Quebec Supports Tariff for its Manufactures

Four Chief Cities Favour Protection, and Even Farmers Believe in Building up Home Market—Sessions at St. John and Moncton, N.B., and at Quebec, Sherbrooke, Three Rivers and Montreal

OCCUPYING the second position among the Canadian provinces, from the standpoint of manufacturing, and the leading position in some lines, Quebec province has submitted to the Tariff Commission evidence which is, on the whole, favorable to protection. A good deal of evidence has been collected since the commission left Moncton on November 10. On November 11 it sat in Quebec, on November 12 in Sherbrooke, on November 13 in Three Rivers, and on November 15 in Montreal.

The remaining sessions of the commission are scheduled as follows: November 25, Kingston; November 26, Hamilton; November 29, London; November 30, Windsor; December 1, Toronto. A special meeting will later be held in Ottawa.

The statement presented in St. John on November 9 by W. S. Fisher referred to the "tremendous geographical handicap" in seeking to weld in Canada a small body of people into a national unit, under one central government, stretching over so vast a territory with great natural barriers. It was said that the barriers "running north and south have the tendency to make trade and interest flow in the same direction—namely, across the national border, to intermingle with the large bodies of people immediately adjoining our little groups scattered across the continent."

Interdependence in exchange of commodities was set out as a vital interest in the matter of a common national ideal. It was also asserted that unless something was done to remedy the serious condition created by recent freight advances, in the way of substantial reductions in the long-haul rates, any protection that the tariff would otherwise afford would in many instances be absolutely wiped out as against manufacturers in such large centres as Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Spokane, Portland, Seattle, etc., "who can ship to points all along our territory at almost a negligible freight rate."

Reference to alteration in tariffs in Europe in order to retain more of their home markets for their own industries and to the declared probability of a higher tariff wall in the United States with the Republicans in power was made, and it was stated in conclusion that "with the likelihood of our greatest competitors acting in this manner it would surely be folly for Canada to grant less protection to her industries than will enable them to expand, pay fair wages to their workmen, and to enable them to retain the major portion of our home market."

J. W. Walker, mayor of Marysville, a cotton factory employee, said the reduction of the tariff would practically wipe out the town. He also said 180 families occupied homes owned by the company, paying $6 a month, as compared with $16 paid in Fredericton just across the river.

W. S. Poole, vice-president of the United Farmers of New Brunswick, and president of the United Farmers' Co-operative Co. of St. Stephen, read the tariff plank in the farmers' platform. He said it was reported that the Marysville cotton concern was making as high as 315 per cent. profit during the past year. He thought the duty on wearing apparel, farm machinery, etc., should be reduced. Revenue could be raised to replace the duties lost, he said, by direct taxation on unimproved values, graduated income tax, and other means as outlined in the farmers' platform.

Moncton Dependent on Tariff

Great hardship might be inflicted on the workmen of this city were the tariff to be changed, J. L. Macdonald, speaking on behalf of Moncton manufacturers, argued before the Tariff Commission, when it met in that city on Wednesday. Mr. Macdonald said most of the workmen in Moncton factories owned their own homes, in which were invested their entire savings, and unlike those in larger cities, who rented theirs. If changes were made in the tariff these men might be thrown out of work and their plight would be a serious one. He added:—

"In the province of New Brunswick we have potential power in our waterfalls in hundreds of thousands of horsepower waiting to be harnessed, and right alongside rich mineral deposits. Capital in enormous amounts is required to develop these, and will not be forthcoming if the people controlling it are in any doubt as to the continuation of the policy of adequate protection. The United States, with a population of over twelve times that of Canada, finds it necessary to maintain a tariff very much higher than ever, and under the Republican party recently elected increases to it are certain to be made. The finest product of Canada is the sober, industrious and highly-endowed Canadian people. That Canada, and especially so these maritime provinces, does not provide enough remunerative employment for its own people, and that thousands are yearly obliged to cross the line in search of opportunity denied them at home, is a national tragedy and one that must never be lost sight of by our legislators."

Quebec Strongly Protectionist

Enquiries by United States firms desirous of establishing manufacturing plants in Quebec were advanced as evidence of the advantage of protection by O. H. Cote, industrial commissioner of the Board of Trade, before the commission in Quebec. Mr. Cote said the American firms interesting themselves in Quebec were connected with the following interests: Asbestos, glass, motor cars, storage batteries, silk, knitting and tractors, etc.

Mayor Samson, citing official statistics, showed the tremendous development of Quebec under protection within the last twenty years and the immense increase in the amount of capital invested in Quebec industries. There were, he said, besides the 72,500 people directly dependent upon the development and continuance of the industries in Quebec, merchants, professional men and others also dependent indirectly upon those industries. Anything that would curtail the demand for products manufactured in Quebec city would have a serious effect upon all classes in the community, said the mayor. The mayor favored, as Sir Lomer Gouin stated at the annual convention of the shoe manufacturers in this city some time ago, "a tariff that would keep industries going, labor men working for good wages, and the most deserving of all Quebec citizens, the good farmers—content and prosperous."

J. H. Fortier spoke at some length of the exodus from Quebec to the United States in the past, when there were no industries to attract the surplus of the rural populations. It was only through the adoption by the government of a national protective tariff, said Mr. Fortier, that such exodus was stopped.

Sherbrooke a Manufacturing Centre

The city, local manufacturers and the Board of Trade were represented at the session in Sherbrooke. In the absense of the mayor, who is not in the city, pro-Mayor Tetrault presented the brief on behalf of the city, in which it is pointed out that Sherbrooke owes its phenomenal growth in the past few years to the number of manufacturers located here. This is the means of supplying a great part of the population with employment and generally improving conditions. The markets owe their success in turn to the fortunate working conditions that prevail. It is pointed out that the customs tariff is responsible for much of this industrial

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