

The Canadian Revolt Against Protection

[Some Awkward Facts]

By G. WALLACE CARTER, Secretary, Free Trade Union

NOTE—Under the above title the following letter appeared in the Westminster Gazette of Oct. 13. It shows how deeply interested the English people are in the Tariff revolt among Canadian Farmers.—Ed.

BRITISH Tariff Reformers have been seriously disturbed by the revolt against Protection in Canada. I am not surprised. It is a death blow to preference. Tariff Reform may, and doubtless will, linger on as an appeal to the instincts of a few favored classes. But Preference to the Colonies is hopeless. Still everybody who can discount the Free Trade movement in Canada is pressed into the Protectionist service. On September 16 the Times allowed Mr. J. H. Mackinder (M.P. Camlachie, Glasgow) a column and a half, in which he attempted to reply to my public statements as to the progress of Free Trade in Canada. On September 19 the Times devoted a leading article to a further reply to me, based upon some statements alleged to have been made by the Mayor of Calgary. Evidently Mr. Mackinder's reply was inadequate. Perhaps, because in spite of his whirling words, he had admitted the truth of two of the most important statements I made; that Canada gave a Preference to Britain to serve his own ends, and that the immediate outcome of the present Free Trade movement would probably be an extension of the Preference to British goods. The leading article of the Times required a reply. I accordingly wrote a letter; but the correspondence had been closed! Still a statement from a Free Trade point of view may have some interest and importance. It will perhaps clear the air if I state the facts which are explicitly admitted, or not disputed, by Tariff Reformers:

1. The Canadian government gave a Preference to British goods in order to carry out, in some degree, these pledges to abolish or reduce tariffs all round.

2. This Preference was not, and is not, intended as an offer to induce the British people to give a preference on Canadian produce in return.

3. The Canadian farmers have explicitly declared that they have no wish but a Preference for their corn or other products in Great Britain, but that they do desire to see a free exchange between Canadian produce and British manufactures.

4. The demand of the Canadian farmers is likely to lead to a further reduction of Canadian tariffs and an increase in the Preference given to Great Britain.

5. The Free Trade movement in Canada was originally responsible for the grant of Preference to Great Britain; and it is only by the force of this movement that Preference can be extended.

This far, I believe, Free Traders and Tariff Reformers are substantially agreed on the facts of the case. If that is so, I was surely justified in saying that the declaration of the Canadian farmers against Preference and in favor of free exchange "ought to kill the tariff movement in this country so far as its imperial aspect is concerned." Does anybody imagine that a scheme of Preference for the sake of the Canadian farmers can live in the face of the declaration of those same farmers that they do not desire such Preference?

The Times, in its leader columns, and Mr. H. J. Mackinder, in his letter, appears to have already relegated the imperial aspect of the question to a secondary place. Mr. Mackinder wrote:

Similarly, we advocate Tariff Reform in Great Britain, and an imperial Preference, because we believe that, although considered such a policy would be greatly to the advantage of the British workers.

Tariffs as a sacrifice for the sake of the Empire as first proclaimed by Mr. Chamberlain no longer appear to hold the field. But Lord Milner and Mr. Austen Chamberlain have urged that, unless we establish mutual Preference with Canada, Canada will seek Preference elsewhere. There is no doubt not only that they will seek, but they are now seeking, Preferences with other countries. That Canada should do so is an inevitable result of Canadian independence, with which nobody has suggested we should interfere. That being so, no scheme of mere preferences in British markets could possibly check the natural and proper desire of the Canadian people to increase their facilities

for trade in those foreign markets which are most convenient to them and best adapted to their needs. The people of Canada, like the people of every other country, will only buy what they want, and they will seek to buy on the best possible terms. In some cases America provides better goods than Britain; in others, John Bull's store offers a superior article at a lower price. In order to make the best bargain Canadians want to have easy access to both markets. Who can think seriously of trying to prevent them? No Canadian government could live which attempted to do so, and no empire

want Free Trade will be outnumbered and outvoted by the manufacturers who want Protection. This prediction may, on the face of it, appear to be as good as mine; though the evidence is rather meagre and the number and weight of the witnesses somewhat scanty!

Let me call the evidence on the other side.

1. The present Canadian government was returned to power as a Free Trade government. Apart, therefore, from the present movement among the Western farmers there was and is a strong Free Trade sentiment throughout the whole of Canada.

2. Since 1896 there has been a vast growth of population in the Western provinces, so much so that they will be entitled to some twelve or thirteen more members, and the next Dominion Parliament will see a large and solid Free Trade phalanx from the Western States.

3. The demand for Free Trade in Western Canada is not confined to farmers, but includes other classes; witness the deputations representing the Boards of Trade (Chambers of Commerce) from Calgary, Saskatchewan, Lethbridge, Winnipeg, Brandon, Prince Albert, Regina, and Moose Jaw, which waited upon Sir

opportunity to develop the manufacturers still further. I agree, I am convinced that the Canadian manufacturer out West is, and will be, in such a splendid position that he can easily outdistance his American rival. By the purchase of untaxed machinery and the adoption of American methods he will not only be able to fight the tariff and trust-fettered American, but, like the boot manufacturers of our own island, turn the tables on him and beat him at his own trade in his own markets!

The Canadian government failed to establish Free Trade in 1896, although pledged to do so. Why? Because, while the manufacturing interests were well organized and all-powerful, there were no organizations and no "interests" to support the Free Trade cause. This will not happen again. The farmers have now organized their forces, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier has discovered. The Grain Growers' Associations (as the farmers' organizations are called) of East Canada have now joined with those of the West in order to send a large deputation to Ottawa to demand free imports of machinery and all-round lower tariffs. The deputation goes on December 1 next. I do not think they will come away empty-handed. But at and after the next Dominion election, if not before, the farmers will be in a position to enforce their demands, since it is doubtful whether any government could remain in office without the support of the farmers' representatives.

The present Prime Minister of Canada and the leading members of his cabinet are known to be free traders, pledged to Free Trade principles. In Canada no other ministry is regarded as possible for many years to come. Should the demand for Free Trade prove sufficiently strong the present ministry will doubtless seize the opportunity of putting their principles into practice. But should they fail to do so the Conservative opposition may not be slow to grasp the reins of office, if by abandoning Protection they could secure the support of Free Traders. Conservative Protectionists have been known to do such things even in a British parliament.

DO NOT FORGET THE CLOTHING TAX

(From the Toronto Sun)

The Sun holds very strongly to the opinion that the United States offer of free trade in agricultural implements should be accepted. At the same time it seems to us as if there was some danger of attention being concentrated on the implement duties to the neglect of others which are much more burdensome.

The farmer's clothing tax is a much larger item in the year's outgo than is the tariff on his implements. Basing the statement on information obtained from representative farmers, we think it safe to say that the average owner of a hundred acre farm in Ontario does not spend more than \$150 a year on implements. His average expenditure on clothing for himself and family, including boots and shoes, will not be less than \$250. The tariff on implements ranges from 17½ per cent. in the case of harvesters to 25 per cent. on hay loaders, feed cutters, etc. Customs duties on cotton clothing under the preference, are 25 per cent., on woollen wearing apparel 30 per cent., and on boots and shoes, imported from the United States, practically the only source of supply, the duty is also 30 per cent.

While pressing, therefore, for relief from the burden involved in the implement duties, let us not forget the greater burden imposed under the tariff on boots and shoes and cotton and woollen clothing. Moreover a reduction along some of these lines will certainly not involve any greater hardship on the beneficiaries of the protective system than will a lowering of the implement duties. Those in the cotton combine have received 50 per cent dividends on part of the stock held by them.

NEW AGRICULTURAL EDITOR

Owing to repeated demands on the part of the readers of THE GRAIN that agricultural subjects should be dealt with in the paper, an agricultural editor has been added to the staff. Henceforth attention will be given to stock raising, dairying, poultry, field husbandry, and the various agricultural subjects. Mr. D. S. Charlson is in charge of this work. He is a young man who has spent his life on a farm, and after several years' study in Manitoba University, has had experience in agricultural journalism. Undoubtedly, the new department will be appreciated by the readers of the GRAIN.

Sixty Years of Protection in Canada, 1846-1907

By Edward Porritt

Western farmers at the present time are intensely interested in the tariff, and are anxious to secure information upon tariff matters. The above mentioned book by Edward Porritt is the best work on the subject. Mr. Porritt is a British Free Trader, and was for two years a lecturer in Harvard University on political economy and Canadian constitutional history. In 1905-6 he travelled with the Canadian tariff commission and has devoted a great deal of study to the Canadian tariff and the abuses which have followed protection. Mr. Porritt's book is entirely non-political and is a study of the tariff history of Canada for the last sixty years. It is written in a most interesting manner and at the same time contains exact information on trade and manufacturers and the methods by which tariffs are made. Every farmer who is interested in tariff reduction will find Mr. Porritt's book the most valuable one that he can secure. He will also learn how the manufacturers lay aside politics in their efforts to have the tariff burden increased. If every farmer in Canada would read Mr. Porritt's book, the "system of legalized robbery" would come to an end inside of one year. The book contains 478 pages and is fully indexed. It will be sent to any reader for \$1.50 postpaid.

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could last which was thus bound together by mutual harm instead of by mutual help.

May I add one word of warning to those who are inclined to belittle the Free Trade movement in Canada; and, at the same time, a word to cheer those who fear evil may come to the Empire by closer trade relations between Canada and the States? The Canadian Free Trade movement is the one great motive power which, in the event of Canadian tariffs being lowered against the United States, can procure a proportionate extension of the Preference already given to Britain. The Protectionists of Canada are Protectionist all round. They object to British competition as much as any other. If we want to see the Canadian tariffs modified still further in favor of British goods it is to the Free Traders of Canada we must look for help.

The only serious criticism which has been urged against my statement of the Canadian case has been in reference to my prediction that, with the growth of the West, Free Trade in Canada will become inevitable. Tariff Reformers, in reply to me, have urged that with the growth of Western Canada will come the growth of manufacturers in those provinces. The Times produced the Mayor of Calgary as a witness to support this argument, and reported him as having said that those manufacturers, when they come, must have protective tariffs. It appears to be assumed that the population producing manufacturers will outnumber the population using them; that the farmers who

Wilfrid Laurier to urge him to abolish protective tariffs.

4. Finally, the demand for Free Trade is so strong in the West, that, according to the Manitoba Free Press (September 12, 1910), "again and again have Conservative candidates in Western constituencies declared in clarion tones for free agricultural implements." These Conservative candidates are now such vehement supporters of lower tariffs that Sir Wilfrid Laurier's organ above quoted appears to be alarmed lest they should steal Free Trade votes. Some of the Western Conservatives are trying to prove themselves to be the strongest opponents of Protection. The Winnipeg Telegram, the leading Conservative newspaper in the West, declared in a leading article (September 12, 1910), that "under the present government the tariff has been made an instrument of robbery." Another Conservative paper says: "The Western wing of the Conservative party is for tariff reduction. That might as well be understood." When both parties in the West are vying with each other to proclaim their opposition to the existing high tariffs and one of them demands absolute Free Trade I venture to suggest that it is no exaggeration to say that the Western supporters of the present tariffs are—in spite of the Mayor of Calgary—a negligible quantity.

So much for my evidence, and now for one or two conclusions.

Mr. Mackinder has written in glowing terms of the boundless natural resources of Western Canada, and the splendid

AUTOMOBILE PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

We would be glad if our readers who own automobiles would send us a photograph of the same for publication in THE GRAIN. The photograph must show the farmer or some member of his family at the wheel, and we would also like to have a letter from the owner telling us whether he considers an automobile to be of any value to a farmer. There are a great many farmers in the West who own automobiles and we would like to receive a great number of good photographs and letters during the next few weeks.

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE, Winnipeg.