

all the requisites of a post office are wanting in our make shift. Branch offices would supply these wants. It is needless to point out the advantages that would accrue from their establishment, and as for the objections to them, there are no valid ones. The only objection that could be raised would be on the grounds of expense or delay. As to the latter there need not be but a few minutes lost in delivering letters from the central to the branch offices and in sending the mails from the branch to the general office: and as to the expense there would be little or none, because there are are but too many store keepers and business men who would be very glad of a branch office merely for the custom it would bring to their shop, and the small per centage usually allowed. In alluding to the branch offices in the old country it will be remarked that we did not speak of them as delivery offices. We merely spoke of them as receiving offices. And so in fact they are nothing else. As most of our readers know, the delivery of letters in London or Dublin is effected on quite a different plan from that adopted in the Dominion. Here every business man rents a box or drawer at the Post Office, for which he pays from a dollar and a half to four dollars a year. Into his box or drawer all his letters and papers are put, and five or six times a day, on the arrival of every mail, a mob of merchants, shopkeepers, professional men, and others may be seen waiting opposite a "wicket" while the mail is being distributed, and then a further tedious delay occurs until each man's letters are taken out of the box or drawer into which they have just been put, and are handed out to their expectant owner. Our system, it will thus be seen, is expensive and dilatory. In the metropolitan cities of England or Ireland this does not occur. There, a number of postmen are employed—so many men being assigned to each district in the city. The moment a mail arrives at the General Post Office, the letters for each district are sorted out: each postman receives his allotted mail. Half-a-dozen or a dozen of them going in one direction, jump into a mail cart and are driven off, each man getting out where his district begins. Thus, in an incredible short space of time after the mail arrives at the General Office, the postmen are going their rounds delivering the letters at the doors according to their directions.

One of the strangest things in connection with this speedy delivery, is that it costs nothing: and that, too, notwithstanding the fact that the postmen are all dressed in fine scarlet livery, and the mail waggons are drawn by relays of very fine horses. One penny pays the postage, and covers all the expenses of postmen, liveries, waggons and horses. Here, then, we see speed and cheapness combined. The public are well served and cheaply served, and we may add, honestly served too for the postman is so well paid for doing his duty, and so well punished for leaving it undone or for acting dishonestly, that frauds on the public are very seldom attempted. It may be said, however that granting all we have stated, the English system would not suit us. We cannot see why it should not succeed in our large cities. At all events, now that the subject of postal reform is before the country, we think it right to draw public attention to the suggestions we have made. If they cannot all be adopted some of them may. If we cannot have our letters delivered at our own doors as speedily and cheaply as in England we can perhaps, have branch offices for the convenience of those living at a distance from the centres of cities. Every city is divided into wards for municipal purposes, and perhaps it would not be too much to expect that at no distant time every ward will have its branch Post-office.

PROTECTION AND FREE TRADE.

THE above is the title of a pamphlet, just published by Mr. John Maclean, of which a copy has been laid on our table.

The object of this pamphlet is to prove that it is for the best interests of Canada that encouragement should be given to "Home Industry" by the imposition of duties sufficiently high to cause manufactures to be carried on, which otherwise would not be undertaken, and that if a revenue has to be raised at all, it makes no difference as to its aggregate burdensomeness whether it is obtained in one way or another, whether by high rates of duty on small importations, or low rates spread over a large amount of goods.

Now as we have to raise a revenue greater, not less, than we have had hitherto to provide, let us see

whether Mr Maclean's position is tenable, or whether he has not taken a superficial view of his subject, and given a judgment which cannot be depended upon.

In the first place, under the protective system, the people have to pay, on the one hand, the same aggregate amount of revenue to Government, and besides have to pay to the manufacturer the amount necessary to enable him to make a living and a handsome return on capital invested, which otherwise could not be obtained. For example, the duty on boots and shoes is 15 per cent. The total import for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1867, was \$61,685, which at 16 per cent. would yield \$9,252 75. Now had the duty been 5 per cent., (supposing that 10 per cent. over that is needed by the manufacturer) the imports of boots and shoes would not have fallen much short of \$10,000,000, the revenue from which would have been \$500,000, and the people would have obtained their goods at less cost than they are now paying for them. We select boots and shoes merely as a marked instance of the effect on the revenue of a protective tariff, even when the duty is supposed to be only 5 per cent. under a tariff not intended to be prohibitive. As in this single industry, so would it be over a variety of articles, which, unimportant separately, foot up in the aggregate to large amounts, and, in which, as far as revenue is concerned, we might almost as well have free trade at once.

The great argument of protectionists (and much stress is laid on it in the pamphlet now under consideration) is that there is a loss in the transportation of the raw material and food to the artisan, and the carriage back to the consumer of the manufactured article, and that producers of food and raw material on the one hand should be in as close proximity as possible to the manufacturers on the other hand. There cannot be a question that other things being equal there would be a gain in the saving of labour, could cost of transportation be lessened in any way. Still it must be borne in mind that the cost of transportation, except of food, is not so large an item as it would seem to be at first glance, and, food included, is more than counterbalanced by the advantages gained by cheapness of labour and the accumulation of capital in old manufacturing countries. There, in England for instance with which we have most to do, machinery is cheaper now than it can ever hope to become on this continent, and consequently, as the work done by machinery bears an ever increasing ratio to that done by hand, and as the interest on capital invested in machinery must always be a very heavy item in the cost of manufacturing, it is very unlikely that for very many years to come, there will be much removal of capital from England for investment in machinery here. Skilled labour, too, is very difficult to move, especially in advance of any certainty of sufficient employment being provided for it. If there should be here for a considerable time a demand for labourers, skilled or unskilled, at wages much above those paid in England, there might be a considerable immigration induced. But that immigration would be checked as soon as wages here fell to nearly the same level as in England, or as soon as the rate there had advanced to within a certain distance of what it was here. In either case, we should never be able to compete on equal terms with England in this respect, so long as wild lands were to be had which would give a higher return for labour expended on them than a workman could earn, and, for very many years, this fact will serve to prevent wages from sinking to the low point existing in densely populated countries where land is scarce, and commands a high rent.

Another argument to which protectionists give prominence is that a country wholly agricultural, progresses slowly, as compared with a country whose pursuits are more diversified. The deduction may be right, but the premises, certainly as far as Canada is concerned, are unsound. No civilised community can be wholly agricultural. The wants of the farming population have to be supplied, and if not furnished by their fellow citizens, must be obtained from abroad. This stimulates trade, both foreign and domestic, and a large number of the inhabitants naturally turn their attention to trade, giving up agriculture. Then again, there are the carrying interests, the railways, steamships, sailing vessels, &c., &c. in all of which employment is given in order to supply the wants of the farmer. Towns and cities spring up at favourable points, and grow apace much more rapidly than when they are merely manufacturing industries. Where are the cities in manufacturing New England, whose growth is at all comparable to that of those cities mainly commercial, such as New York, Chicago, St.

Louis, New Orleans, &c., &c. We do not mean to deny that the growth of a city is accelerated by its having manufactures, but we mean to say that they much less than commerce tend to rapid increase of population. Is manufacturing Manchester or Birmingham as large to-day as commercial New York, or does their population increase with one-tenth the rapidity of that of the cities of the West, dependent altogether on an agricultural country for their vitality?

The great mistake into which manufacturers fall is that they consider their own prosperity and that of the country as identical. If the country is prosperous, they undoubtedly feel that prosperity in increased business, but on the other hand they may be making enormous profits while the country at large is becoming poorer. In considering this subject of protection and free trade, we must not confine our attention to any particular interests, or take a narrow-minded, one-sided view. We must strive to discover what is best for the largest number, and shape our course accordingly. We have already shown that to raise revenue, it is best to impose such duties as shall check importation as little as possible, and to avoid prohibitive duties, so that the consideration of what is best need not be hampered by the fact of our necessities.

Now what is best for Canada? Is it more profitable for A. a farmer, to pay B. for manufacturing his wearing apparel, than to pay C. for bringing it to him from England, when C, after paying the Government a fair per centage can still supply A. more cheaply than B. can? "But" says the protectionist, "C. would have to send money or food to England to pay for what he imports, whereas B. would spend it in the country, and help to give employment to labour." Yea, we reply, under your system, A. would have to be taxed to pay B. to do unnecessary and unprofitable work. In the time of the Irish famine, the English Government employed many thousand of the starving people to do unnecessary work on the public roads merely as being preferable to giving them direct assistance, but what would be thought of any Government that as a matter of system and principle should persist in taxing the nation in order to furnish unprofitable work to those who could and would otherwise employ themselves profitably. It would be better at once to say to the manufacturer, "we will make you a present of an annual income equal to your present yearly profits, and set your men to work at farming, or mining, or lumbering, or anything whereby the wealth of the country is increased," than to tax the country in a much larger sum to help support these men while engaged in useless work. The great sources of wealth to Canada are its arable and pasture lands, and its forests—grain, cattle, lumber—in these are found the causes of our young nation's growing greatness, not in manufactures. Why should any portion of the earnings of the farmer, wrung by hard toil, in summer's heat and winter's cold, from the land, be paid for the honour of wearing domestic clothes, home made boots and shoes, or for using agricultural implements, dearer yet less valuable than he can buy abroad? We see no reason for it whatever. Besides it is unjust, and moreover an injustice for which no plea of necessity or expediency can be raised. All legislation is liable to work some injustice, but protective legislation cannot fail of doing so. If Canadians generally could be made to understand the folly of protection, if those who would be benefitted by free trade, would only act together with the same determination that manufacturers shew in looking after their interests, we should soon see a change made in our fiscal policy more in consonance with the wishes of the majority of Canadians, more in accordance with the enlightened principles that should underlie all our legislation. We trust that Government will have prepared by the time Parliament again meets such a measure as shall commend itself to good sense, and as shall enable them to raise the necessary revenue in the way that shall be least onerous to the country at large.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT LABOUR.

HONEST labour brings a sweet reward. Such at least, used to be the opinion of our ancestors. They did not earn work—and hard work too. They understood practically what "the sweat of their brow" meant, and were not ashamed of it; nay, rather glorified in it. But all this has greatly changed. We live in a new age—an age having new ideas on the question of labour. Nowadays honest labour is scorned, not by all, thank Providence, but by large classes of the people, and particularly among those