

stance that Europeans frequently choose this country as a dumping-place for surplus products which are to be parted with without much regard for values.

For this reason no legislation can exactly measure the precise degree of protection that a tariff system will afford. A law that may be fully protective to-day, may give little or no protection to-morrow. In 1883, the wool and woollen schedule of our tariff act was judged by expert observers to be sufficient to shield the home industry from destructive foreign competition, and this estimate was probably a correct one. But, after a while, the prices of wool tumbled, and changes in machinery and prices of labor, reduced the cost in Europe of certain fabrics, and the law that was once protective, permitted the infliction of grave disaster upon an important home industry. Three months ago British and Belgian iron and steel products poured in here in a flood. The law was a partial obstruction to the movement, but it was so little obstructive that the European manufacturers was able to over-ride and surmount it, and to beat us in some lines in our own markets. The law has not yet been changed in any particular, and yet, to-day, it is not only fully protective, but in certain directions absolutely prohibitive. The reason, of course, is that prices of iron and steel products in Europe have so far advanced that no European can meet American prices in this market. The legislator who should undertake to use a tariff law as an instrument for maintaining parity of the conditions upon which American and European manufacturers enter the American market, will have to devise a law that will change with every shift of the wind in the commercial centres of the world, and that is an impossibility.

A customs law must necessarily be nearly if not quite inflexible, unless it be based wholly upon the *ad valorem* principle, and that would mean limitless opportunity for fraud. If the law is, in fact, to be made protective in all cases, there is no escape from the necessity that it shall be high enough to supply protection when there is a decline of foreign prices, as well as when such prices are at a fairly normal level. An owner of low meadow-land along a river, desiring to build a bank to prevent overflow, would hardly content himself with a construction which should lift the bank just beyond the ordinary level of the stream. He would consider the certainty of the coming of freshets, and would build the bank upwards above the extreme high-water mark indicated by past experience. This, and this alone, would make the dyke fully protective. It would serve for low water and the highest high water. It would guard against every form of menace from the fluctuating forces of the stream. No tariff law can be regarded as actually protective if it exposes home industry to the shock of severe and unusual competition from abroad, whenever European prices happen to make a tumble or surplus production, chances to create a willingness to make heavy sacrifices. In such cases the domestic producer in fact actually fails to get, what every Protectionist admits he should have, namely, an opportunity to meet his rival upon equal terms. In truth, unless the tariff law gives him at least this, at all times and in spite of all upward and downward movements of the market, the Protective system is a delusion and a snare, rather than a comforting and encouraging reality. We express the opinion that the American people desire that the law shall supply such full assurance of fair play to the producers of this country. If the verdict given at the polls last year mean anything, it means that the nation favors Protection in full measure without qualification or reservation; and it is difficult to avoid the impression that the friends of Protection, who are filled with anxiety lest the tariff may be a trifle too high or a little too obstructive of importation either, have not the courage of their convictions of the justice of the system, or not enough faith in the expressed purpose of the mass of the people, to stand firmly by the principles to which they have given emphatic approval.—*The Manufacturer.*

#### NOVA SCOTIA COAL AND IRON.

The following letter, from the Premier of Nova Scotia, appears in the *Boston Herald*:

In a recent issue of a Boston paper, Mr. D. H. Hall discussed the question, "Whether the seaboard Canadian Provinces actually possessed any deposits of coal and iron ore suitable to produce pig iron if these materials could be imported duty free?" Mr. Hall, desiring to answer the question in the negative, quotes with much satisfaction a letter in the Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association, written by Mr. A. Evans, jr., who, for a short time, had charge of the blast furnaces of the Londonderry Iron Company at Acadia mines, Nova Scotia. The substance of Mr. Evans' statement is that the Londonderry company could hardly get enough material to keep one of its two stacks running; that the iron ore available was small in quantity and inferior in quality, that the

manager travelled far and wide through the Provinces in an unavailing search for ore, and that the coal supplied was very poor.

As the views of public men on this side of the boundary line are not likely to have much weight in your tariff discussion, I shall not trouble you with any opinions on the question of tariff reform. But when any of the parties engaged in that discussion endeavor to sustain their views by discrediting the character of the mineral deposits of Nova Scotia, I must be permitted to offer a protest against such unfairness. Mr. Evans, I fear, is a prejudiced witness as respects the Londonderry iron mines, and he certainly is not a safe guide on the general question of the value of the iron and coal deposits of Nova Scotia. I send you herewith a letter from Mr. Edwin Gilpin, jr., Inspector of Mines for Nova Scotia, which, I think, will satisfy those interested in the iron industries of New England, that the iron and coal deposits of Nova Scotia are very extensive and of great value. It is the firm belief of most Nova Scotians that these valuable deposits will, at an early date, be more extensively worked, and will become a source of great wealth to our country.

W. S. FIELDING.

HALIFAX, N.S., December 19, 1889.

Hon. W. S. Fielding, Premier of Nova Scotia—Sir: In answer to your enquiry as to the correctness of the statements about the quality of Nova Scotia coal and iron ore made by Mr. A. Evans writing to the Bulletin of the American Iron and Steel Association, I beg to remark:

The Londonderry company have only two stacks. Necessarily it is frequently the case that one is idle for repairs, and they have had both running together. The Londonderry ore has yielded an average per cent. of metallic iron running from 42 to 45 parts in the hundred. Its quality is good as respects sulphur and phosphorous. I am acquainted with the manager, who visited various iron ore deposits in the interest of the company, and I know that he found ores adapted for the use of his furnaces. In one case he informed me that the rate of railway freight insisted on was prohibitory, and in other cases his prices for the ore were considered too small. The amount of available ore in Nova Scotia alone may be gathered from the fact that large bodies of Bessemer ore are known in Pictou county, besides numerous beds from four to fifty feet thick of hematites running from 40 to 50 per cent. of metallic iron and large deposits of limonite ore.

The extent of the Pictou ores is such that at this moment two companies are actively engaged in the preliminary work of railway surveys, shaft sinking, etc., with a view of erecting steel and iron works, and one has actually commenced to build its railway. Large bodies of ore are also known in the Annapolis Valley, in Colchester county, and at several points in the Island of Cape Breton. At the latter point several furnace masters have considered the ore bodies in sight amply large to warrant iron smelting on a large scale.

The coke used at the Londonderry works is silicious, containing several per cent. more of silicious matter than the typical coke made from the Pittsburg coking coal, but it is not inferior in other respects, as far as I have either seen or make analyses of it. There are seams known in Pictou and Cumberland which yield a better coke, and they will shortly be opened, when an increased demand for furnace coke will permit of successful competition with collieries now opened, which consider the amount of coke made for Londonderry a question of "bye products" only. The Cape Breton coals, from practical tests, yield coke in every respect equal to that from Connellsville, and almost identical in character and composition with the famous Durham cokes.

In view of the Londonderry company being obliged to use a silicious coke, it is an argument more ingenious than fair to say that their search for richer ore is a sign that the ore they are working is too poor, as the addition of a rich iron ore to the furnace burden is intended as an offset to the silicious fuel.

It has I presume, never occurred to any one in Nova Scotia that ore holding 40 per cent. of iron would be shipped in competition with the rich Spanish, Algerian and other ores, either with the duty on or off. There are, however, deposits of rich ore in the Province, and it is believed by those who are opening up the Pictou and other deposits that with railway facilities that will be able to supply the markets of the Eastern States with ores equal in quality and lower in price than either the best United States or foreign ores.

It is also believed that the facilities for making cheap coke prevailing in Cape Breton, which have led to its adoption for smelting purposes in Newfoundland in preference to English coke, will be found equally effectual in building up a trade in that article in the New England States.

Yours obediently,

E. GILPIN, JR.

MINES DEPARTMENT, HALIFAX, Dec. 16, 1889.