

I am prepared, as I said months ago in an interview, that a restriction should be put on at the earliest hour. If legislation is necessary, let us have legislation. If it is necessary to pass an Act to do this common, simple justice to our own people, the neglect of whom under the circumstances is shameful, then let us enact the necessary legislation. I am prepared to-morrow morning to take the responsibility of endeavoring to put legislation of that kind on the statute book of Ontario, and I am prepared to do it because I know the people of our own Province desire it, and I know also that they would not desire it if it were not a proper thing to desire. The sooner we arrive at some conclusion as to whether we are to be guided by the interests of the people of the Province of Ontario, the sooner we will do that duty which belongs to legislators to do.

### THE TARIFF COMMISSION.

When the Laurier Government's tariff commission was abroad in the land it heard the evidence of hundreds of manufacturers in almost every line of trade, and that evidence was so strong that no sane person who considered it would for one moment propose to do away entirely with protection. Liberals and Conservatives alike, the managers of the great producing concerns agreed upon the necessity for the preservation of the extant conditions of trade in Canada so far as governmental erection of those conditions were concerned. The manufacturers everywhere laid it down as an axiom necessary to their interests, and to the interests of the whole country, that the principle of protection be upheld. And not manufacturers alone, but the men whose daily sweat contributed to the upbuilding of Canadian industries, told Messrs. Cartwright, Fielding and Paterson the same straightforward story.

Down at Halifax the commissioners had the very strongest kind of propositions laid before them by the authorized representatives of organized trades of workmen. These men represented the great industry that deals with the iron and steel products. Three hundred members of the Royal Society of the workmen in the steel department of the Nova Scotia Steel Company assembled and delegated five of their number to appear before the Tariff Commission and state their views. They pointed out that the works employed 450 men and the average wage was \$1.51 per day. The men owned houses valued at \$250,000, and all but two of them were Nova Scotians, most of them trained in the iron business and knowing no other. If deprived of work there they would be obliged to go to the States, or some other iron-producing country. Their statement to the Commission concluded in this wise:—

Fully one-half of the men in the employ of the Company are in sympathy with the Liberal party, and voted for its candidates at the last election, having the fullest confidence in the oft-repeated assurances of the leaders of the party that no change would be made in the tariff that would injuriously affect the interests of the working men. While it was well known that the management of the Company was strongly in favor of the policy of the late government, every man in the employ was allowed the fullest liberty in voting for the candidate of his choice, no pressure being brought to bear on them to do otherwise.

With reference to the duty on steel, the men are all of one mind, and are most decidedly opposed to any change in the way of lowering the same.

We unitedly and earnestly request that the tariff shall not be made any more unfavorable to us than it is at present, and that the encouragement that we have had for the past few years

be continued, so that our country with its vast resources be developed, and thereby help the people of the east to pay for the manufactured goods of the west.

We consider the lowering of the duty at the present time would certainly bring disaster and ruin to very many of our population.

The workmen of the Ferrona Iron Works of the Nova Scotia Steel Company sent a representative to tell the Commission how the tariff question appealed to them. Here is the statement of their reason to wish protection on pig iron:—

1. Because the price of labor is the largest factor in the cost of producing iron, and any reduction in the price of iron must naturally lower wages.

2. Because the wages now paid at Ferrona have practically reached the minimum that will support life in this latitude at a kind of work which compels a large outlay for boots and clothing.

3. Because we cannot support ourselves and families upon wages, which will not enable us to compete with the convict labor of the Southern States, where the only wages paid by pig iron manufacturers is some thirty-seven cents a day per head paid to the State for convict laborers.

Because a large number of workmen have invested all their savings in dwelling houses about the furnace. The closing of the works, by reduction in price of iron or otherwise, will render these properties valueless, and leave these people destitute.

5. Because we know no other business, and have no other means of gaining a livelihood, except at the furnace.

The Iron Ore miners of Bridgeville, N.S., also had a brief of their views laid before the Commissioners. They pointed out the number of men employed and the wide-reaching distribution of their wages among the farmers and merchants. Their statement concludes as follows:

Any reduction of the present iron duties must tend to restrict the operations of the Company, and will be detrimental to the miners and others dependent on the industry for a livelihood, and would be a direct repudiation of the promises made by the friends of the Government that no tariff changes would be made which would in any way injuriously affect the miners or iron workers of this country, which promise we now respectfully ask the Government through your Commission to faithfully carry out.

The correlated industries of the important iron industry form an immense interest to be dealt with. The workmen as well as the manufacturers realize that the industries cannot be developed except under a policy of protection. Their doctrine is sound. Their views are given here as an interesting example of the understanding of the tariff at which the Canadian artisan has arrived. They are well worth reading and presenting to the notice of your employes, as an indication of how correct principles, properly promulgated, are a strong factor in securing their own embodiment in law.

### PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

After all, the chances for the establishment of preferential trade appear to be extremely good. The Conservative party are in favor of it and believe that it is possible, and not only that, but they believe that Great Britain will concede a tariff to the demands of her colonies and for the benefit of the colonies and the Motherland. The Liberals of the practical class have faith also in this proposition, and union of these two parties in a Preferential Trade party will carry it to a successful issue. During the recent campaign in Centre Toronto,