

to others of her loyal subjects, and the nonprivileged are compelled to assist the privileged in the gathering in of their "dues." Inequality, established, and supported by the whole machinery of civil government is surely a wrong. The Roman Catholic clergy are "protected" while the Protestant are forced to do with "free trade." I do not ask for a levelling *up*, but I have a right to demand a levelling *down*. But, "no complaint has been made by the people interested"; no popular complaint perhaps. For that is provided against by an ingenious, but cruel contrivance, which allows a man to refuse to pay the tithes upon declaration that he is no longer a Catholic. Why should the one follow the other? What right have we to bind a civil obligation and a religious conviction together? "No complaint has been made by the people interested": then we are not to educate children until they complain of their ignorance; we are not to give the franchise to the working classes until they ask for it; we are not to send the Gospel to the heathen until they complain of their darkness.

It seems to me that Sir Francis Hincks has viewed this matter in its political aspect merely; but many of us have to regard it in other ways, and as having a bearing upon the great principles of justice to all the members of the State. And I may be allowed to remind the Honorable Knight that even in politics he, and those associated with him, did not always find it so easy to champion the cause of the Catholics. The Catholics of this Province were a dead-weight upon the hands of both parties in the House; *they* spent the money, and held the balance of power; *they* by seeking the interests of the Church rather than the interests of the State, brought about a political dead-lock—and because of them the miserable policy had to be adopted of having Provinces and Provincial Parliaments. We are paying the price to-day. Sir Francis says: "If I were convinced of the soundness of such views as you have expressed, which I am not, I should in the present state of public opinion be convinced of the impolicy of advocating them." With great respect I submit that the advocacy of my view is far safer than the line pursued by Sir Francis. What he is doing can only tend to inflate those already puffed up—to confirm oppressors in oppression, and to give Mayor Beaudry, and such as he, some show of reason for their folly.

EDITOR.

WHAT IS A NATIONAL POLICY?

In a former article, two weeks ago, the above question was proposed, with the view of determining, not only the general drift of a National Policy, but the special demands which such a policy makes upon electors at the approaching crisis in our political affairs. In that article, however, the important question of Protection to Canadian Manufactures was held in abeyance, with the intention that it should be subsequently discussed; and to that discussion the present article will be devoted. Those who are in sympathy with the demand for a National Policy, and are sickened of mere party-cries, must feel gratified if the coming elections are made to turn on a great economical and political question like that of Protection, rather than on the comparative merits of the two political parties who are clamouring for support at the polls. Some of the most serious perils to which Constitutional Government is exposed, some of the most disgusting vices by which political life is stained, arise from taking the vote of a people, not upon a question in which the national welfare is bound up, but upon the past record of two antagonistic parties, whose respective services to the country can be satisfactorily estimated only by the impartial historian of later times.

There are, indeed, two preliminary obstacles to accepting Protection as the principle which is at stake in the coming elections. First of all, neither people nor politicians are dividing themselves into parties along the line. On the contrary, as far as yet appears, Protectionists who have been supporters of the Government, and Free Traders who have hitherto voted with the Opposition, intend, in many cases at least, to stick to their old party alliances. Moreover, it appears that this fact receives some explanation from a second difficulty. The gravest doubts are entertained as to the sincerity of the promises which the Opposition have been making to Protectionists. It is alleged that the leader of the Opposition never was, and is not yet, a Protectionist from scientific conviction; and that he has unfurled the banner of Protection merely in the hope of rallying some followers to fill up the vacant ranks of those who deserted his cause from indignation at the Pacific Railway Scandal. There is no doubt that these facts constitute formidable difficulties. To the extreme Protectionist at least. The Free Trader, indeed, and the moderate Protectionist who feels satisfied that existing duties afford all reasonable protection to our manufactures, the merchant also whose transactions must assume stability in our fiscal system,—all these may vote with confidence for the Government. Whether the extreme Protectionist may, with equal confidence, vote for the Opposition, it is for himself to decide. We shall, for the present, waive his difficulties. We shall assume that the question of Protection is to form the dividing line of the two parties, and that the Opposition may be relied upon to carry out the promises they have made. Is that a National Policy which they propose?

In answering this question it is necessary to distinguish between the abstract teachings of Economical Science and the practical necessities of a political system. There is, indeed, an elementary principle of trade which the Economist traces alike in the bargain by which a child exchanges with the confectioner a cent for a sugarstick and in the most complicated transactions of international commerce. But this elementary principle is inevitably modified by the political wants of a community. Of these the most important is the

necessity of a public revenue for carrying on the operations of Government. Now, a very superficial acquaintance with economical laws must show, if common sense is not sufficient to convince any one, that there is no artifice by which the taxes required for a public revenue can be made anything but a burden to the community by whom they are contributed. Political justice, indeed, demands that this burden shall not be shifted from one class of the community in order that it may be thrown wholly on the shoulders of another. But what system of taxation distributes the burden most fairly over the different members of the community? That is a question beset by many difficult, perhaps inextricable, complications. Especially may it be said that the two main rival systems of direct and indirect taxation have each peculiar advantages to plead in their favour. The chief difficulties, in fact, experienced in the adoption of either system, arise in adjusting the detailed arrangements with fairness, and in having these arrangements honestly carried out. Any system yet devised is, after all, but a clumsy expedient at the best, when compared with that which might be rendered possible by a moderate increase of intelligence and virtue in the community.

Still it should not be forgotten, though it seems astonishing that men require to be reminded of the fact, that, while taxes must of course be raised, they must nevertheless be a burden. It is against the most rudimentary and obvious principle of economy to suppose that any man, or body of men, can add to their wealth by subtracting a part of it to form a public fund. This is a simple law of economy which is readily recognised, and too often observed with public meanness, in every other sort of contribution. In subscribing for a religious or charitable object no man supposes that his wealth is thereby increased: his subscriptions have no meaning if they are not sacrifices; it is this that imparts to them their moral and spiritual worth. The same economical truism is, in fact, also generally recognised with ease in almost any form of taxation but that which is raised by duties upon the articles we import from foreign countries. And this is the reason why the scientific economist finds it so difficult to understand the hallucination by which people delude themselves into the belief that if they add to the taxes which they pay on their foreign importations, they will thereby add to their wealth. Such a hallucination seems possible only as the result of a logical jugglery, similar to that which a clever dialectician might practise on any simple mind with regard to the most indubitable certainties. Fancy the straightforward intelligence of a mathematician thrown aghast with doubt as to whether a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, by being bamboozled with a rhetorical exposition of the familiar proverb that the longest way round is the shortest way home!

For the economical law, which governs all trade between individuals and between communities alike, is surely as simple and certain as any mathematical axiom; and it is only by some logical illusion, arising out of the intricacies of international commerce, that men can lose sight of a truism, upon which they act without question in all the ordinary transactions of their trade. What is trade? Is it not a matter of buying and selling? Now, there is a very simple law of economy by which this matter is uniformly governed. To be truly economical, a man must buy as much as he can for what he sells, or, to put it in another form, must sell as little as he can for what he buys. This may commonly be expressed further by saying that a man seeks to obtain what he wants at the cost of as little labour as possible; and it need scarcely be added that this is the economical law which is understood by the phrase about buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. Of course it is not to be understood that no man ever departs from this principle in any of his purchases; it is merely said that if he does depart from this principle his purchase is not directed by considerations of economy. You may praise him as noble, as just or generous; you may vituperate him as vain and foolish, according to the view which you form of his motives; but there is one thing which you cannot do—you cannot call his transaction economical.

Now, this is what is understood by economy, not only in the business relations of individuals. If two or three men enter into partnership, they know that bankruptcy would be the inevitable issue of their undertaking, if they made a practice of seeking any other than the cheapest market for their purchases, any other than the dearest for their sales. If a hundred or a thousand men form a joint-stock company, their hope of a dividend is based on their trust in the economical management of the directorate; and any disclosure of a transaction, in which the directors had paid more than was necessary, or accepted less in payment than might have been obtained, would be sure to lead to unpleasant scenes at the first general meeting of shareholders. And yet now, when some four millions of people have entered into a joint-stock association for political purposes, they are asked to elect a Board of Directors who are pledged, not only to abandon the fundamental principle of economy themselves, but to take forcible measures for compelling every shareholder, whatever his private convictions may be, to abandon the principle too.

Now, if economy means the supply of our wants at the least possible cost,—if this is what economy means for one man, or for a hundred, or a thousand men who form a commercial association,—what is the reason why this ceases to be economy when a few thousand form a political association as in some of the smaller British colonies, or when some millions are combined in any of the larger empires of the world? There is no mysterious force in arithmetical processes to work out such a result; and not the wildest fancy of ancient Pythagorean or of later mystic with regard to the magic powers of numbers ever attributed to them such an inexplicable potency as this modern extravagance, according to which, by a mere trick of multiplication, the essential nature of economy may be reserved. For, be it observed, a nation—a political community—is simply a number of individuals living under common laws, and when we speak of what is economical for a nation, if we understand the purport of our own language, we must mean what is economical for the individual citizens of whom the nation is composed. If the individual citizens, therefore, acknowledge without hesitation that the only economy for them is to find the most remunerative market for their productions, the least exacting market for the supply of their wants, they have already settled the question as to what economy means for the nation to which they belong; for the nation is themselves.

Such is the essential teaching of every great political thinker, who has