

AMERICAN OPINION.

The journalists and pamphleteers in Canada who represent the selfish interests of the rich monopolists, seem to ignore all the world except the United States, and that country is held up to us in illustration of the benefits accruing from a high tariff. Strange to say, a great number of intelligent people in that country are strongly in favour of the tariff reductions proposed in the bill of Senator Fernando Wood, of New York, and Senator Beck, who represents the interests of the farmers of the Great West. Day after day these Tory journals and pamphlets republish stale stump speeches and fly-sheets, the product of the greatest demagogues and lobby agents that have ever haunted the Capitol. They omit to tell us that protection in the United States was a war measure,—that it was not adopted to foster any “perishing industries,” or for the pecuniary benefit of the community at large. The Government had taxed everything they could tax, and still wanted money to carry on the war. As an evidence of this, the tariff was collected in gold, and that gold was used in paying interest on the public debt, of which Europe at one time held nearly two-thirds.

The following extract from a speech made during the present session of Congress, by Senator Beck, will give an idea of his opinion of Protection in the United States; and it may be premised that he is as good an authority on that subject as the *Toronto Mail*:—

“We have had Protection. God knows we have had nothing else for the last twelve years. I would like to know where all the immense profits made by the manufacturers by virtue of the protection they have unjustly maintained in the last twelve years have gone. It is obvious that their employees have not been the beneficiaries. They are, it is claimed, in a starving condition. Thousands are reduced to beggary, and have become tramps instead of industrious operatives. Protection has not protected them. Each new protected machine which performs their work drives them out of the workshops in which they earned their daily bread, and their former employers care for them no more. But the palatial residences, the magnificent equipages, the princely style of living of these protected owners of that machinery, attest where the profits of their sweat and toil, and the money of the tax-payers all over the land have gone. And the clamour they are making in these halls, the lobbies they have organized, the newspapers they have subsidized, the arrogance with which they demand the maintenance of these bounties in perpetuity, attest equally their insolence and their confidence in their power.

“They have the audacity to require their operatives, the victims of their greed, to petition the representatives of the people for a continuation of the system which has produced these results, and they set themselves up as the special guardians of the labouring poor. Representatives in these halls are threatened with defeat if they dare to oppose, and are lured by promises of promotion if they obey their orders. The poor are becoming poorer and the rich richer, extreme poverty and immense fortunes are brought in sharp contrast, and the masses are used by their masters to influence legislation to still further enrich the already overprotected few, and to add to their own poverty and degradation.

“If the manufacturer, instead of getting 50 per cent., which he gets now by a tariff-tax upon the people of this country, had to content himself with 10 per cent. above the value of his goods in open market, which he could obtain by fair competition in the markets of the world, he could not close his establishments when he pleased, but his labourers would have employment day by day, and every day in the year, at full, fair, honest wages. It is because he can control a restricted market for his goods, which he can glut as often as he pleases, ten times—what the people of this country can consume, that when it has produced as much as can be safely held without reducing the price below the foreign cost and the tariff added, the mills and factories can be closed and the workmen left to starve. The labourers are the victims of protection; it does not protect them.

“The clamour of protection to labour and home industry is all a fraud; the tariff is not in the interest of labouring people, but in the interest of the owners of the machinery that manufactures all. The labourers only manage it and oversee it. When it stands idle it neither eats nor drinks nor requires clothing. The original cost is all the cost or expense there is about it, and its owners can let it stand idle until the market is sufficient to enable them to get their profits again by excluding competition with the people of all other nations, making the unprotected masses of the people pay for all.”