# THE FARMER AND THE TARIFF.

"**WE do not ask for favors, but merely for fair play;"** In that quotation from the tariff memorial presented to the Government on December 16th, by the Dominion Council of Agriculture, representing the organized agriculturalists of Western Canada and of Ontario, is summed up a whole fiscal philosophy.

Favors of unduly restricted competition to special interests behind tariff protection are economically unjustifiable as they are morally unjust. Fair play for any one class of the community involves fair play for all. That is, in essence, the tariff doctrine preached to the Government by the farmers. It combines real patriotism with sound economics.

The facts and figures presented in support of the fiscal arguments are deserving of the consideration of every person concerned in the main problem of Canadian politics at the present time.

Referring to the combination of interests which has taken place, the deputation said:

**"The outstanding economic fact in the last few years in our country is the consummation of a large number of industrial amalgamations. In four years previous to January 1913, fifty-six industrial mergers were negotiated, with an aggregate authorized capitalization of $456,938,266. The 56 amalgamations absorbed 248 individual companies. A few outstanding illustrations are: The Canada Cement Co., Montreal, capitalized at $38,000,000, absorbed 11 companies with a total capital of $17,750,000: Ames Holden & McCready, Boots and Shoes, capitalized at $11,500,000, absorbed two companies, capital $3,500,000; Canada Cereal & Malting Co., capitalized at $3,250,000, absorbed 8 companies with $809,000, capital; Dominion Canners, Hamilton, capitalized at $12,500,000 absorbed 45 individual companies whose capital was given as $1,324,000. All the other mergers are similarly inflated."**

**"This consolidation of individual companies into combines and combines into trusts, has the further effect of centralizing capital and power in the hands of a few individuals. By an interlocking of Directors, the same men control our banking institutions, our loan companies, our insurance companies, our transportation companies, and our industrial institutions. It is stated on good authority that Canada's economic structure is in control of about 23 Capital Directors who are members of 90 of the 121 corporations of Canada having a capitalization of $500,000 or over."**

How serious have been the effects of some of these combines and trusts which by the monoply they have secured can dictate to the producer the price at which he must sell, and fix for the consumer, the price at which he must buy, will be apparent from the following statements contained in the farmer's memorial and which derive an added significance because of the source from whence they come. They are all important as shewing wherein taxation on food, operates to the detriment of both producers and consumers and helps to increase the high cost of living to both.

**"The average price paid farmers for tomatoes last year at Ontario factories was 30 cents per bushel. In some cases the price ran as low as 27½ cents. It is stated that a bushel of these tomatoes will, under ordinary conditions, fill ten cans, the price of which to the consumer in Western Canada is 20 cents per can."**

**"The farmers in the Western Provinces sell their wheat at a little more than 1c per lb., the consumers pay 3c per lb. for flour. Hogs sell around 7½ cents, consumers pay 20 to 25 cents per lb. for bacon and ham. Oats sell for less than one cent per lb., oatmeal costs 3c."**

**"We ask that all Foodstuffs be placed on the free list as we believe that the taxing of food is a crime against humanity."**

*From memorial of Dominion Council of Agriculture presented to the Government, December* 16, 1913.

The delegates of the organized farmers declared that the defeat of reciprocity had in the past two years brought not only to the grain growers of Western Canada, but to all classes throughout the Dominion, a realization of the economic wisdom of giving greater freedom to producers and consumers to buy and to sell in the best market.

The following are some of the facts by which their statements were supported:

**"Expansion in farming operations has ceased. Less than 100,000 acres has been broken in 1913 as against an estimate of 4,000,000 two years previous; and this in the face of the fact that upwards of half a million immigrants have been brought into that Western country within the last three years."**

**"The last two years have demonstrated that Western farmers are not going to continue to grow crops at a loss. They cannot grow grain at a profit in larger quantities without other markets and alternate route for shipment. So long as our grain is forced to go for export through one channel that lends itself so readily to the manipulation of grain speculation, and the imposing of excessive freight charges by combinations of transportation companies, we need look for no great increase in production.**

**"In the four years, 1908 to 1911, when the growth of the West was at its height, the crop area increased from 8,312,956 acres in 1908 to 17,488,117, in 1911. The next two years showed a decrease of 1,259,617, and it remains with this Government to say whether we revert to this rapid growth of the decade ending 1911, or remain as we have since."**

As producers of food stuffs, the farmers declared their willingness to face the competition of the world without any adventitious tariff aid. They emphasized however, the cumulative evil effect of a protective tariff maintained without regard to conditions of economic production in Canada. It was urged that these conditions enabled special interests—either manufacturing, transportation or middlemen—to profit at the expense of other classes of the community. The time had come for some prompt measure of remedial tariff legislation.

The following is the language in which the farmers preferred their request.

**"We submit that the wider market afforded us by accepting the offer of the United States for free interchange of natural products would have the same effect in stimulating the raising of wheat, oats, barley and flax as free access to the United States market for cattle has already done for that line of farm enterprise. Not only because it would provide another market for grain, but also because it would provide a competitive route for transporting grain to Europe.**

**"We ask that all food stuffs be placed on the free list as we believe that the taxing of food is a crime against humanity."**

The memorial of the deputation should be read in its entirety. It is filled with substantial argument. It bristles with questions that must be answered, and with advice which cannot pass unheeded. The following are among its observations:

**The sensible thing for the Canadian people to do is to stop borrowing money, pay for what we buy and produce for export to meet our obligations.**

**Wherein should we tax the benefit of money invested in agriculture for the benefit of capital invested in manufacturing?**

**A few men become millionaires, while the masses become poorer; a few live in mansions, while many are forced into slums.**

**Manufacturing is unduly expanding, while the farming industry languishes because of being drained of its life blood.**

**Farmers do not object to pay their share of the cost of Government. They are willing to submit to any system that will be of equitable taxation, levied for revenue purposes only.**