

than at the Toronto one, judging from the newspaper reports of the latter event. As for the practical aspect of the question, the address was not as full as might have been expected, and we fear that the impression left would be rather on the negative side. However, it will tend to stir up thought upon the question. That Col. Vincent is evidently a believer in the subtle doctrines of protection, even aside from his advocacy of the protective doctrines of preferential trade within the empire, may be understood from his uncalled for sneer at the Cobden Club, in his Toronto address.

Many men who believe in the principles of free trade in a general sense, can be caught with argument to the effect that resort to protection is necessary to counteract the hostile influences of foreign tariffs. They look upon protection as an evil which they are forced to adopt, in order to fight other nations with their own weapons. Col. Vincent starts out on these lines by picturing the injury done to British and Canadian commercial interests through the hostile tariff of the United States. He then asks: Shall we acknowledge defeat and sue for mercy from Washington? This of course he answers in the negative by proposing what is virtually a peculiar protective policy for the empire. The different self-governing divisions of the empire are to have control of their own tariff affairs, but are to allow imports from other divisions of the empire at a preferential rate. Thus there would be a column in the tariff lists for imports from other divisions of the empire, and another column for the tariff upon imports from foreign countries.

Col. Vincent compares Canada's trade with the Empire, with our trade with the United States, and he makes some pertinent remarks to the effect that the United States is our competitor in trade. Products which we produce in Canada for export, such as grain, butter, cheese, live stock, meats, etc., are also produced in surplus quantities in the republic. Our aim, he endeavors to show, should be to encourage trade with Great Britain, where these products are wanted, and not to seek an alliance with the United States, where they are not wanted. He refers to the advantage Canada has over the United States in the export of cattle to Great Britain, and shows what an encouragement it has been to our export cattle trade. If the home government were to place a tax of 25 to 50 cents per quarter (eight bushels) upon wheat coming from foreign countries, and admit Canadian and wheat produced in other colonies and dependencies free, our farmers, he says, would hold the king of trumps. Certainly this would be a very pleasant thing for Canadian farmers, but where, we ask, would the British bread-eater be under such an arrangement? All the surplus wheat produced within the empire would not supply more than one-third of the home demand, and the balance would have to be bought from the foreigners, duty and all. We have not the same faith which Col. Vincent expresses, in Canada's ability, within the brief period mentioned, to supply the United Kingdom with bread. It would be many years before this could be done. In the meantime, are we to believe that the British workman would consent to a tax upon bread? Col. Vincent tells us they can be persuaded to do so, but the

proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we will be wise to await developments before accepting this belief. Though we are not saying anything new, we would in this connection repeat the opinion expressed in the eastern press, that the British people at home should first give evidence of their willingness to adopt the policy of the Trade League. Then the agitation of the question in the colonies would look like something more useful than a waste of time.

Leaving out of consideration for the meantime, the attitude of the British people at home, we see nothing particularly harmful to Manitoba, or indeed to Canada, in the question as explained by Col. Vincent. We would maintain control of our tariff, whereas in commercial union with the United States, our tariff would be regulated from Washington. Again, the adoption of a policy of preferential trade within the empire, would necessitate a reduction of our present tariff, whereas a commercial union compact with the republic, would necessitate a general increase in our tariff, to correspond with that of the United States. Free Traders would therefore naturally decide at once in favor of preferential trade with the empire, as against commercial union or unrestricted reciprocity with the republic. If Great Britain were to place a tariff upon certain products from foreign countries, in order to give the colonies a preferential advantage in her markets, by the admission of the same products from the colonies free, the colonies would be obliged to give a *quid pro quo* in the shape of a liberal reduction of their tariffs upon imports of British goods. Canada is a protectionist country, and our tariff is directed principally against British manufactures. Canadian free traders would therefore welcome the policy of the Trade League, from the standpoint of the general reduction which it would bring in our present high tariff. The adoption of the policy of preferential trade within the empire, to protectionist Canada would simply mean a sweeping reduction in our high tariff. To free trade Great Britain on the other hand, it would mean the adoption of a policy of protection. That there is any likelihood that the British people at home will soon adopt such a policy, we have no good reason to believe.

* A RIDICULOUS BELIEF.

During the frost scare last week, the remark was frequently heard that the grain men would make the most out of the scare, as they would be interested in having it appear that damage had been done. Some remark to this effect was so frequently heard, that the belief seems to be almost general outside of grain circles, and even business men who ought to know better, were heard to repeat some such saying. Now, we do not know where this very ridiculous idea originated, but we have no hesitation in declaring that it is entirely without foundation. A little thought, we fancy, should be sufficient to convince anybody that the report is absurd. The natural influence of the spreading of a report to the effect that our wheat crop was seriously injured, would be to advance the price of wheat. In a very short time Manitoba grain men will be actively buying wheat, and

they do not want to "boom" prices. Their interest is in the opposite direction. They would prefer that the market here for new wheat should open with reasonably low prices, so that they would be in a position to gain from any advance which might occur later on. Anything which would put prices up unduly now, would be inimical to their wishes.

In the next place, wheat is like any other commodity, the general rule being that it is more satisfactory to handle a good article than a poor one. Any merchant in Manitoba knows that choice butter is more saleable than poor stuff. It is only to keep a customer that they will handle bad butter at all, in some instances. Nobody wants it, and merchants who take it are often the losers. It is harder to sell because of its undesirable quality. It is exactly the same with wheat. The farmer who has a choice quality of wheat will get the top market price, and he is accordingly satisfied. His neighbor who has poor wheat, is dissatisfied because he cannot get the same price. In buying therefore we say it is unsatisfactory for the grain men to handle poor grain, as compared with a choice quality. The next thing is in selling the wheat, and here again it is easier to find a market for choice grain than for poor stuff. Why have the grain men advised Manitoba farmers in the past to grow red fife wheat? Because it is the finest quality and is more readily marketable. In a short crop year, even poor grain is readily marketable, but in a year of abundance everywhere, the poor stuff will be slow sale at best. Why did the Dominion Grain Exchange send out a circular last year advising the farmers of Manitoba to grow a better quality of oats? Simply because it is more satisfactory for the grain men to handle a good quality of oats, than a poor article. It is the same with wheat. There would be every whit as much reason to say that the grain men would prefer a damaged crop of oats, as to say the same thing regarding wheat. Yet the fact that they have sent out circulars at their own expense, giving instructions in the matter of growing oats, so as to secure the best quality, is proof that they do not prefer a poor article.

The idea seems to prevail, that if the wheat is damaged, the grain buyers can beat the price down and get it proportionately cheaper than if it were of choice quality. This we believe is a popular fallacy. Last crop year the basis of prices was No. 2 hard. We venture the assertion, that a great deal more wheat was bought from farmers at the valuation of No. 2 hard, which would not equal that grade, than was bought for the same price that would grade better than No. 2 hard.

Another popular fallacy is, that frosted wheat is little injured for milling purposes. The fact of the matter is, that only a low grade flour can be made from frosted wheat. If the grain is at all badly damaged, it cannot be used for best grades of flour, and millers who do a large business and have a reputation to keep up, cannot afford to use it. Of course it can be worked up for lower grades of flour, but the best millers would prefer not to handle it at all. There is more waste in milling, and it must be bought correspondingly low.

We have no hesitation in saying, that the apparently general belief that the grain men would like a little damage to the wheat, and that they would make the most out of any catastrophe of this nature, is erroneous and unjust. There is no body of business men in Manitoba, who are more anxious for a large crop of fine quality of wheat, than the grain men. Anybody who went among them and noted the despondency which prevailed during the late critical weather would be willing to admit the charge is unjust.