

extent of several hundred per cent. What happened? The railway commission gave a ruling that the express companies might charge 66 2/3 per cent. higher rates in the Prairie Provinces than in Eastern Canada. There is absolutely no justification for such discrimination, and yet the board of railway commissioners, appointed presumably for the protection of the people, made that ruling. Certainly it is time that the Western people had some representation upon the commission. This is a move that should receive the very strongest support from the Western members of the House of Commons, and no doubt will when it is brought closely to their attention. This incident of express rates merely indicates that even if the railway commission is given all the power that it is possible for them to have that a strong public opinion is still needed. The aim of the railway interests is to confuse the commission as much as possible, and to keep them employed with trivial matters, so that the great and important questions of rates may not be dealt with. In fact the railway commission has never delved into the freight rate question to amount to anything, its chief rulings being limited local rates and discriminations. The great underlying and fundamental difficulties remain an absolutely unexplored field. Even some of the most important information secured by the railway commission, as evidence in open court from an official of the Canadian Pacific railway as to the cost of operation, is withheld from the public. Now, this is something that should not be. There is no possible method of curing the railway extortion practised in this country so well as thorough publicity. The public in Canada know nothing about the cost of operation of the railways and the railways refuse to give such information. The railway commission apparently has no power to investigate the books and accounts of the railways, and to ascertain just what information should be in their hands relative to cost of operation. Neither has the commission power to take a physical valuation of the railways and to base the freight rates upon the actual value of such property, which would seem to be eminently fair. It would be well if the commission was given power to dig into the railway problem, and to find out just where the trouble is, and to remedy it instead of devoting so much of their time to matters that could be as well attended to by less competent officials. The Interstate Commerce Commission in the United States has power and has the necessary staff of officials to investigate the business methods of the railways. The result has been the greatest overhauling of the American railway system during the past few years that has taken place anywhere in the world. Of course, the American system is not yet perfect, but there is a power in that country that has some control over the rapacity of the railways which in Canada is not apparent. Of course it must be borne in mind that we should not proceed too fast along railway regulation lines, not for fear of frightening capital (which is hush), but because haste may be accompanied by errors hard to undo. But even with this good advice at hand from the railway companies, no one will claim that we are controlling our Canadian railways with such headlong haste as to endanger the whole railway system of the country. The fact is that the big railway companies are devoting a great amount of energy to prevent the members of Parliament from checking their profitable greed. The pressure which prevents government operation of the Hudson Bay railway is the same kind of pressure which secured the guarantee of \$35,000,000 bonds the other day, and is the very same force which prevents our railway commission from receiving and exercising the power which would compel the railways to give the people a square deal. This matter of public control of railways is one of the

greatest dangers which face the big railway monopolists of Canada today, and they can afford to spend huge sums of money to prevent it becoming effective. Certainly to make the railway commission of Canada of practical use in the control of railways there should be several improvements made at once.

1. The commission should be given full power to investigate upon its own initiative into the entire business of the railway companies at its own discretion.

2. The commission should be empowered and authorized to take a complete and accurate physical valuation of the railways of Canada and to base the freight rates upon such valuation.

3. There should be at least two Western men appointed upon the commission immediately in order that the discrimination against the West might cease.

4. The commission should employ a sufficient staff of experts in order that they may carry on their investigations all over the country, and that the members of the board may devote themselves only to matters of the utmost importance.

5. There should be the fullest publicity given to the facts secured in investigations into railway matters in order that the public might become thoroughly informed of the railway methods.

A PIPE DREAM

The protectionists are endeavoring to bolster up their case by every conceivable argument. In the June number of *Industrial Canada*, the official organ of the Canadian Manufacturers' association, appears the following editorial article reprinted from the *Canadian Century*, and heartily approved:

In the eighties Gresson and other French kid leather manufacturers were sending to the United States \$5,000,000 worth of shoe leather, charging for it 60 cents per foot. A protective duty of 20 per cent. was put on. Gresson kid did not go to 72 cents per foot. It dropped to 45 cents and then to 40 cents, 35 cents and 30 cents. Thousands of men from France and elsewhere were put to work in the kid factories of the United States. Was protection worth while? J. G. Cleghorn, of England, manufactured linings for coats and employed in his factories 3,000 men and women. The United States put on a protective tariff and the Cleghorn factories were shut up. Three thousand were given employment in the United States making coat linings. Mr. Cleghorn's comment to a United States enquirer was: "You have the wise statesmen to keep your people employed." Then there is the case of men's gloves. The largest English manufacturer of gloves lost 80 per cent. of his business with the United States when a duty was put on that item. What was the result? Before the tariff was enacted these gloves sold for \$1.25 a pair. Afterwards the price was \$1 for the same glove. Pearl buttons were imported into the United States in immense quantities. A protective tariff was put on and the banks of the Mississippi hummed with the industry of many pearl button factories. The whole industry was transported to the United States and the shells which lay for generations valueless were turned into articles of commerce. And the price dropped below what it was before the tariff was put on. Canada is entering upon her industrial career. Such lessons as these from the United States are illuminating.

This is certainly "illuminating." If these statements are true, and must admit they look fishy, they form an unanswerable argument in favor of absolute free trade. It proves conclusively that the cost of production was lower in the United States on all of these articles. Then where would be the sense of a protective tariff, and why would it be needed. We should like to have those American manufacturers produced as exhibits to prove the correctness of the statements made. They must be a peculiar breed to refuse to take good money when the law expressly authorizes them to do so. No doubt they were the last of their species, and their philanthropy took them to an early grave. Or perhaps when we pay 51 per cent. advance on cement on account of protection;

30 per cent. on boots and shoes; 35 per cent. on blankets, etc., we are really getting them cheaper. This may be so and protection may be a good thing after all, just as the earth may be flat, but we doubt it. If *Industrial Canada* will give us a list of Canadian made articles enjoying tariff protection that are sold more cheaply than they could be imported under free trade we will be compelled to admit there is something in their argument.

The collapse of the anti-reciprocity campaign waged by the United States Grange has its lessons for all farmers' organizations. The farmers belonging to the Grange protested against having protection withdrawn from them while it was still maintained upon manufactured articles. This was quite a legitimate demand, and their campaign was exercising considerable influence in the United States. The Grange, however, made its great mistake in making an alliance with the big trusts and protected manufacturers. The men at the head of the Grange were campaigning professedly for the welfare of the farmers of the United States, but were influenced and financed by the protected manufacturers, who knew that free trade in agricultural products would bring about the downfall of protection. The facts here presented were brought out before a committee of the U.S. Senate and the opposition of the Grange to the reciprocity agreement has collapsed, because it was found that the Grange was being used as a tool in the hands of the combines. The trusts in Canada are just as much opposed to reciprocity as in the United States, and are spending their money in a campaign against the reciprocity agreement. They dare not approach the organized farmers, but by financing speakers and subsidizing the press, they are able to poison the minds of a great many Canadians.

Placing farm implements, spraying material, cement and coal on the free list at the present session would be one of the most popular moves the government could make. It would give relief to farmers, fruit growers, builders and manufacturers and consumers generally. The loss in revenue would be only a bagatelle compared to the benefits. The industries affected have reached the stage where they need no protection and the government would be giving the people some guarantee that it is not hopelessly in the control of Special Privilege.

If Eastern Canada meant only the handful of people in the financial and industrial centres who are fattening off the rest of Canada there might be some reason in the talk of arraying the East against the West. But there are more of the exploited class in the East than in the West. They want to get the burden off their backs just as much as do the Western people.

Reciprocity in natural products has been the avowed policy of both the political parties in Canada since Confederation, yet when one party offers anything to the farmer the other party opposes it. Thus it is with the whole Farmers' Bill of Rights. Both parties are opposed to giving the farmers very much relief, but what one party will give the other party is in duty bound to refuse.

The reciprocity agreement will bring the Western farmer a higher price for his wheat and barley and a lower price for his farm implements. These advantages, if there were no others, are sufficient to warrant the farmers in supporting the agreement.

The Prairie Provinces are destined to be the great training ground for Canadian politicians.

We wish to thank our readers for their kindness in supplying us with copies of the issue of May 31 for our files.

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