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The Tariff Issue Gone.

IT is manifest that what has been known as the tariff question in Canada, that is the issue between a moderately high tariff and a low one, between free trade and protection, or even between tariff for revenue only and moderate protection, has almost disappeared from the political arena. The Montreal Witness commenting on a cabled statement from Canada to England that no paper, except the Witness has any objection to the protectionist policy of the Laurier government, states that although the correspondent's investigation was not exhaustive by any means still the statement was, broadly speaking true, so far as the Canada east of Lake Superior is concerned. The attempt of the Witness to explain this is not very successful. The real explanation is not an insinuation against the integrity of the Canadian press but the open fact that the issue has disappeared from the minds of the people and the daily and weekly press print what the people are doing and what the people are saying, and if the people are not objecting to the tariff policy of the

Laurier government it would be a waste of time for the newspaper, which are printed for the people, to attempt to force a discussion in which the people are apparently not interested. Somehow or other the general public have accepted a tariff whose maximum duty is 35 per cent, and whose average on dutiable goods runs between 20 and 25 per cent.

The activity of a very strong and ably led Opposition for the 15 years preceding 1896 stirred the people up over the tariff question and to cap the campaign Canada endured a period of severe depression in the first half of the nineties, and so the tariff came to be a pretty live issue. But that can't be done over again in our generation, and particularly with the present Opposition pledged to increase rather than decrease the duties.

The present government has enormously increased the internal taxes collected by the Department of Inland Revenue, but no person seems to object very loudly and the Montreal Witness itself is no doubt rather in favor of the increased taxes.