

The Commercial

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EMERSON'S CONNECTING LINK.

It has been a favorite argument of some supporters of disallowance to characterize the whole movement against that policy as a piece of inconsistency and ingratitude upon the part of the people of Manitoba, and indeed there is too much truth in the statement. Among the most bitter opponents of the Canadian Pacific Railway in this province are many, who have blundered, so to speak, into great wealth, owing to the work of railway construction so rapidly carried forward by the company, and not a few are men whose business ability would never have brought them any great wealth, but whose lands have been greatly increased in value through the energy and enterprise of the C.P.R. syndicate. It does seem both ingratitude and inconsistency for such to oppose the C.P.R. interests in the North-west, and when they join in a cry for a policy which would compromise the honor and credit of the Dominion for their special benefit, their demands come within the limit of what, in slang, is called "cheek." Yet there are exceptions to all these rules, and as matters stood one month ago, there seemed good excuse, if not reason, on the part of the people of Emerson and West Lynne for the anti-disallowance cry, which came from those places. West of these two towns lies one of the richest stretches of country in the North-west, the development of which so far is in a great measure due to the enterprise of the people of the Dual Cities. As matters stood a month ago it seemed as if this trade was likely to be cut off and diverted to a new railway town established by the C.P.R. This seemed all the harder to the Emerson and West Lynne people, when the construction of a short link of railway of less than twenty miles would still retain for them the trade of Southern Manitoba, which they had built up, or at least give them a reasonable chance of competition with newer points.

Under circumstances such as above described it was natural that considerable discontent should have existed in Emerson and West Lynne, and the feeling was eagerly taken advantage of by opponents of the policy of disallowance, and an in-

crease to their stock of political capital made out of it. To this feeling the resurrection of the Emerson and North-western charter is due, and it furnished a valuable stalking horse for politicians, as it made a suitable seat for discontent to travel in. Hitched beside it was the threat of Grand Trunk aid, which doubtless found its origin in the imaginations of the E. & N.W. resurrectionists, and a harvest for political and speculative schemes seemed close at hand. Unfortunately for these parties Mayor Carney of Emerson, at Ottawa, found, that it was not so difficult a matter after all to convince the Dominion government and the C.P.R. syndicate of the justice of the claims of Emerson and West Lynne, and the new arrangements by which these towns will in one year be the depot of supplies for Southern Manitoba is the outcome of his negotiations. The connecting link of the C.P.R. between these towns and that company's South-western branch will accomplish all this, and do it much more effectively than private enterprise ever could, especially when based upon a charter vetoed by the Dominion government, and which had been peddled around for patrons until it had become a stench in the nostrils of capitalists all over Canada. The rapid progress of the Dual cities is now a matter of certainty, and even the speculative portion of the anti-disallowance agitators must feel satisfied with the arrangement. The political portion will not feel so, as their capital is to a great extent gone, and they must now hunt around for some other grievance, real or imaginary, on which to base their attacks upon the disallowance policy so far as it affects the interests of Emerson and West Lynne.

TARIFF AND NORTH-WESTERN IMPORTS.

It seems that a reverend gentleman at West Lynne is much displeased with the effects of Canadian tariffs on agriculture in the North-west, and in a letter to the *Montreal Witness* soars upward into the realms of righteous wrath over the comparative prices of pitch forks and seeders in Dakota and Manitoba. The *Toronto World*, as a natural consequence, locked horns with the reverend commercial economist, and in the usual tone of that journal rushes the question into one of Manitoba interests versus those of Ontario, with no intention, however, of fairly representing those of the former. Our

local contemporary, the *Free Press*, has been impressed with the gravity of the question, and acting upon the ideas of the immortal Bob Acres in arranging a triangular duel, stepped into the arena on Thursday last, and devoted half a column towards proving that Ontario alone did not bear the taxation necessary for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

None of the parties in this triangular wrangle seem to have any desire to view the tariff effects upon the North-west from any standpoint, but where their political leanings or formerly fixed ideas have placed them. It is but natural that the reversed advocate of free trade should get stuck on a pitch fork or some such implement, as that would be about as far as his leisure from theology, tenet and dogma studies would allow him to investigate into matters of commercial economy; and the wonder is that sensible journals like the *World* and *Free Press* should condescend to notice his monomania regarding the price of farm-yard tools.

But the effects of the present tariff system on the North west has peculiar features not connected with it in older Provinces, and these do not always show to the disadvantage of the country. It is an axiom of commerce that any marketable commodity with a tax upon it should sell at the amount of that tax higher than it would if exempt from taxation, and any advance in price beyond that cannot be attributed to the tax itself. Upon this theory it is difficult to see how farmers in Manitoba have, as the *Free Press* asserts, to pay double for their implements in order that the Ontario manufacturer may be supported. The estimate of prices under a tariff or a free trade system may be made up according to the opinions of the individual making the same, and the press of Canada furnishes a mass of literature on the subject, from which any class of opinion may be selected, as a singer selects from his bunch of ballads, and the correctness of the selection will be ruled in all probability by the political leanings of the party making the same. The commercial calculation, however, is as we have stated, and a non-manufacturing country must pay the tariff extra for its manufactured goods under a protection system. It remains to be seen if the protection system gives any advantages to the North-west in return for advanced prices in manufactured goods, and a glance