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CURRENT TOPICS.

According to the *New York Tribune* "the North is more solid and more determined against the British tariff policy of the Democratic party than it was against the Rebellion." The falling off in the Democratic vote by twenty per cent in Vermont and by a much larger percentage in Maine, at the recent elections, gives considerable colour to this strong assertion, though the fact that the defaulting Democrats do not seem to have given their votes to the Republicans, to any considerable extent, suggests that the recalcitrants may have merely been sulking in their tents in consequence of other grievances, rather than resentful of the threatened downfall of McKinleysim. The *Tribune* could not

have felt very sure of its position or it would not have felt it necessary to cater to a vulgar prejudice by the introduction of the word "British," instead of relying upon the merits of its contention. The *Nation* suggests that there can be, by the admissions of the Republicans themselves, no increase of tariff on protectionist lines before 1898, and that four years of activity under present conditions may have done much by that time to educate the public sentiment. The *Nation* also quotes from protectionist sources two significant extracts touching the evil that has been wrought by high protection in bolstering up manufacturing and other concerns which are "slack and behind the times in their business methods and mill equipments," and whose proprietors "want the laws of the country made so that they can make the greatest possible amount of money in the shortest possible time, and without any risk." These quotations are very suggestive of the evil effects of high tariffs in killing enterprise and leading the proprietors to rely upon the aid of Government rather than upon their own energy and ingenuity. Coming as they do from protectionist organs, they are full of meaning.

It cannot be said that any conclusions very practical, very definite, or very unanimous, were reached by the Deep Waterways Convention. We do not suppose that any reasonable person expected anything of that kind at so early a stage in the history of the enterprise. It by no means follows that nothing tending to progress was accomplished. The interchange of opinions must have thrown a good deal of light upon many aspects of the question. Probably every delegate went away with clearer conceptions of the magnitude of the undertaking, but if so, he must also have carried with him a deeper conviction of its desirability and importance. The crucial question of ways and means was hardly touched. Perhaps little light was thrown upon the other practical question, that of feasibility. There are evidently immense obstacles to be overcome before the two peoples are brought into cordial co-operation, and without such co-operation nothing can be done. The enterprise is one of such largeness as would tax the resources and energies of both peoples for years. There are evidently serious national misapprehensions and prejudices to be overcome. Perhaps the most serious obstacle of all will be found in the fact that the project, however

worthy to be made national by both countries, appeals at the outset only to limited though large sections of each. It would, in fact, be pretty sure to arouse sectional opposition from more than one quarter. It has, however, been made tolerably clear that there are very large and important portions of both the United States and Canada to which the carrying out of such a scheme would bring advantages that are well-nigh incalculable; that it would, in fact, give an impetus to the growth and development of the two Great-Wests such as would, in a few years, add enormously to the trade, and so to the wealth of those regions, on both sides of the boundary. The next movement of the Convention will probably be awaited with much greater interest than the last.

The interest some of the prominent men among our neighbours take in the welfare of Canada is touching. An instance is before us in the shape of an outline of a speech made a few days since, by Senator Higgins, of Delaware, at the county fair at Ogdensburg, N.Y. The kind-hearted Senator takes occasion to prophesy that "the deceitful illusion held out by the lowered duties of the recent tariff act will not betray Canadians into the hope that, while remaining a separate people, they will have free access to the markets of the United States." In order to strengthen us in our resolve not to be so betrayed, the Senator goes on to warn us that "no people can be assured of the stability of any prosperity that rests upon the vicissitudes of the legislation of a foreign government, and Canada can have no assurance that the American legislation of 1894 will stand more than four years longer." For these friendly hints let us be duly grateful. But when the Senator, in the kindness of his heart, goes on to point out how all uncertainty might be removed by the simple process of continental union, thus delicately inviting us to annex ourselves and be forever blest, we must demur. We must not suffer ourselves to be beaten in the contest of magnanimity. We cannot forget that the Senator had just before been pointing out to the people of New York State the advantages enjoyed by the Canadian farmer over the farmers of the eastern part of the United States, by reason of their more fertile soil, lower wages, etc. Now, if it would be ruinous to the farmers of New York and other States to allow all that portion of its population who are not directly engaged in farming to buy