

OPINIONS ON THE TARIFF

Opinions vary considerably on the proposed tariff changes that are now before the House of Commons. A glance at the opinions published in this issue will show clearly that nearly all the opponents to the reciprocity arrangements with United States are connected with the big interests of Canada that have profited enormously by direct or indirect donations from the public treasury. One of the outstanding exceptions is the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, the general manager of which says that reciprocity will do his company no injury. The new tariff if carried into effect will increase the prosperity of the general consumer in Canada, and it will compel many of the big interests to face more real competition than they have faced in the past. Many of the big interests in Canada have enjoyed special privileges which have been given them by the government and legislatures (without consultation with the people) for so many years that they consider it now a divine right. They resent any insinuations that their methods are unfair, but they are equally unwilling that there shall be any publicity of their business methods. These interests have in the past been so selfish that the Canadian people will not incline a very sympathetic ear to their wailings. Other opinions are expressed for purely political purposes simply to be opposed to anything that is done by the present government at Ottawa. These political opponents do not suggest any alternative to the proposed arrangements. That is the difficulty that the Canadian people face. If one political party makes a move the other religiously objects, though frequently offers nothing as an alternative. We believe in giving credit where credit is due. If the proposed tariff goes into effect it will be a partial fulfillment of the promises made by the Dominion government fifteen years ago, but which have been lying dormant since that time. For this favor the Canadian people are thankful, but are not at all satisfied with the tariff reductions on manufactured articles. Apparently the government in dealing with the tariff on manufactured goods considered that the farmers are not entitled to consideration on other than their own products. Evidence all goes to show that as far as manufactured goods are concerned the government has inclined its ear to the manufacturers. This is a vital error on the part of the government. Men of wisdom realize that today there is sweeping over Canada a wave of indignation at the injustice that is being practiced upon the people in favor of big interests.

DISMEMBERING THE EMPIRE

It is evident from the feeling of the members of the Montreal Board of Trade that the big business interests of that city are not a unit in opposing reciprocity. On January 31, at the annual meeting of the board, a resolution opposing reciprocity was passed by a vote of 61 for and 47 against. The majority, however, decided to send a delegation to Ottawa at once and protest against any changes being made in the tariff. Members of this delegation included C. C. Ballantyne, ex-president Canadian Manufacturers' Association; Geo. Caverhill, E. B. Green-shields, A. J. Hodgson, Robert Meighen, president Lake of the Woods Milling Co., director of the C.P.R., etc., and Farquhar Robertson. The report of the board meeting, as given in the Montreal Witness, shows that Robert Meighen took a prominent part, and, in fact, seconded the resolution. He said he did not approach the subject from the standpoint of the miller alone. According to the report

"his interests in farm lands in the West and wood pulp and forest reserves in the East were ten times as great as his milling interests, and for this reason he should be credited with

viewing the subject from a broad standpoint and giving the question impartial consideration."

Mr. Meighen did not mention his interests in the C.P.R., but having prepared his audience for his "impartial" statements, he said:

"Reciprocity with the United States or, more properly speaking, the agreement now under discussion at Washington and Ottawa, is the most important question that has come before the parliament of Canada since Confederation. Permit me to state that the present parliament of Canada holds no mandate from the people to adjudicate on this very important matter. I look upon it from the Imperial as well as from the commercial standpoint. I believe that the proposition now before the Canadian parliament is the first step towards the dismemberment of the British Empire. I do not believe that the majority of the Canadian people are in favor of that policy. I am convinced they are in favor of closer trade relations within our own Empire. And the parliament of Canada, before venturing to enter into any such agreement with the United States—as they have no mandate from the people—should submit the matter to the people. Then we would very soon find out the mind of the Canadian electors on this very important question. Personally I stand by the resolution which I brought before the board of trade on the 17th of May, 1909, of which the crucial point was simply that 'the governments of Great Britain and the colonies should grant to one another a substantial preference in duties, and that in so far as their respective revenues would permit, the principle of free trade within the Empire should prevail.'"

Mr. Meighen has been one of the most insistent opponents of reciprocity since the subject was first seriously considered. He may be able to convince himself that his views are entirely disinterested and most patriotic, but he will have difficulty in convincing Canadians in general of the same fact. He is connected with the very largest banking, milling, transportation and other corporation interests in Canada, and these interests are ever on the alert to preserve "Canada for Canadians"—meaning themselves. Certainly the parliament has no mandate from the people on the tariff, but neither have they any mandate on the naval question nor upon a hundred other matters in which the "interests" have been well looked after. There was no mandate from the people for the huge C.P.R. melons which Mr. Meighen, as a director, no doubt found to be most delightfully juicy. But he is greatly worried over the "dismemberment of the British Empire." This is the bogey that is trotted out every time a suggestion is made to give the common people a square deal. But in the same meeting Mr. Meighen, in replying to a gentleman who spoke in favor of reciprocity, showed where in reality lay the "Empire" he feared would be "dismembered." He "declared the United States not only were not needed for a market for Canadian wheat, but our neighbors across the line were our most aggressive competitors in the wheat markets all over the world." During the same address he said:

"THESE PROPOSALS GIVE US FREE WHEAT, BUT NOT FREE FLOUR. GIVE US A FAIR FIELD. They will use our wheat for high grade flour, and take our markets for the low grades, and then where will our feed for dairying and cattle come from? What our farmers should learn is to send their products from the farm not as grain, but on the hoof. We do not want to send our grain to the United States to feed United States cattle. We should work to build up Canada, not the United States, and the idea that there is a market in the United States for products which it would be of advantage to Canada to sell is simply ROT."

Mr. Meighen's "rot" is answered by himself when he shows that reciprocity will compel the Canadian millers to compete for their wheat, instead of enjoying the "cream" process that has helped them so much for years. The C.P.R. will also have to meet competition. Reciprocity may compel some of the big interests, with which Mr. Meighen is identified, to give the people more con-

sideration, but he may rest assured that a few millions of unjust profits taken from them and given to the people will not endanger the Empire. The Empire which the big "interests" are concerned about has for its coat of arms \$.

MAKING A NATION

It seems necessary again to repeat the statement that the farmers of the West have no desire to ruin our manufacturing institutions, our railways, our milling plants, our banks and other great institutions that have been criticized. No people are more proud of Canada's great commercial and industrial advancement than are the Western farmers. They realize the need of these institutions in building up a great nation such as Canada is destined to be. There are today the greatest railways in the world in Canada; her manufacturing plants, in many lines, are turning out products second to none in the world; the flour from Canadian mills takes first place in the world's markets; the Canadian banking system challenges admiration in its stability and in its protection to depositors. What then is the trouble and why is the complaint against present conditions? Simply that no matter how splendid and deserving may be all these institutions, there is a point where their grasping becomes intolerable. The people of Canada have given, and given to the verge of prodigality, to build up these great institutions, and now feel that this support may be withdrawn without endangering them in the slightest. If the people of Canada believed that a reduction in freight rates would cripple the railways; that tariff reduction would ruin the manufacturers; that reciprocity would close up the flour mills; that inspection would injure the financial institutions, they would not demand it. But the people of Canada do not believe it. They have the most excellent of reasons for believing to the contrary. The men behind these institutions shout "blue ruin," but they are confronted by the statement of their profits. These profits are an unassailable argument. Not until the profits can be hidden will the big interests be able to take on the emaciated appearance which their tongues lead us to look for.

Our protected manufacturers tell us that protection brings foreign manufacturers into Canada to build up the nation. Yet it is an astounding truth that the trusts, mergers and combines established under the shadow of our protective tariff have ruined more small or independent manufacturers than the protective tariff has brought into the country. No element resents the establishment of competitive factories in Canada so much as our protected manufacturers.

Have the farmers in the West who want public operation of the terminal elevators informed their members at Ottawa of their wishes? If not, the time to do it is now. There is nothing like "letters from home" to brace up a member of parliament. The Western members, so far as they have spoken in the house, are in favor of the farmers' demands. "Letters from home" will make them stronger still.

The C.P.R. have won their case before the Imperial Privy Council. The difference between intention when the C.P.R. charter was given and the way it has worked out will mean probably \$50,000,000 or \$75,000,000 additional in the treasury of the company. The people of the West pay it all.

There is still a determined effort being made in certain quarters in the East to hide the true facts of the Ottawa delegation. Ontario was more largely represented than any province, and yet these parties—for their own purposes—declare it to have been a Western delegation.

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