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EDITORIAL

HIGH PROTECTION A NATIONAL HANDICAP.

"The Farmer's Advocate" does not believe in absolute free trade as being the most expedient policy for the Dominion of Canada to adopt under existing conditions, although a permanently-established system of world-wide, or even continental, free trade would be a vast boon to all countries concerned. Meanwhile, in view of the policy studiously pursued by our great southern neighbor, a moderate tariff appears to be necessary to foster the development of a self-reliant and reasonably self-contained nation, capable of supplying the greater part of its own needs, and being thereby rendered comparatively independent of the fiscal caprices of the peoples with which we trade. We believe, for instance, in conserving the supply of such raw materials as pulpwood and lumber, and, accordingly, favor export duties on such commodities, to the end that their utilization may be encouraged in our own country, or, failing this, that they may be reserved until such time as Canadian enterprise can make use of them. We do not believe in permitting alien capitalists to skim the cream off Canadian natural resources without contributing a dollar to our public revenues. We believe in a moderate and reasonable tariff impost on manufactured goods for reasons indicated above.

At the same time, we do not endorse the superficial claptrap arguments commonly adduced in favor of a protective policy, nor do we believe in extreme protection of home industries, for the cardinal reason that such a policy tends, in the first place, to divert the energies of capital and labor into channels for which the country is not naturally best adapted, thus involving economic waste; and, in the second place, it affords capitalists in lines that could flourish without protection opportunity to maintain prices at an artificial level, more particularly through the agency of trade combines, which are a natural and mischievous outgrowth of high protection. Trusts and monopolies have their sharpest teeth drawn in countries enjoying low tariffs.

The immediate purpose of this article is to point out that the common mistake of protection organs lies in their assumption that vast manufacturing and other urban industries are the great end and aim of material development. They see in the agricultural and laboring classes merely a broad base on which to build cities and urban industries. The actual condition of the farming and working classes occasions them no concern so long as conditions are not onerous enough to drive these out of the country. Of course, all this is egregiously wrong. While we want manufacturing in Canada, we also want farmers, and, from the standpoint of material progress, from the standpoint of citizenship, from the standpoint of nationhood, a flourishing agricultural population is infinitely more to be desired than any development of cities it is possible to conceive. Inasmuch as Canada is primarily an agricultural country, agricultural exports constituting the basis of our wealth, it follows that agriculture cannot be protected to any great extent, hence the net burdens of a system of fiscal protection to manufacturing interests must fall largely on the farmer, who already, and otherwise, bears more than his full share of taxation. The interests of the Canadian farmer is diametrically opposed to the maintenance of a high tariff wall, and, seeing that the agricultural population is our country's greatest asset, every broad consideration of statesmanship demands that the seductive requests for high-

er import duties, as well as special bounties and privileges, be discriminately weighed and sparingly conceded. Our tariff is already plenty high, and would be better for some further reductions.

CO-OPERATION OF CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

Co-operative fruit packing and selling has reached a point where a move forward is necessary. This movement began ten or twelve years ago in the formation of co-operative associations at Chatham and St. Catharines, though an organization on somewhat similar lines had existed at Burlington for some years previous. There are thirty-five or forty of these associations in the Province of Ontario to-day; also a number in British Columbia, while in Nova Scotia the movement is gradually getting under way. The members co-operate in spraying, in buying supplies, in packing and marketing their fruit. The general effect has been beneficial both to the grower and to the consumer. The pack of fruit is more uniform in character, and few, if any, cases of fraudulent branding have been traced to these associations. The small grower has benefited by them, and in many ways they have stimulated apple-growing on the average farm, and made this branch of agriculture a more valuable asset.

A further development of the co-operative principle is now declared necessary. Not only must there be co-operation among growers in handling their fruit, but it is believed that the co-operative associations may co-operate one with another. A couple of years ago a central association was formed at Toronto, designed to be representative of the Ontario co-operative organizations. At its annual meeting in June of this year, it was contended that there must be a stronger and more effective banding together of the local associations if the movement is not to receive a setback. Never a friend of co-operative enterprise, the apple-buyer is charged with having made special efforts during the past season to thwart and bring it into disrepute with the trade. This may not be true of all the buyers, but there is no doubt that many of them regard co-operation as a trespass upon their preserves. In addition to this active and sometimes underhand opposition, the associations have to cope with the usual disabilities and handicaps incident to inexperience, and the various frailties of human nature. The need of effective business negotiation in disposing of the product is also manifest. In short, it is held that some concerted action is necessary to assist and strengthen the co-operative associations.

The central organization was formed two years ago to aid the local associations in buying supplies, in selling the fruit, and in keeping them informed regarding market and crop conditions. Excepting the last-named service, nothing tangible has been accomplished, and even regarding crop conditions the work has not been so effectual as it might be, owing to the apathy of many local officers in supplying reports. The larger objects aimed at have not been achieved because the central body has not had power to engage in business transactions, its efforts in this direction having been largely advisory. Nor has the central organization had the full support of the local ones. During its first year, there were thirteen local associations enrolled as members. At the end of the year three dropped out, leaving but ten. Additional enrollments last year brought the total up to twenty-four, or about two-thirds of all in the Province. To hold and increase its membership, something practical must be done by

the representative body. The mere meeting together and discussing co-operation is not sufficient.

At the meeting referred to, incorporation was recommended, and the engaging of a competent man to manage the association, devoting his whole time to the work. Incorporation would enable the central association to buy supplies wholesale and distribute them among the local associations, for which it might also act as selling agent. A capable manager, studying the market, and in touch with the trade, should be of service in placing the output better than a number of small companies acting separately. It need not mean the discontinuance of f. o. b. selling, but the placing of the fruit where and when a suitable market could be found. In fact, it is claimed that such an organization would become a strong factor in the trade. It has also been suggested that inspectors should be employed to grade the fruit and place a registered brand on every barrel of a local pack coming up to a certain standard. There is admittedly need for instruction in spraying and packing. Many of the recent local associations are novitiate at the business, and help of this kind would be appreciated.

In just how far these suggestions may prove practicable, remains to be seen. If the plan of a capably-managed central incorporated body can be worked out to fruition, it should prove a vast benefit to the fruit-growing industry, and its objects would doubtless commend themselves to the practical endorsement of the Provincial Department of Agriculture. There is need, however, for wise business counsel before anything of the kind is undertaken.

REFORESTATION OF FARMS AND PUBLIC LANDS

Between four and five hundred thousand seedlings have been sent out this year from the Provincial Government's tree nursery at Guelph, Ont., says E. J. Zavitz, who has charge of the Forestry Department. The resources of the nursery are barely sufficient to supply the demand, and, with the vastly increased planting which might and should be encouraged from now on, a much greater nursery area will be required. Mr. Zavitz is now giving considerable attention to the public reforestation of waste land in various sections. It may be news to many readers to know that, not only in New England are there abandoned farms, but right in Ontario, the banner agricultural Province of the Dominion, may be found limited areas of worthless blow sand, which has been homesteaded, but which the owners have been glad to dispose of for a song, or to abandon outright. The township of Walsingham, in Norfolk Co., contains more or less such land, while portions of Muskoka, Parry Sound, and some other counties, will never be fit to produce any crop but trees. In view of the alarming and increasing scarcity of commercial lumber, it is of the greatest importance that such districts should be reforested by either municipal or Provincial enterprise, as well as that holders of private lands should take prompt steps to plant the poorer and rougher portions of their farms with trees. Indeed, throughout the great area of agricultural Canada, no farm, even if composed entirely of first-class arable land, should be without a moderate-sized wood-lot. In years to come, the present-day farmers who plant trees will be pointed to as wise men of their day and generation. Let us have fewer half-tilled fields, and more well-planted and judiciously-managed wood-lots. The remaining acres will produce more crops per acre on account of the protection, while the forest will be a splendid source of revenue and a constant pride and joy of its thrifty owner.

PLANT TREES.