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Comments on the Customs.



FACTS AND FANCIES.—Right on the heels of Sir John's optimistic speech at the Board of Trade banquet, in which, with joyful iteration, it was declared that Canada was revelling in a prosperity hitherto unknown, comes the report of the Legislative Committee of the Trade and Labor Council with a very different story to tell, so far as the artisans of the country are concerned. The members of this committee are the genuine representatives of the Canadian labor organizations, and their deliverance is made aside altogether from party politics. It is, moreover, the result of a long and careful investigation, and may fairly be regarded as a statement of solid facts as opposed to the post prandial fancies of

the Prime Minister. What is the gist of this report? That the promise of the Protectionist orators has been fulfilled, in the maintaining of steady work and high wages as the result of a high tariff? Not at all. It sets forth the exact state of things which any person with ordinary reasoning powers could have foretold would be the outcome of that shallow scheme. It announces that, as the result of "free trade in men"—stimulated by what may be politely termed whoppers told in the immigration literature sent out by Government agents with reference to the rates of wages in Canada—the labor market of this country has been over-supplied. The direct and inevitable result of this has been the reduction of wages, and its secondary consequence the exodus of large numbers of Canadian workers to the United States. So much for the N.P. as a "protective" agency for the horny-handed son of toil. It ought to be clear enough now that the only way to protect a worker is to prevent the entrance of competing workers. The present highly intelligent system is to let in competing workers and keep out goods the workers all need. This plan, of course, makes things lovely for the lucky few who happen to be manufacturing goods upon which the tariff is

heavy, and here we arrive at the active injury the tariff does the Canadian workingman. By the amount of the benefit conferred upon these protected manufacturers by the N.P. is he injured in his capacity as a consumer. Living is made higher at the same time that wages are made lower. It is now in order for the wage-earners to have something to say about this policy. Do they propose to let it go on? If so, they have less spirit and intelligence than we are inclined to give them credit for. The matter is entirely within their power to rectify. Let them but shake their ballots in the face of Sir John, and that sagacious statesman will quickly announce that, after all, the policy of taxing the whole community for the benefit of a favored few is not so sound as he thought it was.

THE TRUE STATE OF HER FEELINGS.—A fortnight ago three of our humorous New York contemporaries, *Puck*, *Judge* and *Time*, came out simultaneously with cartoons on the Annexation question. In each of the pictures Brother Jonathan was represented as courting Miss Canada, and the possibility of an early union was more or less confidently hinted at. From these and other indications in the press across the lines it is easy to gather that the "idea" over there is that Miss Canada is "willin' to be courted," at least, and it is calculated that most girls who go that far are also willing to be won. The analogy between this country and a blushing maiden may be very obvious to the literary mind, but it is a misleading one, all the same. Canada is *not* willing to be courted; she is not disposed to give one moment's serious consideration to a proposal of political Annexation from Brother Jonathan or anybody else. Nothing will ever bring her to that pass short of dire necessity, and such a necessity can only arise from two sources—outside force or inside pressure. As to the former, it may be dismissed as something out of the question. The United States will never attempt to annex Canada forcibly. The other is quite possible, and it behooves our rulers to give due weight to this fact. British connection is dear to the Canadian heart; independence with the good will of Britain is perhaps even dearer, but to keep either sentiment in a vigorous and growing state it is necessary that our people should enjoy the measure of prosperity and comfort which they know their country to be capable of affording them under right conditions. It is easily conceivable that a policy of government could be followed which would tend to weaken the patriotism of Canadians by making the country—notwithstanding its natural advantages—an undesirable place to live in. Man has physical and intellectual wants which crave satisfaction, and if by force of law these wants are brought into conflict with his sentiments, the latter are most likely to give way. This is not random speculation. The process of turning loyal and patriotic Canadians into Annexationists is going on now. Mr. Sol White declares himself a lover of Canada; and there is no reason to doubt his word, but he is an avowed Annexationist. Why? Because he thinks political union with the States would be for the benefit of his country. Does Mr. White believe that American institutions are superior to our own? No; but commercial freedom would be a mutual boon so great as to be worth the price, in his opinion. How many others are drifting in the same direction? And what is the motive power which is driving them along? The policy of trade restriction. If the Annexationist sentiment ever becomes general in Canada, the unnatural, unchristian and accursed system of "Protection" will be alone to blame for it. What Canada wants is not political union, but free trade with our neighbors. Is it worth while to risk the growth of the Annexation sentiment for the sake of making a few of our manufacturers rich by artificial means?

MR. THOMAS J. ALLAN, who doubtless speaks from experience, contributes an article to the *Boston Writer* on "The Whole Art of Easy Writing." He says, "The easiest kind of writing is the thing in the daily papers called a 'leader.' There are two kinds of leaders—one is political, and the other isn't. For the former you need a good command of abusive epithets, and some skill in the manipulation of facts, because if the facts are not to your taste you have got to—well, rearrange them. The chief point is to remember which side you are writing on. Writing party leaders is as easy as lying; and it is often very much like it." Now we understand how it is that the chief editors of our Canadian dailies keep in such robust health, and generally inclined to *embonpoint*. We never understood the true inwardness of leaders before.