

During the year just closed, I have sold from my flock \$234.80 worth of mutton, \$39 worth of wool, while five lambs, valued at \$6 each, have been used for food on the farm; total returns, \$303.80, of which \$264.80 has been for mutton, and \$39 for wool. Had the proposed duty been in force, I would have received 5 cents per pound more for the 135 pounds of washed wool produced, or, in total, \$9.75 more for my year's returns; that is, the total returns of my flock would have been increased by 3.2 per cent. I find sheep-raising pays well. Nothing on the farm pays better, and my profits are not cut so fine as to depend on the addition of \$9.75—the price of one fat lamb—to my receipts. The effect of the additional duty in raising the price of the clothes of my household would probably far more than offset the gain on the wool. I have not used the figures of my own flock from any desire to introduce personal experience, but simply as an example, for the truth of which I can vouch, of such a flock as could and should be kept on the average Ontario farm. The figures given for last year are, I think, rather below the average yearly production, certainly not above it.

Now, will any man in his senses maintain that the addition of 3 per cent. to the gross returns of our flocks will have an appreciable effect in encouraging the raising of sheep? My own belief is that sheep-raising in Ontario would still be exceedingly profitable if nothing but mutton were produced. The sheep, while a great feeder, consumes cheap foods; the capital expenditure for housing is very small, and the effect of sheep on the farm in destroying weeds and weed seeds is very beneficial, while labor is a very small item, compared to other kinds of live stock. The wonder to me is that sheep-raising is not more widely followed under our conditions.

Now, what is the explanation of the decreasing sheep industry of Canada? Mr. Biggar explains it by a lot of figures of exports and imports, which may mean little or nothing, and, in interpreting which, cause and effect are very easily confused. The explanation is not far to seek, and it lies with the farmers themselves, and not in any lack of protective duty. We may as well be frank about it. While Ontario has many sheep-breeders of note, and many grade flocks, which pay well, the great bulk of the sheep in this country are wretchedly handled. I am fairly well acquainted with conditions in this Province, and know whereof I speak. I have no hesitation in saying that in Ontario there are not fifty per cent. of the farmers who keep sheep who have proper housing for them, cheap as that housing is, not twenty-five per cent. who use pure-bred rams of any breed in their flocks, and not ten per cent. who castrate their male lambs, or who keep their flock reasonably free from parasites by the use of any sort of dip. If this estimate is correct—and I am sure that it does not err by representing conditions as worse than they are, let us see what it means to our sheep industry. It means that the sheep on half our farms have no shelter other than the barnyard affords, and are constantly exposed to injury by cattle and horses which use the same yard, so that yearly losses by accident run high. It means that three-fourths of our flock-owners do not follow any reasonable system of breeding; that the cheapest of mongrel males are used, and no proper selection of females is made. It means that the great bulk of our lambs have to be sold in that lowest class, listed as "bucks and culs," at a time of the year when the market is glutted with them. Is it any wonder that sheep-raising when followed in this way, does not pay, or that those who follow it in this manner are getting out of the business? Would our bacon or beef or dairying industries have amounted to much if managed in the same way? Has not this sort of thing had much more to do with the decline of sheep-raising than the lack of an import duty on wool?

Our woollen manufacturers and, indeed, all our manufacturers—would like increased protection on their products, because it would enable them to charge more for their output. There is no doubt as to this. Our woollen manufacturers now have a protective duty of 30 per cent. in their favor, and this, added to the natural advantage of proximity to their market, should be ample to insure reasonable profits, and I am informed by one who knows intimately the conditions of woollen manufacture that this is the case wherever modern machinery and methods are used. There is little doubt that many of our woollen manufacturers are in the same class as our unsuccessful sheep raisers, and are looking to a protective tariff to make them a profit which should come from the application of more brains in their business. What is wanted is not more protection, but an educational campaign both on the farm and in the factory.

Then, again, this matter of protection to wool is an endless chain. It is hard to see where the effects cease. To give the farmer a gross return of 3 per cent. more than he now receives, or of about two cents per sheep, we would increase the cost of the woollen manufacturer's raw material by about 15 per cent. Consequently, he demands more protection, which again increases the cost of material to the tailor and maker of clothing. There, again, more protection is the remedy, and the whole accumulated burden falls on the shoulders

of the helpless consumer, with the effect of increasing the cost of living, which is already higher in Canada than in almost any other country in the world. The farmer will be injured in two ways: First, by having his own living expenses increased, and, second, by having his market injured by the greater economies which must be practiced in city homes to meet the increased clothing bill. Further, and worst of all, the farming community will have lost that jewel, consistency, and will no longer be able to meet the rapacious demands of the protectionist manufacturers with that statement of policy which has become a settled question to the 30,000 organized farmers of Canada. "The entire elimination of the protective principle from our tariff." Let us be clear on this question. The farmers of Canada are already suffering greatly from the effects of our protective tariff, in proof of which statement we have only to point out that the decrease in rural population, which is now rousing such concern, is co-incidental with the application of a protective tariff in Canada. There is, and has been, a persistent demand from all independent farmers' organizations for the cessation of this policy, and now, just as success is in sight, comes this proposal for increased woollen duties, which would rivet our fetters more firmly than before. Let the farmers of Canada beware of strengthening in any way the hands of those who are already working them so much injury.

I have every sympathy with the efforts of the sheep-breeders to revive an industry which should be a great factor in Canadian agriculture. When, however, leaders in this matter come out in support of a measure of such doubtful value to sheep-raising as a protective duty on wool, especially where the support of this measure would mean the weakening of the whole position of the farmers on the tariff question, they appear before the public in a very doubtful light. They are either very badly-informed on the sheep question, very easily duped, or are influenced by other and more sinister influences. Let them stick to the policy of education, establish if necessary—more demonstration flocks, and rouse the Department of Farmers' Institutes until the same attention is paid to sheep that has been paid to bacon and dairying. In these efforts they will have the hearty support of all who have at heart the agricultural well-being of Canada, and there is little doubt as to their meeting with early and complete success.

E. C. DRURY.

An Illusory Proposition.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Mr. Biggar's long letter in July 7th issue is, I think, calculated to befog, rather than to clarify, the mind in regard to the duty on wool. Knowing Mr. Biggar's connection with the manufacturing end of the woollen industry, which has been agitating for years for an increase in the tariff on woollen goods, I would be disposed to read somewhat carefully between the lines when he ostensibly espouses the cause of the farmer, and advocates a protective duty on raw wool for the latter's special benefit. In regard to the general question of protection, I am firmly convinced that its practice has been a curse to the masses of the Canadian people; that, as a settled fiscal policy, it is fallacious in theory and vicious in practice, and that the Canadian farmer has been the special victim of its operations. Facts and argument in support of this contention I have given elsewhere, and space does not here permit a repetition thereof; but, looking at the matter as I do, I regard any agitation on the part of the farmer for special "protection," any joining in the general clamor for such assistance, to be a commitment to support unsound policies, effectually stultifying his efforts to get rid of the incubus of protection. Nothing will so satisfactorily induce criminal silence as the taking of a bribe; and if the Canadian farmer clutches at the bait now being thrown out to him, he loses his integrity, and independence, and the public confidence and respect that rest upon that integrity and independence.

With special reference to Mr. Biggar's letter, allow me to draw your readers' attention to some of its salient points, without attempting to examine exhaustively or connectedly an article that covers so much ground.

The first two paragraphs of Mr. Biggar's letter, reciting briefly the obvious advantages of direct taxation and freedom of trade, are excellent, and even the most uncompromising free trader is disposed to agree with him, when he says that, "Since we have a tariff, all classes should have an equitable share in its advantages and burdens." Surely this is both logical and just. And yet the fact is that an equal protection to all classes would be no protection at all. For purposes of taxation, we may have a revenue tariff, but an effort to give all classes "an equitable share" in its advantages and burdens inevitably involves an effort to eliminate the protective principle. The protectionist propaganda is in the highest degree absurd if it does not contemplate giving certain industries special advantages at the expense of other industries, and any losing sight of this fact blinds one to the fallacies in the protectionist doctrine. The fact, as stated above, may not

be immediately apparent. I shall, therefore, give a case to make my meaning clear. Take the manufacturers of woollens, for example. They have a certain tariff protection on their finished product, whereby they are enabled to charge so much more for their wares than they could do without such protection. But, if their raw material, their equipment, their labor, is similarly protected, they are no better off than they would be with all tariffs abolished. And surely the producers of their raw material are entitled to protection, and their employees, also, and the manufacturers of their plant and machinery. Let the reader take any case he likes, and he will see that an equal protection is not, and can not, in the nature of the case, be any efficient protection at all. But in practice there never is an equitable sharing of the advantages and burdens of protection; and when once the policy is established, it is those industries which are best organized, most aggressive, or maintain the most influential lobby, that swing the pendulum in their direction and obtain the bigger share of public aid. If it were not for this inevitably unfair discrimination there would be no protectionist propaganda, because it would lose its whole underlying motive. The only safe thing for the Canadian farmer to do is to persistently work for the abolition of the protective principle, and, incidentally, as soon as may be, for the substitution of direct for indirect customs taxation. So long as Canada is mainly an agricultural country, exporting large quantities of agricultural products, her farmers cannot benefit by any protective tariffs ostensibly designed in their favor, and they know it. And I think that a good many of the other industries (including the one with which Mr. Biggar is connected) know it, too, are conscious of the weakness of their claims and the injustice of their special advantages, and are anxious to obtain such moral support from agriculture as would be involved in their request for protection on raw wool. Let us not fall victims to any such plans. Let us, rather, maintain resolute independence, scorn Government pay, and be assured success will ultimately crown our efforts.

Mr. Biggar gives a great number of figures whose interpretation may be one thing or another. Exports of Canadian farm products to the United States have declined, partly due to the United States high tariff. Granted. What of it? It is our misfortune. Let us make reasonable efforts to have that tariff reduced, and there are not wanting indications that something can be done in that direction. United States shipments of farm products to Canada have increased from \$6,299,000, in 1886, to \$28,000,000 in 1908. But Mr. Biggar does not specify what products these are. It may be a convenient omission on his part, but the reader is left quite in the dark, and cannot form any opinion until he knows the items. Mr. Biggar states that for 50 years the United States farmers have had a larger share of protection than Canadian farmers have had. What of it? What good has it done them? Where will you find greater commercial injustice and more control of legislation by vast aggregations of wealth and tariff beneficiaries than in the United States?

Further, the sheep industry in Canada has declined. Granted; but will Mr. Biggar guarantee to re-establish it by a 5-cents-a-pound duty on wool? Are there no other causes that have brought about a decline in the sheep industry than the price of wool (e. g., the dog misanthropy), and is it to be rehabilitated by tariffs such as Mr. Biggar proposes? Let the farmer answer. Even what wool we do raise is largely shipped to the United States because, as Mr. Biggar claims, no one would think of establishing a complete worsted plant in Canada. As to why the industry does not or can not flourish in this country, Mr. Biggar leaves us in the dark. But if they cannot exist under present conditions, the tariff on their finished product will have to be so high that the encouragement given the farmer in the greater home demand or better prices for his wool will be but a drop in the bucket, compared with the consequent enhancement in the price he must pay for his woollen cloth. It seems to me a case of "Tails I win, heads you lose."

Finally, Mr. Biggar recommends a tariff that will "restore Canadian wool to its due prominence in Canadian cloth." One would like to know how this is to be done. Certainly, it would be a sad sad-ration that shoddy should give place to better cloth. But I fail to see how Mr. Biggar proposes to do this by a scientific tariff. Shoddy is cheap because it is cheap, and Mr. Biggar's tariff will certainly not cheapen cloth. At best, we are assured that "It is a question if the consumer would pay more for his suit of clothes, even if higher prices were placed on woollen goods." It certainly is a question which I am disposed to answer somewhat differently from Mr. Biggar. The Canadian farmer should abstain from all participation in the protectionist clamor; its advantages to him and to the country at large are negligible, as are its advantages substantial and oppressive.

W. C. GOOD.

Let me again give them a chance at the plow grass. They will destroy much of it. Then, when the plow is ready, and see the plow grass, the roots left exposed.