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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

PROBABLY the most noteworthy fact in connection with the great Conservative banquet at Petrolea was Sir John Thompson's emphatic declaration that the National Policy is still the policy of the Party. This announcement will be a disappointment to many, and to at least a few staunch friends of the Government. At least so we infer from utterances which have been made by prominent Conservatives from time to time, especially since the disappointing results of the census became known. The emphatic re-assertion of the Government's faith in the old policy gave Sir John Thompson a tempting opportunity, of which he did not fail to avail himself, to taunt the Opposition with the vacillation which has marked their course within the last few years in regard to the trade question. But now that public attention, which had been more or less diverted by fanciful schemes of Imperial Federation and Imperial Trade Union, and so forth, is brought back and the virtual leader of the Government tells us that they have nothing better to offer the country than the old protectionism, it becomes important to examine carefully the record on which they rely for experimental proof of the merits of this as the best available policy for Canada. The gist of the evidence, as given by Sir John Thompson, is contained in the statement that in the last ten years the number of people employed in the industries of Canada has been increased by 112,000 persons, and the wages paid to those employed in those industries, by \$10,000,000. Waiving the very important question of what is meant by industries and taking the figures as thus given, we find ourselves shut up to certain inferences which seriously affect the value of the evidence. As the total number of persons now engaged in these industries in Canada is but 367,000, and the total amount of wages paid, \$40,000,000, it appears that the increase in the former during the decade was nearly forty-five per cent., and that in the latter, thirty-three per cent. The ratio of increase in the number of employees being much greater than that in the amount of wages paid, it would seem to follow that the rate of wages per employee must have been seriously reduced. As this will hardly be admitted, and is not, we think, the fact, there is evidently something wrong with the statistics. Again, Sir John appealed to his audience to judge whether if the National Policy were abandoned, the great body of these 367,000 employees would not have to seek employment in the United States. Well, no, not the great body of

them, but only the 112,000 for whom the National Policy claims credit, and those only on the two very large assumptions that these industries would, without exception, cease on the reduction or discontinuance of the protective tariff, and that no other industry or employment could be found to take their place. But where did these 112,000 persons come from? Were they brought into the country by the N.P. to engage in new industries? The census gives an emphatic and crushing answer in the negative, unless others were driven out of it to make room for them. The sum of this staple argument, then, seems to be that if and in so far as the policy of protection was the means of creating or fostering the industries which give employment to these people, it merely transferred them from some other employment, presumably farming, a transfer which many regard as of very dubious value.

SOME of the statements which the Finance Minister was enabled to make at Petrolea were decidedly reassuring. Such is the fact that the exports of Canada have increased from \$89,000,000 in 1890, to \$114,000,000 in 1892, and the companion fact that the value of imports last year was \$127,500,000, though the balance-of-trade theorists may not be pleased with the decided preponderance of the latter figures. It is also extremely satisfactory to learn that the debt has not increased during the last three years. The striking off of \$3,500,000 of taxation, in the shape of sugar duties, is undoubtedly a great relief to the country, but Mr. Foster must credit his hearers with amazingly short memories when he seeks to exalt the Government as the beneficent author of this deliverance. Does he suppose that there is an intelligent man, of those who heard or read his speech, who does not know that the Government consented with great reluctance to grant this relief, and granted it simply because they were in a manner forced to do so by the action of the United States? They knew well that with cheap sugar on the other side of the border it would never do to attempt to keep up the tariff on this side, unless they were prepared to transform all the militia of the country into customs officers, and set them to guard the frontier, and at the same time face a great increase of popular discontent as the result of the startling object-lesson on the beauties of high taxation, which the people would have had constantly before their eyes. It is rather to the lasting discredit of the Government that they have, in the interest of a few wealthy refiners, persistently refused to give the people the full benefit of the remission of the sugar tax, just as, in order to put money into the pockets of a few proprietors in the neighbourhood in which the demonstration was held, they are compelling the people of Canada to pay millions of dollars for illuminating oil, over and above its true value as determined by the laws of supply and demand.

THE one clear note which rang through the addresses of all the Ministers who spoke at Petrolea was that Canada is at the present moment a happy and prosperous country, and that all those who cannot see this to be the case must be either imbeciles or ingrates. That there are a good many prosperous and contented people in the country may be cheerfully conceded. That the amount of suffering from want of the necessaries of life amongst us is small compared with that unhappily existing in most older countries we must also gratefully acknowledge. But when we speak of the prosperity of a country what should be our standard? What test can we apply? Can it be reasonably or truthfully said that any young country, with vast and fertile regions almost unoccupied and immense resources undeveloped, is prospering when its increase of population falls below the average of natural growth, and when its own citizens, especially the young and vigorous, are emigrating by hundreds of thousands? If so, then may Canada be said to be prosperous. This brings us to the old question of the unceasing, debilitating exodus. The Minister of Finance waxed eloquent upon the happy homes of Canada, but the fact is that the happiness of tens of thousands of homes is seriously marred by the unoccupied places which suggest the absent members, who have been forced to seek opportunities to earn their bread in a foreign land. Surely this question, how to keep our people in the

country, is the most pressing question in Canadian politics to-day. Yet all the comfort our Ministers have to give us in regard to it is that contained in Sir John Thompson's assertion that "the Government cannot control movements of population in a country." Is that so? What does control these movements? Every one knows that they are governed almost entirely by material considerations. Our people cross the border because they can, or believe that they can, better their circumstances in respect to the securing of a livelihood, or a competence. Most of them would prefer to remain in Canada, and would do so but for this one consideration. No one can deny that it is a perfectly legitimate consideration. The plain inference, then, is that if the Government can equalize the conditions either by reducing the taxes and the cost of living in other respects, or by increasing the demand and the remuneration for the various kinds of labour, physical and mental, it can control the movements of the population. Has the Government given up all hope of being able to secure admission to wider and more accessible markets for our various products of the farm, the forest, the mine and the sea? If that is Sir John's meaning, his confession of inability is a note of despair, so far as any rapid increase of the country's population and the development of its resources are concerned.

SOME of the Ministers at the Petrolea banquet were emphatic in protesting that Canada has done no wrong in the matter of the canal tolls, that the discrimination in favour of Canadian ports is no violation of the Treaty, and that any concessions which the Government proposed to make were simply from good-will and for the sake of conciliation. To this we can fancy the Washington Secretary making the easy reply that in that case the United States have done no wrong in adopting essentially the same policy and making a similar discrimination in favour of American ports, and that, therefore, Canada has really nothing to complain of. We confess that, so far as we can see, the rejoinder would be unanswerable. A Canadian or an Englishman might, however, go further and say that to yield a right under threat to an exacting neighbour is the very worst way in which to seek peace or conciliation. But our attention is now called to an argument of quite a different kind. By way of preface we may say that some of our friends have more than once dissented from the views of THE WEEK in this matter. They seem to think that we are playing the role of a certain writer of whom his friends used to say that in trying to stand erect in controversy he always "leaned the other way." In this matter we almost wish we could plead guilty to the charge or accept the compliment, whichever it may be, for we would most gladly lay all the blame at the door of our ever sharp neighbours if we could. But to the argument, which, we are told, puts the question fairly. It is summed up in a brief article in the *Montreal Witness*. To guard against possible misconstruction, we quote it entire:—

The only part of Mr. Foster's reply we take exception to is that in which he charges that in discriminating against American routes on her canals Canada violates the Washington treaty. It cannot be too often insisted upon that Canada does nothing of the kind. The Washington treaty is between the Government of Great Britain and the Government of the United States, and Canada had no more and no less to do with it than any one of the States of the Union separately, such as New York. The British Government could not agree to give the use of Canada's canals to United States citizens any more than could the United States agree to give the use of the States canals to Canada. The United States Government did agree, however, to advise the State of New York and other states to allow Canadian citizens the use of their state canals on the same terms as American citizens, and the British Government agreed in return to advise Canada to grant the use of her canals to the citizens of the United States on the same terms as Canadians. Canada complied with the request of Great Britain and opened her canals to American citizens by statute, but not as a provision of a treaty. The United States Government never recommended the States to open their canals to Canadians and the States never did so, and they are closed against Canadians to this day, though Americans have all along been using the Canadian canals. The United States did by treaty bind themselves to open the national canals, which are the property of the Federal