

The Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1912.

"THE TARIFF AND SHIPPING."

If we may judge by the tenor of recent articles the Telegraph is cherishing the belief that the time has come to convert the world to Free Trade "as it is in England." It is noteworthy that its advocacy is somewhat half-hearted. The statements presented in favor of its contentions are unsupported, and statistical returns, which it is generally understood cannot lie, are strangely lacking. Such material, however, as it submits as a basis in its crusade against a tariff, affords an opportunity to offer in reply a few facts and figures on the advantages of Protection and to point a moral therefrom on the fallacies of Free Trade.

Taking "The Tariff and Shipping" as a congenial subject, the Telegraph starts out with a sweeping assertion. "That shipping and shipbuilding suffer under the policy of high protection," it says. "It is proven by the experience of every nation that has tried the policy of protection." Coming down to concrete instances we are told that "the American merchant marine has been driven from the seas through the fiscal policy of the country," and the only suggestion that politicians can offer to recover this activity, in which the country once excelled, "is by bounties shipbuilding companies."

It is a stock argument with Free Traders to point to the comparatively slow growth of the shipping of the United States as exemplifying what they are accustomed to call "the blighting influence of Protection." But it so happens that shipping is almost, if not quite, the only industry in the States which is unprotected. To illustrate this point the following quotation from a speech by Mr. C. H. Grosvenor of Ohio, in the House of Representatives, is instructive:

"Of all the Americans who come face to face with foreign competition, our ocean shipowners alone are unprotected. That is the reason—this lack of protection for fifty years and more—why there are almost no ships building in America for ocean trade. Why such ships cost more than the ships of other nations. . . . We have protected our railroads. We have built thousands of miles by national aid, by State aid, and by municipal aid. We have protected by a tariff the building of their locomotives, their cars, and the making of their iron and steel rails in America. Protect shipowning as you have protected railroads, iron manufacturing, cotton manufacturing, woolen manufacturing, and everything else, and you will get the same results."

In further support of the reason why "the American merchant marine has been driven from the seas," we have the striking contrast which is afforded by the enormous coastal and river trade of the United States, which is fully protected. The Payne Tariff Law is directly responsible for these more prosperous conditions. In the section permitting all materials which may be imported for the building of vessels for foreign trade to be admitted free of duty there is this drastic provision:

"Vessels receiving the benefit of this section shall not be allowed to engage in the coastwise trade of the United States more than six months in any one year, except upon the payment to the United States of the duties of which a rebate is herein allowed. Provided that vessels built in the United States for foreign account and ownership shall not be allowed to engage in the coastwise trade of the United States."

The effect of this stringent protection of the United States coastal shipping trade has been well expressed in the following terms: "The Detroit River boats more tons of freight than enter and clear at the ports of London, Liverpool and New York combined, and 95 per cent, of the ships carrying this freight are American ships, manned by American men, built by American capital, and American labor out of American material, cut, forged, shaped and dug from American soil."

The example of shipping in the United States which the Telegraph unguardedly submits as a plea for Free Trade, on investigation proves to be a sound and cogent argument for Protection. Where Protection has been afforded, in the river and coastal trade, there has been an immense and increasing development, and this, be it remembered, under the highest rate of wages paid in any industrial country.

Taking Germany, where shipbuilding is free from a tariff, to further prove its case, the Telegraph asserts that "she has made more progress in shipbuilding than any other country except Great Britain." The force of this argument is subsequently lost by the admission that the tariff reformers of Britain "have no intention of placing a tariff upon the British shipbuilding industry." There are strong reasons for the contention of Protectionists, and which the Telegraph quotes, in "the advantage of being able to use foreign steel sold below cost price." But the fact must not be lost sight of that in all other respects Germany is in the advance guard of protected countries and is reaping her profits at the expense of Free Trade Britain.

In the shipping industry itself, for example, we find from statistical tables in the Fiscal Blue Book that in net tonnage of sailing and steam vessels entered and cleared in foreign trade, Germany has a proportional increase of 48.6 per cent, and Great Britain 25.9 per cent. The British Consul-General at Antwerp, in his report for 1910, gives a table showing the relative progress of British and German shipping entering the port of Antwerp during the years 1890-1910. From it we learn that the British tonnage increased from 2,554,680 in 1890 to 5,824,371 in 1910, or by 147 per cent. On the other hand the German tonnage rose from 612,990 in 1890 to 2,636,820 in 1910, an increase of 495 per cent.

The Consul-General says: "During 1910, as compared with 1909, the increase of British shipping amounted to 86 vessels and 172,653 tons, that of Germany showing an increase of 165 vessels and 342,045 tons; should this relative rate of progress continue it is very clear that ere many years have elapsed but a small margin will separate the magnitude of the shipping at Antwerp of the 'two countries named.' Shipbuilding in both countries being on a Free Trade basis it is obvious that Germany's encroachments on Great Britain's carrying trade are due to other reasons. According to Free Trade theories Great Britain owes her supremacy in shipping to Free Trade yet here we see foreign shipping, so far from being ruined by tariffs, actually assailing Great Britain's supremacy and increasing its proportion while the British proportion has declined."

The Telegraph in conclusion makes the wild assertion that Canadian shipping and shipbuilding have suffered by high protection, but brings no argument to bear in support of this claim. Turning to the Canadian Customs Tariff of 1907, which is still in force, this omission is not surprising. Practically all materials required in

the construction of vessels are admitted into Canada "free." In this free list the following items may be mentioned: "Anchors for vessels; iron or steel masts, or parts thereof, and iron or steel beams, angles, sheets, plates, knees, and cable chain; for wooden, iron, steel or composite ships and vessels; and iron, steel or brass manufactures which at the time of their importation are of a class or kind not manufactured in Canada," when imported for use in the construction or equipment of ships or vessels under regulations prescribed by the Minister of Customs; oakum of jute or hemp; steel wire for use exclusively in the manufacture of "ropes; and also wire rope for use exclusively for rigging of ships and vessels." This list of commodities which are admitted free into Canada for use in shipbuilding could be extended but enough has been quoted to show the absurdity of the contention that a policy of protection has anything to do with the decline in shipping or shipbuilding in the Dominion.

To sum up from the evidence in the countries the Telegraph cites: the United States under high protection places no tariff on ocean shipping and the industry is not satisfactory; the United States places a stringent protection on her coastal trade and the industry is highly prosperous. Germany, under high protection, places no tariff on shipping and the trade is already threatening the supremacy of Great Britain, a professedly free trade country. Canada, with a moderate tariff, places no barriers in the way of the shipping industry; the amount of shipbuilding is negligible. We submit from these unquestioned facts that it would take a Philadelpha lawyer to prove the Telegraph's case "that shipping and shipbuilding suffer under a policy of high protection."

Shipbuilding in Canada has undoubtedly declined, as the Telegraph admits, by reason of the decline in the building of wooden ships. That was a contingency which no economic legislation could guard against. Progress in modern shipbuilding in a young country must necessarily be slow on account of the increased cost of production. Indications are not wanting that Canada, with a growing export trade through her great national ports, will ere long establish large shipbuilding plants of her own. A policy of Protection in Great Britain combined with Imperial Preference will go far, by the impetus it will afford to Canadian trade, not only to build up a shipbuilding industry but to make by the advantage it will give over foreign competitors, for the general development of the country.

A MEANS TO AN END.

The attempts of the Liberal press to belittle the significance of President Taft's statement that Reciprocity would make Canada "an adjunct of the United States" have proved singularly ineffective. It is not surprising to discover that Mr. Taft's more detailed explanation that "it would transfer all their important business to Chicago and New York with their bank credits and everything else," has been received in stony silence. Spasmoidic attempts have been made to demonstrate that the loyalty of Canadians should rise superior to all such considerations. One journal to minimize the shock has suggested that the United States, with her 90 millions, would, under Reciprocity, become "a trade adjunct of Canada." We have now heard that this contingency was contemplated by Sir Wilfrid Laurier even in his wildest dreams.

Not only the loyalty of Canadians but their sound business judgment prompted them to refuse Reciprocity. They realized that it was no mere trade agreement but a means to an end. They knew before the general election from Mr. Taft's admissions in his own campaign that the Agreement meant something more than "larger markets," that it was devised as an agent to strike a blow at Imperial Preference, as a means to destroy the bond uniting the Dominion with the Mother Country, because the bond was "light and almost imperceptible." Knowing these things and realizing that it was not a fair business proposition they rejected it. By the further disclosure of Mr. Taft's motives, in the Roosevelt correspondence, their judgment has been unmistakably confirmed.

REASONABLE PRECAUTION.

It is satisfactory to note that many steamship companies in the North Atlantic passenger trade have already taken steps to guard, in so far as possible, against a catastrophe similar to that which befell the Titanic. "Southern" routes are now being used by the various lines and there has also been an increase in life-saving equipment.

Steamships plying to and from ports in the Dominion are now apparently well provided with all the safeguards which prudence can suggest. One Canadian line advertises that "All steamers are equipped with wireless and submarine signal systems," the latter being used to automatically detect the approach to hidden dangers. Another line in the Canadian trade announces: "All steamers of the undermentioned lines will follow the new southern course Eastbound and Westbound, thus avoiding all possibility of meeting ice, and each steamer will have boat and life raft capacity for every person on board, including both passengers and crew."

A company operating largely from New York, but also having ships on the St. Lawrence, asserts that: "Ample lifeboat accommodation is provided for all passengers and crews;" while yet another Canadian line declares that its steamships "are fitted with Marconi wireless telegraph and every modern device to assure absolute safety."

No question can be raised as to the wisdom of these precautions. In future no ships can be permitted to sail without a full life-saving equipment, or with more people on board than can be taken care of in case of accident under circumstances permitting life to be saved.

Current Comment

(Medicine Hat Times.)

It will be noted that the record of Canada's representatives on the Titanic is one of which Canada may be justly proud and if their stories are not all told it is for lack of men to tell them for the women do not wish to speak of these things. They wish to forget.

(Kingston Standard.)

For a good, clean, healthy job, with money in it, we recommend the driver's seat of a Chicago pig wagon. One driver retired the other day with \$75,000 in cash. He was paid a commission of 6 per cent. on all sales. This beats newspaper work, and most of the professions.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

The public will be curious to know whether some of the Canadian pushers of the pact have in their possession letters whose publication would make as interesting reading as President Taft's letter to Col. Roosevelt.

(Vancouver Province.)

The New York hunter who came to Ottawa to shoot big game in the streets of the capital promises to return when the House is in session.

(Manitoba Free Press.)

"The short and ugly word" appears to be in great demand by the United States politicians just at present.

(London Free Press.)

Possibly the next vessel owner who finds himself aboard his sinking ship will insist upon being drowned.

THE NEWS IN SHORT METER

LOCAL.

Married in Lowell.
Mabel P. Jones, formerly of the North End, was married in Lowell, on Monday last, to Reginald P. Evison of that city.

Will Go to Uplam.

Rev. A. C. Fenwick, of St. Luke's, has been appointed rector of Uplam, and will take up his duties about the last of the present month.

Tipped by an Astor.

A St. John newsboy has caused to remember the visit of Vincent Astor through St. John. Young Astor bought a paper from the boy in the Union Depot the other night, and paid a dollar for it.

Lard Advancing.

Compound lard jumped a cent and a quarter per pound in prices in the local market on Wednesday. This equals a rise of \$4 per tierce. Present quotations are from \$12.50 to \$12.75 per tierce. There is no apparent reason for the increase.

Tug Leader.

The tug Leader which has been extensively repaired and painted, was taken up river on Wednesday, on a trial trip, and everything was found to be in first class working order. She was taken through the falls yesterday morning and will begin work about the harbor. The Leader is commanded by Capt. Duncan Wasson, formerly of the tug Wasson.

Dynamite Explosion.

A blast of a hundred pounds of dynamite was set off Wednesday by River Lagoon, on the big rock that has been uncovered at the channel entrance. The explosion of such a large quantity of dynamite at one time causes such a great sea that the diving scow, some 140 feet away, was damaged and disles on the big Stone-lifter were shaken from their racks and broken. It is thought the boulder was so broken up that it can be easily lifted and the channel entrance cleared.

Mayor May Visit Boston.

A national conference on city planning will be held in Boston from May 27 to 29, and Mayor Prink has received an invitation for himself and any of the city officials who would be interested. His worship hopes to be able to attend, but it is not known whether or not the city engineer will be able to get away. During their stay in Boston, the delegates will be entertained by the City of Boston, the Boston chamber of commerce and the City Club.

Assignments.

Samuel Campbell, general trader at Hamoulet, Que. court, has made an assignment to John A. Barry. His liabilities are about \$3000. At a meeting of the creditors, H. F. Puddington and Cyrus J. Lynch were appointed inspectors. Several St. John firms are interested. Timothy A. Hurley, of Blissett, Northumberland county, has made an assignment to Cyrus F. Lynch. Mr. Hurley is a farmer and lumberman. Some months ago he made a compromise offer of 15 cents on the dollar, showing liabilities of over \$12,000. This offer was refused, and an assignment is made in consequence. Mr. Hurley owes several St. John and Fredericton houses.

PROVINCIAL.

Position of E. J. Payson.

Fredricton, May 2.—E. J. Payson, formerly of this city, but for several years past engaged in newspaper work in Moncton, was selected by the members of the public to committee of the board of trade, at their meeting last night, to act as publicity agent for the city of Fredericton. The appointment is not as yet permanent. Members of the committee decided to engage Mr. Payson until after the old home week, and if satisfactory results are obtained his services will be retained. The salary to be given the new official is \$100 a month.

GENERAL.

King as Naval Umpire.

London, May 2.—The King will begin a review of a fleet of 125 vessels off Portland. He will pass three days on board a battleship and act as umpire in a sham battle between the blue and red fleets, the former defending the coast. A novel feature will be a demonstration of the utility of aeroplanes in naval warfare. The battleship Hibernia, which left Sheerness today with four aeroplanes, has been fitted with a special launching platform.

King George IV Liqueur Whisky.
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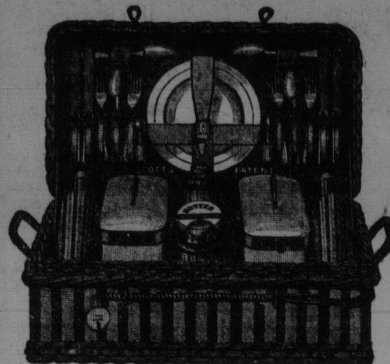
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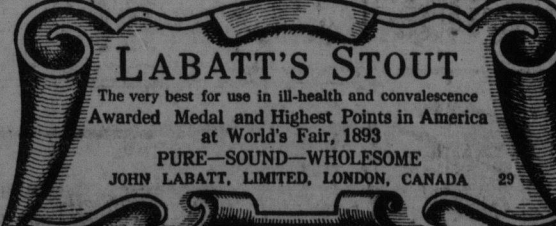
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