

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 12, 1887.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The old Democratic party of the United States, before the days when civil war brought upon those who composed it the stigma of rebel, seems to be once more waking up from its long and silent sleep. So long has its sleep lasted, that years ago politicians of the opposite stripe have proclaimed it dead, while some ultra haters of this party, who were blinded enough to believe, that the slavery of the negro was its only excuse for life, have proclaimed it without a soul and hopelessly beyond the reach of resurrection. Seemingly politicians, like ordinary mortals, are but short-sighted after all. For all the blood of the greatest civil war the world has witnessed; the wild shouts of an emancipated and enfranchised slave, and the bigotry and intolerance of conquering opponents have failed to crush out the Democratic party of the United States. True, now that it is once more showing signs of returning vitality, it does not carry its old burden of slavery, a burden that never properly belonged to it. But its old doctrine of free-trade and equity in taxation is once more heard, and President Cleveland, the Gabriel whose loud trumpet notes now declares the resurrection of this old party doctrine, utters no uncertain sound in his message which he has sent to the United States Congress.

There is a manliness in the style which the President faces the probable surplus in the National Treasury by the 30th of June next, of \$140,000,000, and throughout the whole of the message the same fearless tone is maintained. Truly this message is the first honest declaration of an anti-tariff policy that has come from any President of the United States, since the civil war broke out in 1860. The declaration is all the more fearless and honest, when we take into consideration the fact, that it is made right in the teeth of a Presidential election, and may therefore be considered as embodying the financial and tariff planks of the Democratic party in the contest next year.

The message after facing and acknowledging the difficulties of so great a Treasury surplus, makes short work of two methods of absorbing the same, supported

by an army of lobbyists. The voting of huge appropriations for public undertakings, the President and his party will not countenance, well knowing the boodles such appropriations would in all probability be subjected to. Nor will they expend the surplus in purchasing back Government bonds at fancy premiums fixed up by stock exchange manipulators.

The message in its reference to tariff changes is clear and unmistakable in its aims, and with commendable precision points out the direction in which tariff changes will be followed up by the Administration. The following is a verbatim quotation from this portion of the message:

"One scheme of taxation by means of which this needless surplus is taken from the people and put into the public treasury consists of a tariff or duty levied upon importations from abroad, and internal revenue taxes levied upon the consumption of spirituous and malt liquors. It must be conceded that none of the things subjected to internal revenue taxation are, strictly speaking, necessities. There appears to be no just complaint of this taxation by the consumers of these articles, and there seems to be nothing so well able to bear the burden without hardship to any portion of the people; but our present tariff laws—the vicious, inequitable and illogical source of unnecessary taxation—ought to be at once revised and amended. These laws, as their primary and plain effect, raise the price to consumers of all articles imported and subject to duty by precisely the sum paid for such duty. Thus the amount of the duty measures the tax paid by those who purchase for use these imported articles. Many of these things, however, are raised or manufactured in our own country and the duties now levied upon foreign goods and products are called protection to these manufacturers, because they render it possible for those of our people who are manufacturers to make these taxed articles and sell them for a price equal to that demanded for the imported goods which have paid customs duty. So it happens that while comparatively a few use the imported articles, millions of our people, who never use and never saw any of the foreign products, purchase and use things of the same kind made in this country and pay therefore nearly, or quite, the same charged price to which the duty adds to the imported article. Those who buy imports pay the duty charged thereon into the public treasury, but the great majority of our citizens, who buy domestic articles of the same class, pay a sum at least approximately equal to this duty to the home manufacturer."

Evidently the President and his colleagues are believers in the doctrine that tariff is established only as a source of revenue, and they are about to test the faith of Congress on that point.

Later on the message disclaims all intention of revolutionary legislation in the process of reducing import tariffs, and thus showing that true spirit of conservatism, regarding the manner of reduction, while adhering to the progressive principle it enunciates. It proclaims from its first sentence to its last, that national selfishness shall no longer shape the commercial policy of the great republic. That a poli-

cy which tends to national isolation has outlived its day, and that henceforth the United States shall take the front rank it ought to hold among the free nations of the world in promoting trade intercourse between these nations. If this message of President Cleveland outlines the future policy of his party, and the blunt honesty of its language clearly indicates that it does, then this same policy will have wondrous influences upon the commercial policy of other progressive nations. The first legislative move towards carrying out its spirit will sound the death knell of the "fair trade" agitation in Great Britain, for it will proclaim that term a misnomer. But a short stride in the direction it indicates will open the way to a commercial union with Canada, which will require no Imperial sanction, or legislative enforcement. In short the message outlines a policy upon which once the United States enters, the great republic is hastening the day, when the commerce of this continent will be one great undivided whole, and the interests of the toiling, consuming masses, instead of that of a few tariff-protected schemers, will call for and receive the care and study of the statesman.

COMPETING WITH CO-OPERATION.

Co-operation has undoubtedly lost to a great extent its charm for the masses of the people of this continent, although in Great Britain and other European countries it is still deservedly popular; as there it has not only broken up many a compact for extortion, but has been found a great power, when properly applied to retail merchandise in industrial centres, of breaking up the truck system and bringing the purchasing of the consumer down to a cash basis. On this continent it has been found powerless to oppose the huge monopolies that have grown up, and its value has been much less than in Europe. Beside it has often been held as a kind of unfair competition with the regular trader, and prejudice in this respect has hindered its growth although it is very questionable if the prejudice has any real foundation. Perhaps the fact that it has rarely attempted competition with any but comparatively poor business men makes it unpopular.

A subscriber in the south-west has written us asking for information as to how to compete with a grange store in his neighborhood. He states that farmers who bought from him on credit during the summer now pass his store and