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THE CANADIAN FARMER'S DUTY

-BY-

VALANCEY, E. FULLER,

PRESIDENT CENTRAL FARMERS' INSTITUTE OF ONTARIO.

The following are extracts from a letter to the officers of Farmers' Institutes in Canada, in regard to a resolution favoring Commercial Union, which was passed at the Central Institute, in Toronto, at its April meeting:

"It seems proper that I should state the reasons which were advanced at the time of passing the resolution referred to. It must be apparent to any one taking an interest in the welfare of the farmers of Ontario, that their future at present is not a promising one, and that the average farmer of the day, unless he be engaged in some specialty, is procuring but a very slight return, if any, for his capital and labor. If the farmers of Ontario desire to keep pace with the times, and to progress in place of retrograding, they must change their modes of farming, or find increased and better markets. Those who are at all familiar with the condition of the farmers of the United States, and contrast it with those of Ontario, cannot but be struck with the fact that the position of the American farmer is vastly superior to that of the Canadian. The farmers of Ontario are burdened with debt; whereas the farmers of the older States of the United States are rapidly paying off their debt. The ordinary Ontario farmer's life is one of extreme hardship, and scant return for his labor; whereas the American farmer lives in comparative comfort, and receives a fair return for his capital and labor. The natural question that suggests itself is, 'What is the cause of this?' It cannot be in the soil or climate, as ours surpasses these States in which the farmers are in a flourishing condition. It cannot be in improved mode of farming, as the Ontario farmer is possessed of more perseverance, and is as a rule a better farmer than his American brother. It is not any of these, but in the fact that the American market is a better one for agricultural, stock, and garden products than that of Ontario, and that the United States possess the population, wealth, and purchasing power, which contributes towards making their market a better one to sell in. It will be contended that in advocating this we are losing sight of the English market, but who will on equal terms choose so distant a market, when one lays at our own

doors on equal terms. It will also be argued that the 'removal of all restrictions on trade between the Dominion of Canada and the United States' will strike a most severe blow to our manufacturing interests. To a limited extent this may be true, but even at the worst it will be but temporary. The manufacturing interest should not be made paramount to that of the agriculturist; its welfare is so dependent upon the welfare of the farmers, that what aids and improves the position of the farmer still more improves the position of the manufacturer. The prosperity of the farmer means the prosperity of the manufacturer, and the poverty of the farmer means impoverishment to the manufacturer.

"I cannot conceive that the majority of our Manufacturers are incapable of holding their own against the Americans. This is no question of 'Protection.' We do not seek to give our markets to the Americans unless they give us theirs in return. We take the broad ground that the interests of the farmers of Ontario are paramount to those of any other class, and that the progress of Ontario has been through, and is dependent upon, the prosperity of the farmers. This is an indisputable fact, and if the removal of all restrictions on trade between the Dominion and the United States will benefit you, through you it will benefit the whole country. The farmers of Ontario have never appreciated their own importance, nor have they in the past as a united whole asked for that which their own good sense tells them will be for their future welfare and prosperity. Are we to continue in this condition? It rests with you to decide. The means is given you through this Institute to make your voice felt. Look to your own interests, other bodies will take care of theirs but in so doing you have the comforting conviction that while you are protecting and fostering your own calling, you are acting for the welfare of the whole. If you approve of this Resolution, let not the matter rest