

= Book Review =

"SIXTY YEARS OF PROTECTION IN CANADA"
by Edward Porritt. Published by MacMillan
& Co., London, England. May be secured
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\$1.45 post paid.

This book is the latest complete history of the tariff system in Canada. It was published in 1908 and reviews the tariff from 1846 to 1907. The author is a free trader and gives his book the sub-title, "Where Industry Leans on the Politician." He has made an exhaustive study of the tariff from the view point of the Canadian producer and consumer, as well as dealing with the various negotiations with the British government and with the American government. The author believes and states in very frank language that it is the protected interests of Canada that control Canadian politicians of both parties. He proves conclusively that at the present time the tariff question is not a political question, but that both parties are committed to high protection on Canadian manufactures. This situation is due to the fact of the influence of that powerful organization known as the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

In order to make himself familiar with present day conditions, the author travelled with the Dominion Tariff Commission in 1905-06 and listened to the evidence submitted at more than thirty meetings. He showed that it was the influence of the Dominion Grange, the Ontario Farmers' Association, and the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association which prevented the maximum tariff going into effect in 1907. These organizations presented a determined front and faced the manufacturers at many sittings of the Tariff Commission. After the conclusion of the sittings of the Commission the three farmers' associations united on a joint resolution which they presented at Ottawa. This led to the government dropping the idea of adding still more protection to the manufacturers.

The author, in dealing with the principle of protection, quotes freely from Alexander McKenzie, Goldwin Smith, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright. The leading authority on tariff statistics in Canada is universally admitted to be Sir Richard Cartwright. In 1903 Sir Richard stated that the tariff from 1879 to 1893 had cost the people of Canada hardly less than \$1,000,000,000. Continuing, Sir Richard says, "When Germany levied her enormous war indemnity upon France twenty years ago the total which the victors dared exact from the vanquished country hardly amounted to the sum that has been levied from you and taken out of your pockets for the purpose of entrenching your oppressors in power and enabling them to defeat the wishes of the people." The author, accepting this statement as authoritative, maintains that from 1879 to 1907 the cost of the national policy of protective tariff, which is upheld by both political parties in Canada, has taken from the pockets of the people no less than \$2,000,000,000.

Considering the tariff revision of 1907, Mr. Porritt maintains that home industry is more firmly entrenched in Canada today than in any other country in the Anglo-Saxon world. He pointed out that the United States has the highest tariff in the English speaking world, but that there are no federal American bounties to industry, and the various states bestow no such largesse as is bestowed by Nova Scotia and Ontario. He then reviews the methods by which Canadian municipalities have given to manufacturers bonuses, free sites, loans, and tax exemption for the past thirty years in a way that was never dreamed of in the United States. The constitution in most of the states directly prohibits bounties or subsidies to industries, as well as other forms of largesse that are so common in Canada today.

In addition to tariff protection and bounties to iron and steel industries, the present law demands that railways subsidized by the Dominion government must use "Made in Canada" material. Further, that this the patent laws were amended in 1903 to add further protection to manufacturers and a still more elaborate scheme was worked out in 1907 when the postal rates were revised to exclude advertisements in American periodicals.

When the Tariff Commission was sitting in the winter of 1905-6 the manufacturers of boots and textiles in Canada

admitted that their goods were inferior to similar American manufactures. This admission was accepted by the commission and placed on record. These same manufacturers, however, pleaded for a higher tariff protection that they might specialize and compete with the American manufacturers. The tariff was increased as the shoe manufacturers requested. The author insists that in Canada the "politics of business" reigns supreme. The big interests have found that the newspapers exercise a wide influence, and for this reason practically all the big newspapers of Canada are controlled by men who are of the government or by senators who owe their positions to the government. Other newspapers are controlled by government advertising and printing. At the outset the author takes up the conditions before confederation when the Canadian provinces were looking for reciprocity with the republic to the south. This agitation resulted in the Elgin-Marcy treaty of 1854-66, and brought prosperity to Canadian farmers. This led to continued discussion and arguments between British and Canadian authorities, but after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 Canada had fiscal freedom. Despite this, however, it was not until forty years later that Canada was permitted to enact her tariff without remonstrance from the Colonial Office or without criticism from both British houses of parliament.

In dealing with the Reciprocity treaty of 1854-66 with the United States, the author points out that the treaty was ratified by the American Congress for a peculiar reason. The slavery question was then to the front in America. There was a great deal of talk of annexation. The Southerners realized that if Canada became a part of the United States the North would then be that much stronger to deal with the slavery question. It was this feeling that led the Southern members of congress to support the Reciprocity treaty and secure its passage through the American congress. It required a great deal of energy and persistence on the part of the Canadian authorities to secure the Reciprocity treaty of 1854. Agitation in favor of this treaty began in 1846 and was continuous for eight years before it resulted in success.

The period of reciprocity, from 1854 to 1866, was a period of prosperity for the farmers and fishermen of Canada and they desired that treaty to continue. However, the American authorities were not desirous of continuing it unless it also included American manufacturing instead of being practically limited to natural products. This led, in 1866, to the abrogation of the treaty. Three times, from 1866 to 1874, the Canadians were negotiating in Washington for a renewal of their Reciprocity treaty. Two earlier efforts were futile. The government of Canada, from 1874 to 1878, took up the question of reciprocity and pushed with much vigor for a new treaty. At this time the manufacturing industry of Canada was very small, and it was intended to regard the industrial interests in any treaty that should be made with the United States. A draft treaty was prepared by the Dominion government and approved by the British government. The American senate, however, refused to ratify this treaty with Canada.

The author maintains that since 1878 there has never been any sincerity on the part of the politicians in Canada, on either side of the House, in attempting to secure reciprocity with the United States. Commissioners appointed by the Canadian government were in Washington in 1892 and again in '98-'99, but the writer maintains that the negotiations by these Canadian commissioners were perfunctory fulfillments of election campaign pledges. These negotiations with the United States were failures because the Canadian commissioners wished to confine the reciprocal arrangements to natural products while the Americans would consider nothing that did not include tariff concessions to United States manufacturers.

This book, by Edward Porritt, is one of the most interesting studies to any man desiring to inform himself upon Canadian tariff questions. If all western farmers would secure the information contained in this book they would be in a better position to deal with the tariff question.

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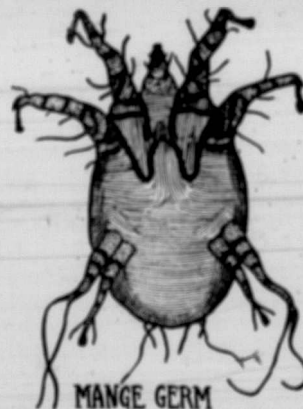
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