

clude foreign food and limit our own production, we might retaliate upon the present protected classes. But while such an action would give us revenge, it would also be a loss to the farmers' themselves, and would undoubtedly end in the poverty of the entire community, which would probably, in the end, find itself in the position of the Kilkenny cats, who fought until they had eaten one another up entirely, and nothing remained save a few teeth and claws. Any policy of retaliation on the part of the agricultural classes would be mutually destructive to themselves and to their industrial enemies. No system of trade regulations can raise the price of farm products so long as these are greater than the requirements of our own people, for, so long as any of them are exported, foreign interests, and not our own, will control prices. So we see that while our manufacturers are able to make vastly greater profits by reason of the protection they receive, our farmers must take what they can get in free competition with the world. Under these conditions we find the capital employed in manufactures yielding very large profits, while that employed in agriculture yields very small profits, very often indeed not reaching the ordinary rates of bank interest. As a result our agricultural classes find themselves very badly handicapped in the race, and it is scarcely to be wondered at that they should fall somewhat behind. That they are falling behind is evident from the fact that their numbers are decreasing, for the final test of the prosperity of any calling must be the flow of population to or from that calling, since

population has ever a tendency to flow to those occupations which offer the greatest advantage.

We have endeavored to show, thus far, how our system of trade regulations tends to reduce the profits of agriculture and increase those of manufacture and commerce. This system of protection has been in force in our country during the last quarter of a century, and, while there have always been grave objections to it, surely the time has now come when no real reason can be urged for its continuance. It was justified at first by the necessity of encouraging infant industries which would afterwards become self-supporting and a source of wealth to the country. This necessity is now past, for our manufacturers are no longer in an infantile condition; indeed some of them have grown so powerful that they threaten to get beyond our control. Of course, we have in Canada some industries that cannot yet exist without protection, but these we would be better without, since the labor which they employ they are diverting from work where it would be of greater advantage to the country. This reason for protection, then, the encouragement of new manufactures, no longer exists, and, on the other hand, there are indications that it is imperative that something should be done to improve the condition of agriculture. The only sure and safe foundation for our national prosperity and greatness is in our farms, and while our rural population continues to decrease, we must believe that this foundation is being weakened. If this condition continues long it is evident that our superstructure of national greatness,