

IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST

It is a mistake to think that we have maintained tariff duties in Canada primarily and peculiarly for the benefit of manufacturers. A manufacturer as such deserves no more legislative consideration than a farmer or a merchant or a workman. We can defend protection only as a national policy and only upon considerations of national safety and national interest. Moreover the manufacturer may only demand duties which will secure for Canadian industries equal competitive conditions with those of other countries. Surely it is to the general advantage that Canadian labor should not have to compete with the cheaper labor of Austria or Japan, that a policy which brings a multitude of American industries and millions of American capital to this country should be substantially maintained, that the raw materials of Canada should be manufactured to the last processes in Canadian factories, that we should have towns and cities which provide local markets for farmers, and that engineers, and scientists educated in Canadian colleges and universities should not have to go elsewhere for employment and recognition. There is a nativism which is feeble in spirit and narrow in outlook, but aside altogether from the sheer necessity of expanding revenues and an increasing population to meet our very heavy obligations, it is legitimate that the Canadian people should be enriched by their own resources and aspire to possess the essential conveniences and finished institutions of a high civilization.

It is unfortunate that we have not got an independent Tariff Commission to investigate and report upon industrial and agricultural conditions in other countries, the wages of labor and cost of production elsewhere, and the advantages or disadvantages in transportation of Canadian industries as compared

with those of competing nations. No one thinks that such a Commission should have power to fix rates of duty or should usurp any of the natural functions of government. The people through their elected representatives must have power over tariffs as over all other questions of public policy. But we would be rid of many misconceptions and escape much angry and unprofitable controversy if we had a High Court of Facts to which we could appeal and if Parliament could base industrial legislation upon evidence which would be substantially beyond suspicion in its origin, definite in statement and unrelated to any class or sectional interest. The Tariff Commission of the United States has greatly moderated the asperities of fiscal debate. It has contributed towards stability in industry and caution in legislation. It has not infringed upon any of the prerogatives of Congress, it is not now an object of popular suspicion, nor is it ever regarded as the mouthpiece of any class, party, or interest. We need such a Court of Facts in Canada, and one cannot easily understand the attitude of organized farmers who oppose its creation, as contrasted with that of organized labor which by resolution of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress and by petition of 1,200 local unions has declared unequivocally and aggressively in favor of a Tariff Commission.

FREIGHT RATES

We have a difficult railway problem, and at the moment there is general irritation over heavy increases in freight and passenger charges. Owing to the great distances which separate communities and Provinces in this country high railway charges are very onerous. But possibly inefficiency in transportation is even more demoralizing than the exaction of high rates by the public carriers. This has been