

THE TARIFF SESSION.

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AVID BURKE, A.I A., F.S.

It is impossible to forecast Mr. Fielding's tariff proposals to the new session of Parliament. His speech at Montreal, on Tuesday, indicated no notable departure from his former declarations that the tariff would continue to be based on the principle of maximum, minimum, and preferential duties-maximum for hostile fiscal countries; minimum for neutral countries; and preferential for Great Britain and other parts of the Empire. No radical change of principle is expected, Mr. Fielding has already shown that he is careful of the industrial welfare of Canada. The new tariff, if it meets the needs of the most important industries will be drawn up with minute consideration of the effect of each detail, with fairness to every class as its underlying principle, and with a due consideration of the necessities of the Dominion treasury.

Since the appointment of the Tariff Commission and the commencement of its labors in the fall of 1905. agricultural classes. Wherever the commission held revenue only

the contest at Ottawa and will be ready when the higher, duty on the foreign. time comes.

The personnel of the commission is interesting. Mr. Fielding has been reporting annually increased expenditure, but his attitude during the sittings of the commission gave the advocates of lower tariff more confidence than they had before. It is partly due to this, that the manufacturers thought it necessary to prepare the most thorough cases they could and present them to the commission, with much wealth of detail. Mr. Paterson and Mr. Brodeur, Ministers of Customs and of Inland Revenue were apparently predisposed to the continuance of such a tariff as will bring in a good revenue. Sir Richard Cartwright, the least active of the commissioners is the man who, in opposition, said the Conservative government was bleeding the farmers white. If public utterances and political inclinations count for anything, a commission thus composed ought to do something in the way of putting into practice the professions of the Liberal party in the direction of tariff for revenue only.

Since 1897, when the first Liberal tariff commisthere has been controversy between manufacturing and sion did its work matters have changed. Predictions were then rife, that a lower tariff would ruin the counsittings the claims of one or both sides were presented. try. Such fears are not unheard to-day. The manu-Champions of agriculture have made a preliminary at- facturers have put forward strong arguments to show tack on the tin plate industry. They have published that they would suffer seriously. They ask for lower a general denunciation of high tariffs and declare that duties on raw materials and higher duties on finished as proof of their sincerity they will gladly assent to products. There are cases in which the requests of the abolition of all duties on agricultural imports, if one industry for higher duties on the finished product the government will observe the principle of tariff for have clashed with those of another for lower duties on the same products, which happened to be, in some The manufacturers have kept quiet. Custom form or other, its raw material. Woolen manufacturhas made the people of Canada look upon the protec- ers want a higher duty on cloths. They complain that tive tariff as a natural condition. Prosperity has come the British preference has harmed them. Tailors are to Canada under a protective tariff and manufacturers opposed to high duties on cloths, and think that the think it is up to the farmers to prove their case for low woolen manufacturers ought to be content with things tariff before it will be necessary to appear busy. But as they are. Dealers in foreign leaf tobacco want a unostentatiously, the manufacturers are preparing for lower duty. Dealers in the home-grown leaf want

During the sessions of the commission there were The tariff commissioners gathered mountains of a half dozen or more questions about which most of information from one end of the country to the other. the discussion and evidence centred, such as agri-