

The Weekly Times

Victoria, Friday, November 2.

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS.

Protection has been wounded in the house of its friends. Behold how the Colonist this morning rounds upon it and abuses it to its face:

The truth is British Columbia coal is so much superior in quality to Washington coal that the consumer of coal in the Pacific States for almost any purpose prefers it to the home product. The Washington coal dealer wants to compel the American consumers to use an inferior article at a high price in order, not that the miners may have good wages, but that the dealers may have big profits.

We see that the Washington newspapers are growing because the ships of the American navy, after making many tests of the quality of the different coals produced on this side of the continent, prefer British Columbia coal. The American naval officers know that it is more economical and better in every way to use good coal in the ships they command, but the Washington mine owners do not care a button about the advantage to the country of using the best coal that can be procured. They want to sell their coal, and provided they can get more for it than it is really worth, they don't care a button who suffers, their country, to which they profess to be so deeply attached, or their fellow citizens, whose interests they pretend to have at heart. This is the long and the short of the howl about coal in the newspapers of the Sound cities. The whine about fresh lumber is equally foolish and equally selfish. If British Columbia is not afraid of American competition in Canadian markets, Washington and Oregon should not be afraid of British Columbian competition in United States markets.

From the standpoint of the protectionist it does not matter how superior the quality of outside products may be; he would force the people of the country to "encourage home industry" or fine them if they refuse. And that is all the Washington protectionists are aiming at. They are talking just as the Canadian cotton, iron and coal producers do when they are threatened with a reduction of duty. It is a great pleasure to observe that the Colonist does once in a while get a glimmering of light on the trade question, even if it refuses to apply its discoveries to the case of its own country. We may hope that its readers will be intelligent enough to make the application for themselves.

A SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT.

Conservative papers in Manitoba and the Northwest, like Conservative papers in British Columbia, have most sedulously endeavored to create the impression that Mr. Laurier's visit was without political effect. There was nothing in his speeches, they say, and nothing but disappointment for himself and his party in his tour through the country. The most significant commentary on all this sort of talk is the fact that a deputation of the Manitoba and Northwest "faithful" deemed it advisable to visit Ottawa and represent to the powers the necessity of doing something to counteract the effects of Mr. Laurier's tour. Some of the members of the deputation have privately admitted that the Liberal leader's tour has done a great deal for his party in the Northwest, and there is no question that Conservative recognition of this fact led to the visit to Ottawa. Certain of the visiting gentlemen are probably concerned about the safety of their own parliamentary seats and the prospect of their party generally, while others are undoubtedly inspired by the idea that here is a fine chance for personal profit, when the government is likely to feel pained by the situation and therefore ready to do a little "sweetening" through the medium of their little projects. In any event, there is no uncertainty about the deputation having approached the government with the information that Mr. Laurier's visit has further damaged Conservative prospects in the Northwest—already poor enough—and urged on this ground that the government should do certain things to recover the lost leeway. The results of the visit will appear sometime in the future, but in the meanwhile Liberals can appreciate the strength of the evidence which the incident affords as to the effect of Mr. Laurier's tour.

PROTECTION FALLACIES.

It is an essential part of the protectionist reasoning that "labor" is incapable of taking care of itself; that it is always in need of having something done for it; that it is something to be encouraged by the fostering care of a superior and independent class; and that its wages depend more on legislative enactment than upon its own exertions in production; in a word, that wages are a gift which may be large or small according to the generosity or otherwise of the giver. And what is most singular in this age of "schools and schoolmasters," with the advantages which the working classes possess of obtaining knowledge and of cultivating their powers of reason and observation, is that they should be to so great an extent under the influence of this degrading and humiliating superstition. Workingmen who read with amazement of the absurd attempts of the

legislators of the seventeenth century in England to regulate the rate of wages by law, are yet among the most eager advocates of protective legislation for the same purpose. Until workingmen, in the true spirit of self-reliance, come to recognize that labor, free to apply itself in production, and unhindered by legislative interference in exchange, is capable of doing everything for itself; that the wages of labor are not a gratuity, but the just measure of what labor itself creates; that a day's labor and a day's wages are equivalents of value, and that all that labor really requires is freedom and opportunity—they must be content to occupy the position of political tools and suppliants, and to accept the mixed character, part pauper and part producer, which protection assigns to them.

Legislative enactment may change the terms in which the value of a day's labor is expressed, but it is powerless to confer upon it a greater value to the laborer. It may change the denominator which expresses the value of a day's work from \$1 to \$2, but it can only affect the value of what the production of a day's work will exchange for by making it less. By increasing the money value of a day's labor applied to the making of stoves, or furniture, or clothing, it does not increase the amount of clothing, or furniture, which a stove maker obtains for his work, because it must correspondingly increase the money value of these things, but by limiting his opportunity of exchanging his labor to a smaller circle it makes its value less. The chances of profit to a man having a hundred chances to trade are surely greater than to one having only ten. The argument for protection assumes many insidious forms.

Many who believe that protective tariffs on the necessities of life are hurtful to workingmen, are persuaded that such tariffs fixed upon luxuries are for their benefit. The first difficulty that presents itself in connection with this idea of taxation is the difficulty of determining what are necessities and what are luxuries. In an advancing society the luxuries of to-day are the necessities of to-morrow. To the man who has only bread butter is a luxury, and to the man who has in addition to these things coffee and milk sugar is a luxury, while to the great majority of Canadian workingmen all these things are among the commonest necessities of life.

This plea for protection appeals to an unreasonable prejudice, which seeks to tax rich men because they are rich, to compel men to contribute to its maintenance not according to its benefits they receive from the institution of government, but according to the extent of their accumulations. This short-sighted plan not only fails to accomplish its professed purpose, but falls heaviest on those on whose interests it is advanced. It goes on the assumption that men can be taxed on their living. This assumption is built on false premises, since to take away by taxation any part of a man's living would be to that extent to starve him. No man can be taxed upon his living, but upon that which he might otherwise save if free from taxation. The proportion to the total amount of their possible savings spent by people of moderate means of every class in luxuries, is much greater than the proportion spent by the rich. Let us suppose the case of a man with a family of five who has an income of \$700 per annum, whose living expenses are \$400, leaving a possible saving of \$300. Out of this he spends \$100 for luxuries in good things to eat and wear, upon which a duty of 35 per cent. is collected. Then the tax levied upon his possible savings is 11.23 per cent. Let us now suppose the case of a man with a family of five who has an income of \$10,000 per annum. Deduct \$400 for living (for there is no reason why a rich family could not sustain life on the same rations as a poor one), and allow him to spend \$1000 per annum on luxuries. This taxed at 35 per cent. equals \$350, a percentage on his possible savings of \$8600—or only a trifle over 4 per cent. So that protective tariffs levied upon luxuries fall upon the poor as compared with the rich in the proportion of nearly three to one. And we have only been considering the disproportion in the case of a man of moderate wealth. The greater the difference in the wealth the greater the injustice in the system of taxation. This is only one of the ways in which protection tends to the concentration of wealth, and the longer it continues the more the injustice is intensified. Can those of moderate means, who are by far the greater proportion of the people of Canada, look upon this accelerating power for the accumulation of wealth which the protective system places in the hands of the wealthy minority with complacency?

INTRA MUROS.

MERCIER.

The death of Honore Mercier will naturally recall to most minds his downfall and disgrace as a politician rather than the signal success which for a brief period waited upon him. He was in many respects eminently fitted to be a leader of men, being brilliant, bold, aggressive and shrewd, and having in large measure

the gifts of the orator. He was an opportunist of an extreme type, and ready to use almost any means within his reach to accomplish his purpose—in politics. In this regard he was the counterpart of Sir John Macdonald. Had he lived many years longer it is not improbable that he would have succeeded in rehabilitating himself politically, as Sir John Macdonald did, by the adoption of some device, the raising of some cry, that would have hidden the record of his past wrong-doing from the public gaze and caused them to ignore the shadow that rested on his career. It is not at all surprising that many of those who censured Mercier most loudly were those who most easily condoned the Pacific scandal and exalted its hero to the highest political heaven. They have also been able to swallow without wincing all the scandals to which the later Macdonald regime has given rise. There has seldom been a more disgusting exhibition of hypocrisy than that which attended the exposure of Mercier's crooked administration. Men who held up their hands in holy horror over the Quebec leader's departures from the path of political virtue had a curiously blind eye to turn on the much greater crimes that were perpetrated at Ottawa. Liberals in general have shown no inclination to condone or excuse Mr. Mercier's lapses. These were not to be pardoned save by men of the opportunist stamp, but it was nevertheless nauseating to witness the attitude of the Macdonaldites who affected to condemn him most severely.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The list of charges drawn up against Contractor St. Louis—presumably by Sir John Thompson himself—summarized as follows:

1. That Emmanuel St. Louis, of Montreal, between the twenty-fourth of February and the seventh of June, 1893, obtained from the Queen the sum of \$144,874 with intent to defraud.

2. That he, between the said 24th of February and the 7th of June, 1893, inclusive, obtained \$1,861.40 with intent to defraud.

3. That he, between the 6th of March and the 7th of June, 1893, inclusive, obtained \$12,337.37 with intent to defraud.

4. That he, between the 20th of March and the 7th of June, 1893, inclusive, obtained \$10,913.92 with intent to defraud.

5. That he, between the 12th of January and the 7th of June, 1893, inclusive, obtained \$425.70 with intent to defraud.

6. That Her Majesty the Queen at all the time between the 24th of February and the 7th of June, 1893, was, and still is, a creditor of Emmanuel St. Louis, and that the said Emmanuel St. Louis, at the city of Montreal, on or about the 7th day of June, 1893, with intent to defraud Her Majesty the Queen, who was then a creditor of the said Emmanuel St. Louis, did unlawfully destroy his books, papers and writings, to wit: time books, checks, bank books, journals, ledgers and balance sheet.

The Montreal Star on them says: "The result of the trial will be awaited with interest. If we cannot get a government alert enough to prevent such losses, we must at least make it dangerous for contractors to inflict them." It may safely be taken for granted that the people would prefer prevention of such stealings to prosecution of the thieves afterwards, but they would show themselves exceedingly dull if they expected the present government to become "alert enough to prevent such losses." Moreover, the trial is not on yet, and it is well known that some of the government's staunchest friends in Quebec are decidedly opposed to the prosecution of St. Louis.

It is not at all surprising that the contract for the Dominion public building should have gone to an eastern man. Some of the local contractors who tendered are said to have been rather astonished to find themselves underbid by an Ottawa man, since they had "figured" as closely as an intimate knowledge of local conditions would allow. They possibly forget that while they may understand the local conditions the Ottawa contractor may know the department better, and also that while they were basing their calculations on local rates of wages the other had in his mind eastern rates. There is no obstacle in the way of his bringing out here all the workmen he needs at eastern wages.

Lord Salisbury deems it advisable that his party should propose a somewhat radical reform of the house of lords, and either of the two alternative plans he is said to have submitted would make a decided change in that body. Still there are some Canadian journals that affect to look on the anti-lords agitation as wholly lacking in strength. Blind leaders of the blind indeed are they.

PROTECTION IN ENGLAND.

The Canadian protectionist press have uniformly adopted the policy of attempting to divert attention from any investigation of the injurious effects of protection in Canada, to the consideration of the complaints of the English landed aristocracy and their following, with the object of discrediting the result of the application of free trade principles. Both in England and in Canada the reactionists unconsciously to themselves—though with very different



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Who are run down;
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objects—are doing that which in the end will be of very great service to the free trade movement. Free trade has suffered in England and America more from the apathy of its supporters than from the attacks of its enemies. In England with the lapse of time men have come to look upon the name of Cobden and the principles by which he was animated, as a tradition of the past, not having had in their own experience a knowledge of the evils of dear bread, and without any clear picture in their own recollections of the true state of things in England under protection, they have lost sight of their advantages in being relieved from it. In Canada, absorbed in the rush and hurry of the development of a new country, and misled by the false prosperity attending the wasteful expenditure of immense amounts of borrowed money by a protectionist government, the people have not been led by the necessities of their situation to study political history or principle. But protection is producing in America the same results as it did in England, and the comparisons of Canadian protectionists and complaints of that class who betray the protectionist instinct by their objections to free competition in England, are effectually establishing in the public mind in both countries the completeness of the parallel. Of this there can be no better illustration than the following quotations from Gowen's life of Cobden:

"By a law of 1773 so long as wheat was not more than 48 shillings per quarter the importation of foreign corn was forbidden. In 1791, avowedly in the interest of agricultural land, the importation of foreign corn was practically prohibited so long as English corn was less than 50s. per quarter. It was not actually forbidden, but what is called a 'prohibitory duty' of 24s. 3d. was put upon foreign corn. If English corn, however, rose to 50s. there was a duty of only 2s. 6d., and while it was between 50s. and 54s. the duty was 6d. 7th day of June, 1893, inclusive, obtained \$10,913.92 with intent to defraud. In 1894 a new corn law was passed, under which so long as English corn was less than 64s. a quarter in the market, there was a prohibitory duty of 24s. 3d. a quarter on foreign corn, with small duties if the price rose higher. Foreign corn could not come into England so long as English wheat was over 63s. a quarter, which would make bread and flour about double the price at which those articles stood in the winter of 1884-5. As a matter of fact the prohibition never came into operation between 1894 and 1914. The price was so high during all that time that foreign corn could be admitted under the law at 6d. duty. During that time, the period of the great war, farmers made fortunes quickly, and land owners had enormous rents for their lands. When the war ceased and the seas and ports were free for commerce once again, great quantities of corn were brought to England, attracted by high prices, for in 1813 wheat was 106s. per quarter, and in 1812 it was 122s. (nearly four times the price of the winter of 1884-5. The consequence of the great flood of foreign corn was a large reduction in the price of wheat. In the midst of the high prices during the war the people were starving and took to eating barley, rye and oats; as soon as the foreign corn came in with the stoppage of the war, the farmers began to cry that they would be ruined, for rents had been going up for many years. What was to be done? Should the landowners largely reduce their rents? Or should a law be passed to keep up the price of corn at the expense of the poor people who wanted bread? Well, the poor people were not in parliament to plead their own cause against dear bread. Generally they had no votes and no voice in the election of members of parliament. So in 1814 a bill was introduced into the house of commons to prohibit the importation of foreign corn until English corn reached a high price. But the country was in a terrible state of distress, and in the face of very strong opposition in and out of parliament, the measure was withdrawn. The question, however, was only postponed for a few months, and in the early part of 1815 a bill was carried through parliament, practically prohibiting the importation of corn until the price of wheat in England should be as high as 80s. per quarter. Whilst the legislature was engaged in the discussion of the question the people of London became riotous, the walls were chalked with invectives such as 'Bread or Blood,' etc. A loaf steeped in blood was placed on Carlton House (now Carlton Club). The houses of some of the

most unpopular promoters of the measure were mobbed. The military were called out and two persons were killed. The houses of parliament were guarded by soldiers, and indeed the whole of London appeared to be in possession of the army. The men of the agitation of 1817 were called 'Blanketeers,' because having resolved to march in a body to London and lay their grievances before the prince regent, it was a part of their plan each to carry a blanket or rug in which to roll themselves up and sleep by the roadside under the hedges, or in the fields by night, on their wretched journey from the North of England to the metropolis. They started from St. Peter's fields in Manchester on the 30th of March. But the authorities resolved not to allow them to find their way to London in this manner. The leaders of the movement were taken into custody and imprisoned. Troops held the roads between Manchester and the capital through which the procession was to pass, and those of the poor creatures who were not sent to prison were dispersed. Next came the battle of Peterloo—this was in 1819. The great Manchester meeting of the 16th of August was arranged to be held in St. Peter's field—the spot on which now stands the Free Trade Hall—lying at that time in the outskirts of Manchester. Some 80,000 people were congregated upon the field carrying banners bearing reform and anti-corn law mottoes and playing bugles. Mr. 'Orator Hunt,' one of the popular leaders of the time, was chairman, and spoke from a wagon. While he was speaking a body of mounted yeomanry with drawn swords, approached the wagon at a brisk trot and seized Mr. Hunt as their prisoner. There was much discussion afterwards on the question whether or not the riot act was read, and the people formally called upon to disperse, but in any case the mass of the people knew nothing of it. The crowd showed no signs of any intention to disperse. Somebody among the yeomanry cried out 'Have at their flags.' The mounted yeomanry made a dash at the people, slashing about them with their swords, and trampling them under the horses' feet. It was very difficult for the people to escape on account of the density of the crowd, particularly as the outlets were held by military detachments. In the crowd eleven men, women and children were killed and six hundred wounded. The whole attack did not last more than ten minutes. The event soon after got the name of the Battle of Peterloo, and the records of Free Trade Hall, Manchester, erected in commemoration of the triumph some 17 years later of Richard Cobden and the Anti-Corn Law League, state that the building is erected on the site of the 'Massacre of Peterloo.' The event aroused a great deal of excitement in the country, and the bitterness of feeling was much intensified by the fact that the yeomanry were not soldiers, but a body of volunteers consisting of farmers and landowners, who were hence accused of cutting and trampling down a starving people in the interest of the high price of corn."

After three-quarters of a century this pitiful drama is again being re-enacted in the United States as a result of protection. The legislature refuses to carry out the mandate of the people for the reduction of the tariff, and the relief of the suffering people. Coxey's army marches on the capital and its tramping wretches are sent to prison or dispersed by armed force. Law-abiding citizens are appalled by scenes of riot and bloodshed that subside only before bullets and bayonets, and the cry of starvation and misery is met by Sheridan's demand for more soldiers. Canadian protection has not yet ripened its full fruit, but already the nod of its beneficiaries is more powerful than the will of the people in parliament, and corruption born of protection boldly helps itself to public funds without fear of retribution. Give them time and when the injustice of protection shall have produced its inevitable disorder, the men who can advocate for the British people a return to the rule of the butchers of Peterloo, will be found equal to the defense of throat-cutting in Canada to perpetuate protectionist plunder rather than the remedy of freedom which produces peace.

INTRA MUROS.

A very disastrous fire in the western outskirts of Winnipeg, the extensive stables and outbuildings of the Ottawa Dairy, with all the stock and several thousand tons of hay and feed being totally consumed. The loss is \$12,000. About seventy-five cows were burned.

LAURIER

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