not withheld from any other province of the Dominion, and it may be that the honorable gentlemen forecast some loud and united demand again coming from the province in the near future, a demand which may so irritate the leaders of their party, that the old pet names of rebel and annexationists may have to be resurrected, and made to do duty for the interests of the party. Manitobans have learned in the past what they can do by unity, and even party interests will not prevent unity once more on a question which is of vital importance to the province. While they may be able to reach unity in aim, they never forsake true loyalty to Canada. At the last general election, when the question of a tariff compact with the United States was advocated by the opposition, Manitobans gave for the patriotic principle of controlling and fixing our own trade policy, and against a compact with any foreign nation, the most decided vote of any province in Canada. That was a fair test of loyalty to Canada, and the answer in favor of it was clearest and most decided from Manitoba of all the provinces in confederation. Therefore, there is no necessity for lectures on loyalty from the honorable gentlemen from Ottawa. Manitoba can read a practical lesson on that doctrine to all the balance of Canada. The lectures given can only be meant to divert if possible the attention by some side issue from the point on which public opinion here is fast concentrating, namely, on the question of reducing import tariff.

But loyalty to Canada is not the only side issue slipped in by the honorable gentleman, apparently with a desire to lessen interest in the great point at issue. The lumber combine, the farm machinery combine, and that terrible middleman are all ingeniously dragged in as powers in adding to, if not creating, the burdens on the farmer. Any arraignment of combines on the part of Mr. Foster, has a ring of

hypocrisy about it, for it is under shelter of the tariff, which is fixed up under his immediate personal supervision, that all the most rascally of the trade combines have sprung up, and he and his colleagues and followers can effectually sit upon all combines, first by the radical course of sweeping away the tariff under which they take shelter, so that it would be impossible for them to exist; or if that be too radical a course, by allowing all dutiable articles to come into the Dominion free, when it can be shown, that a combine exists which affects the price of such home made articles. Thus establishing the principle of protecting the independent home industry, but giving no protection to the combine.

Another field for a side issue, on which the honorable gentleman would evidently wish to mislead the people from the tariff issue, is the freight rates on the Canadian Pacific railway. The Dominion Government and the Canadian Pacific railway company are not the sworn and inseparable friends they have been in past years, and in a coming election their interests are very likely to be in opposition. It would be very convenient at present, if the visiting Ministers could transfer a share of the odium incurred by a burdensome and unjust tariff, to their former friends of the railway company, just as the latter are likely to become their opponents, especially if it would lift up some of the intensity with which the Manitoban mind has taken hold of the question of tariff reform.

It is to be hoped that the people of this province will allow no side issue to lead them away from this point of vital importance to their welfare, the tariff. They are only being played as dupes, when they allow themselves to be moved one jot from the great question. If the tariff under which iniquitous combines are sheltered is removed, the trading public can then handle the combine in a more practical and effectual manner, than the Government. As to the loyalty of Canada, it is superfluous, and the old flag business is purile, if not silly, and positively sickening to listen to, when dinned into the ears of a community too much oppressed with a load of unjust burdens, to think of sentimental issues. The people of this province are too hard-headed to be misled by such twaddle, and it would be wise for the visiting Ministers to cease to use it.

On the great side issue of the Canadian Pacific railway rates, the people of this province would do well to pay but little heed to what Messrs. Foster and Angers say. When we want a reduction in freight rates over the Canadian Pacific railway, let the people approach the managers of the road themselves, and state their case as a business, and not as a political grievance, and better results will assuredly be reached. Messrs. Foster and Angers are members of a Government, which like its predecessors has never conceded to this province the first point on the reducing of tariff. In fact, they have heartily supported every increase in import tariff, which has been made for many years back. They are both avowed advocates of high tariff, and any concessions they are prepared to make are forced from them, and must have the consent of their protectionist supporters in the east. On the

other hand, the Canadian Pacific Railway management have made concessions in freight rates, and this very year made a very material reduction in grain rates to the east. That they made as liberal a reduction as they might have made with safety no business man here will admit, but they made a reduction, in response to appeals from such bodies as the Winnipeg Board of Trade, and further reductions can be most readily secured through the appeals of Manitoba business men and farmers. Railways are invariably managed by shrewd business men, and business men will always do best with the parties interested direct. Let the people therefore settle their own affairs with the Canadian Pacific Railway managers, the combines, the middlemen and all other parties with whom they have a difference. With the tariff greatly reduced, the combines and middlemen will be easy to handle, and with a similar state of affairs, the Canadian Pacific Railway, Grand Trunk, and every other railway company in Canada could purchase their supplies for construction, maintenance and repairs of roads and plant so much cheaper than they can at present, that they could well afford to make a liberal reduction on freight rates, and be better off, than they are under the present state of affairs. In short, high tariff is the buttress of inflation in Canada, and the inflated prices railway companies have to pay for every manufactured commodity they require has more than anything else to do with their high freight rates.

But Messrs. Foster and Angers, in hunting for side issues outside of legislative limits, are meddling with questions they in no way improve by their interference. Their business is politics, or seeking for evils which legislation can remedy, and they would not wisely to stick to what is purely their own field, and not meddle in others. They would do well to remember the story of the industrious Quaker, who cleared \$1,000 profit the first year he located in a retail store, where a number of other business men had been reduced to bankruptcy previously, and in which no former occupant had reached success. On being pressed by friends to tell the secret of his success, he appointed a time and place to meet all inquirers on the subject. A large gathering met him then, and he told them confidentially that he made two thousand dollars by minding his own business, and he made two thousand dollars more by not poking his nose into other people's business.

Let Manitobans keep each party to their own field—minding their own business, so to speak, and the business they have to talk over with the visiting ministers now, and to demand from the Dominion Government at the next session of parliament is a heavy reduction in our import tariff rates all along the line. Politicians are hard to hold to a point, but this point of tariff reduction is the one they must be spiked down to at present.

CHEAP FLOUR AND DEAR BREAD.

It was not without a feeling of regret, that in the last issue of this journal we made the abnormally low quotation of \$1.75 a sack for patent process flour, the highest grade made by our Northwestern millers. One dollar and