

# The Farmer's Advocate

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### EDITORIAL

#### WHERE THE BURDEN BEARS.

Thought-food abounds in J. Hugh McKenney's article, headed "The Farmer's Economic Handicaps." Agriculture is the basis of our wealth, and our greatest exporting industry. Farmers constitute our greatest class of consumers of manufactured goods, and the price of what they buy is largely determined by what a protective tariff enables manufacturers to charge, whilst the price obtained by the farmer for his produce is, in the main, regulated by the value of the exported surplus, save in so far as the presence of manufacturing and commercial centers provides home markets which take dairy, poultry, horticultural and other perishable products at prices above an export basis. In this way, a farmer situated in the neighborhood of a city realizes a considerable indirect advantage which partially compensates him for the increased prices paid on the things he buys. Farmers in non-manufacturing districts, particularly those on the wheat plains, bear the brunt of the burden of protection, with but few and slight indirect advantages, for, of course, a tariff on lines of which we produce a surplus for export is ordinarily of no advantage in augmenting prices on those lines. The value of the settler's wheat, for instance, is based on Liverpool equities, and a tariff of a dollar a bushel at the Canadian boundary would not raise the price a fraction of a cent. Such advantage as the Canadian farmer derives from a protective tariff comes to him indirectly through the general development of the country of which he forms a part, and probably does not, in the aggregate, recoup him in dollars for the toll it levies on him. "The Farmer's Advocate" believes that, for supreme national reasons, it is, on the whole, best to maintain—even at an undeniable economic burden on ourselves as farmers—a moderate tariff, in order to insure the development of such industries in our midst as are necessary to make the Dominion a reasonably self-contained nation, more especially in view of the policy pursued by our Southern neighbors; but it is important that the extent, nature and incidence of the fiscal burden imposed on the producing classes through the tariff should be clearly realized, and its degree progressively reduced.

As to taxation, here again the farmer usually has to play with loaded dice. While not undertaking to vouch for Mr. McKenney's figures of railway taxation in the different States and Provinces, we believe they are substantially correct, although it is but fair to note, en passant, that farm property pays only the municipal tax, while the real property of the railways in Ontario pays the municipal tax, and also the Provincial tax on a double track of \$80 per mile. However, even at that, the railway taxation in this country is relatively very low.

There are two or three points occurring in the article which merit a word of comment. One is that, according to the last census, "The value placed on the products of the factories was nearly double that of our field crops, plus the profit realized by turning the latter into beef, bacon, dairy products, etc." Granted; but this does not mean that the amount of value produced by manufacturers was double that produced by farmers, by any means. The manufacturer buys much material, adds something to its value, and turns it out as his product. What the manufacturer really produces is what he adds to the value of the goods. This is not shown in census reports. What the farmer produces is what he sells. He buys little or no raw material. Bald comparisons

sons of output are not fair to agriculture. Nevertheless, it is a fact that manufacturing is increasing in Canada much faster than agriculture.

Our correspondent also points out that the farm-labor problem is affected by the fact that the protected, bounty-fed, favored industries can outbid the farmer in the labor market. There is considerable force in this, though it must also be confessed that the farmer is more conservative than the manufacturer in adopting labor-saving methods which would enable him to accomplish more per man, and therefore pay large wages more easily.

In conclusion, Mr. McKenney makes one over-sweeping assertion when he says: "Science is good; education is good, but, without economic justice and political equality, their good will be a dream." Rather should he say: "Without economic justice and political equality, their full benefit will not be realized." We have sometimes thought that agriculture in Canada would prosper better with less paternalism and fewer economic handicaps.

While offering these few comments, we wish to express our hearty endorsement of the tenor of Mr. McKenney's contribution, which lays the agricultural community under a debt of obligation. As he very truly says in a private letter to the editor, his object was "to draw attention to our rather one-sided relations with some other industries, as there is much room for a good deal of stirring up in this direction."

#### THE IMMIGRANT IN CANADA.

I notice your readers are still "chewing the rag" about the Englishman. I wish to say:

"There's so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it does not behoove any one of us  
To speak ill of the rest of us."

This applies to Canadians and English alike.

The above contribution, from a Wisconsin subscriber, is, to our mind, about the best of any yet received on the subject of the English immigrant. We thought, when we quietly decided, some weeks ago, to discontinue publishing any more letters on this profitless controversy, that correspondence would soon cease, but, on the contrary, it is still flowing in, and lies piled up on a corner of the editor's desk. Some of the letters are well written and interesting, but our columns are too freely supplied with practical and more elevating matter to be given over to a purely controversial and more or less dangerous and delicate subject. Enough has been said. The employer who had unfortunate experience with a few immigrants has given vent to his sweeping denunciations. The cocksure Englishman has demonstrated, or at any rate declared, to his own satisfaction, that he is equal to any Canadian who ever walked. Moderate-minded readers of all nationalities have drawn their own conclusions or confirmed those previously held. What more could be accomplished by a century of discussion?

In concluding the controversy, the editors wish to make a few observations as to the moral of it all. Englishmen, in common with other races, have their virtues and their failings, and the greatest tribute to Anglo-Saxon character is the part England has contributed to the world's advancement and the place she holds to-day. Unfortunately, the immense vice-breeding cities of the Old Land produce a good many degenerates, and it is largely these who sully the reputation of Englishmen as a class. Then, too, much of the trouble between the English immigrant and his Canadian employer springs from mutual inability to appreciate the other's point of view. The Englishman finds Canadians hard workers,

and often somewhat impatient of the conventionalities and formal courtesies of older lands. The country is somewhat crude and raw, compared to the finished landscape of Old England, while long hours and hustle are contrasted with the accustomed leisure. Withal, the work and customs are strange and uncongenial, and the Englishman is not the best hand in the world at adapting himself. On the other hand, his employer finds him unhandy at the new job, and not inured to the toil, especially if he hails from the city. He is often better at classics than mechanics, and at athletics than steady work. While cultured and gentlemanly, he is not so well versed in practical knowledge, nor possessed of the knack which peoples in new countries acquire. Most exasperating of all, he unconsciously exhibits a rooted tendency to look on all things English as the standard of excellence, and all other things as defective, in so far as they depart therefrom. In short, it has to be confessed that the average Englishman is not readily teachable, and this often causes him to be disparaged in favor of more docile nationalities. As a national trait, this unbending independence has probably been an element of strength. As an individual characteristic, it lessens his value to the employer.

What, then, is to be done about it? Close the doors to immigration? Scarcely. Canada wants immigrants of the right class, and especially welcomes the sturdy Britishers, particularly those who are willing to take up farm work. We extend the glad hand to the self-respecting, industrious workers from the Old Land who come out here to try their fortunes in the New World. We do not, however, believe in paying commissions to agents to book immigrants. Neither do we believe in plastering Europe with overtinted immigration literature. Let those come who will come of their own initiative, based on reliable information concerning Canada. Finally, we trust it is now apparent that the farm-labor problem is not to be solved by wholesale importation of cheap European labor. Good wages to efficient help is the only real solution, for as soon as the cheap worker becomes proficient he will command the going wage. Cheap help is usually dear.

#### DOUBLE UP!

About a year ago, from the window of a railroad coach, we noticed a man harrowing with a pair of horses in a twelve-acre field, while ahead of him was a woman rolling with another team. To the uninformed observers, this must have seemed a pathetic illustration of hardship entailed by the scarcity of farm labor. As a matter of fact, it was a painful commentary on the ingrained conservatism of the tiller of the soil, which leads him to continue in the old ways long after better ones are available. Had that man been up-to-date, he would have been driving the four horses himself, while his wife was in the house, where she belonged.

There is no reasonable excuse in this day and age for the general use of two-horse teams at ordinary tillage operations on farms where more than two horses are kept. On small farms one must make the best of the situation, but it should be realized that such farms are necessarily worked at a disadvantage. An efficient teamster can handle four horses practically as well as two, and save the wages of the extra boy or man.

Of course, this calls for fast-working implements, and on many homesteads the original mistake was in buying the small size, instead of holding an ear to the ground, perceiving the signs of the times, and purchasing the largest size of machine, such as the two or three-furrow plow,