

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN, N. B., APRIL 14 1900.

government in Canada, it must certainly be admitted that no party in Canada has ever before succeeded in placing itself so openly in the wrong as the Tory party in with respect to these questions.

MR. FOSTER'S INCONSISTENCY.

As a pleader Mr. Foster holds a deplorable high place among our debaters in parliament, and that must indeed be a weak case which he cannot present in such a way as to make it seem strong. In the art of statistical legendariness he is a veritable Hermann. After he has juggled with figures for a few minutes they appear to tell the story which he wants to tell; while if this process fails he falls back upon a series of abstract propositions which serve at least to confuse, possibly to confuse, though they do not convince. His task on Tuesday was, however, beyond the capacity of the most skilled tactician in argument. He came on the other side too strong to be overcome even by five hours of chopping, hair splitting, lightning disposition of figures, and ingeniously presented platitudes. When he got through the surplus remained in view as large as ever, the record of increased trade looked as encouraging and satisfactory as before he began, and the increased preference to England still spoke eloquently of practical sympathy with the Empire.

Our admiration for Mr. Foster's capabilities as a speaker does not prevent us from observing the glaring inconsistencies which marred an otherwise effective address. One illustration will suffice. Ten days ago he was hot for preferential trade with Great Britain—not the "unbiased" affair adopted by the government, but a two-sided affair, in which there should be mutual concessions. On Tuesday his argument, if it had any meaning at all, was calculated to show the uselessness of preferences as a means of improving trade. He contended that not withstanding the advantage given to England in the Canadian market, England had increased her imports from the United States more than from Canada. This may be quite true. We wonder if Mr. Foster expects the people to believe that commercial revolutions are brought about in a year, in three years, or in ten years. The test which he makes is not only unsatisfactory, but it is misleading. It ignores the very important fact that within the period covered by the preferential tariff, our imports from England have increased by 26 per cent., and our exports to that country by 48 per cent. It cannot surely be maintained in the face of such a result, that the preference has been a failure. Moreover, as Sir Richard Cartwright pointed out the other afternoon, Great Britain bought from us last year \$11 worth of products per head of our population, to \$4 worth per head from the United States.

That phase of Mr. Foster's treatment of the preferential question was not, however, so serious as were his suggestive references to the possible effect of the new tariff on the industries of the country. His position may be summarized in this order:

- 1st.—That the preference to England may bring about a dangerous competition with our own manufacturers.
- 2nd.—That our manufacturers are entitled to protection.
- 3rd.—That the Conservatives, if in power, would make it their first duty to afford adequate protection to native industries.
- 4th.—That the Conservatives would not disturb the preferential tariff if the opportunity occurred.

This is an accurate statement of the attitude Mr. Foster took in parliament; yet it would be difficult for even so skillful a single pleader as he is to convince a single reasonable elector in the land that these things are reconcilable. In this practical world we cannot eat our pie and still have it. No more can you have a policy in force which involves dangerous competition to our manufacturers and at the same time afford adequate protection.

Leaving Mr. Foster to split a few hairs over his own inconsistency in that regard, it may not be amiss to point out the needlessness of his fears respecting our manufacturers. A glance through the list of our imports from England externalizes the reassuring fact that the articles we buy in large part are not produced in Canada. As was pointed out at a day or two ago, some \$16,000,000 out of a total of \$37,000,000 applies to four great classes—silks, linens, cottons and woollens. We buy none of the common grades of either cottons or woollens, such as are made in this country, but rather the finer goods which can only be manufactured advantageously in a large market. As for the remainder of our purchases, merely a trivial part belong to classes affecting home production, and in relation to these it must not be forgotten that a duty of from 20 to 22 per cent. is imposed upon them even under the preferential tariff. There is no probability of chinaware, cutlery, haberdashery, fancy goods and the like being manufactured in Canada for years to come. So that no risk to our home industries seems to be involved in the new tariff.

Mr. Foster's solicitude for Canadian industries is purely political. It would arouse him and his party very well to arouse a fear in the minds of manufacturers, and those who are identified with them, that the Liberal policy is inimical to their interests. The cry of "wolf" in that relation was of great service to the Tory party in years gone by; but it would be a reflection on the common sense of the people at large to assume that the old scare can be revived, cry the Tories never so vehemently. Everyone is now satisfied that there will be no serious disturbance of tariff conditions while the present government remains in office, and the Conservatives will only be wasting their breath in the attempt to prove the contrary. Our

GOOD WORDS FOR MR. BLAIR.

The praise given to Hon. A. G. Blair in the columns of the Toronto Telegram, especially in respect to the transportation question has been already alluded to in our Ottawa letters. It is the more remarkable from the fact that it comes from a paper that is not in the habit of praising any one very much and that has few good words to say of its political opponents. The Telegram is a Conservative paper of wide circulation and great influence, and the fact that it can admire the minister of railways and canals shows the impression his conduct has produced since he went to Ottawa. The value of the Telegram's praise is increased by the fact that the writer of it accepts as true the slanders in respect to Mr. Blair's career as premier of New Brunswick which were sent to Ottawa in advance of his arrival there. These were so widely disseminated that simple minded Tories who read the Toronto Mail, Ottawa Citizen and other party papers must have thought that some political monster of a new type was come upon the stage. Great therefore was their surprise when they discovered that Mr. Blair did not correspond in any single respect with the picture that had been painted of him in the St. John Sun, and which had been sent by the Kings County Wamba and other members of the Sun staff to papers in Ontario and Quebec. The Telegram says that Mr. Blair when he went to Ottawa "was renowned as a trickster, as a man who would resort to all the games of demagoguery to accomplish a political end." The Telegram then goes on to say: "Blair has not distinguished himself as a trickster in Ottawa. He has, on the contrary, administered his department in a manner suggestive of honest intentions rather than of unscrupulous diplomacy." So much for the observations of one on the spot who has looked at Mr. Blair's career in Ottawa with a critical eye, and without any disposition to treat him with favor. Mr. Blair has been able to wring praise even from a strong political opponent. It is almost a wonder, however, that it did not occur to the Telegram which has found Mr. Blair so different from what the Tory papers represented that he had been slandered and that the stories they told about his being a political trickster were fairy tales. That is a charge that is very easily made and which has been made against almost every man in public life. Sir John A. Macdonald, whom the Conservatives now worship as a saint, was thought by many to be a political trickster and he was certainly much more open to this charge than Mr. Blair has ever been. What is a political trickster anyway? Probably the best definition of it would be to say that he is a man who deceives the electors and gets into power by making promises that he does not keep. Certainly Mr. Blair is not a political trickster according to this definition. What promise has he made that he has not kept? There has never been anything shifty or shuffling about his policy. His enemies always knew where to find him. And as he held the premiership of New Brunswick for more than thirteen years, was successful in four general elections, each giving him a larger majority than the previous one, and only resigned office to accept the most important portfolio in the government of Canada, it is clear that the electors of New Brunswick must have formed a good opinion of his merits or they would not have given him their support. The public might be fooled by a political trickster once or twice, but they are not likely to be fooled in four successive general elections.

The Telegram says and says truly that Mr. Blair is not "weakling," but that he is a "strong reasoner, a convincing debater and a man whose judgment is to be relied upon." Referring to the transportation question speech of the Telegram's which was the occasion of Mr. Blair's references to Mr. Blair, that paper says: "The minister of railways has more than once displayed a contempt for petty issues and for methods that are the weapon of the small politician. He distinguished himself as a broad-minded minister on the transportation question last night. Whether Blair was right or wrong he spurned the tactics which might assist in gaining a constituency here and another there. He was national, not provincial. He possessed regard for general interests rather than for the wishes of isolated localities." He pursued his own broad line, was national in what is primarily a national question, and made a speech which will not grow old so long as Canada has a transportation problem to work out."

These extracts from the Toronto Telegram will show the impression that has been produced on an independent Conservative newspaper by Mr. Blair's management of the department of railways and canals. Such high praise will far more than outweigh the senseless abuse that has been bestowed upon him by the Toronto Mail, St. John Sun and other party organs of the same class.

THE SAME OLD SPEECH.

It is really time that Sir Charles Tupper gave the people of Canada and parliament a new speech. The one which he delivered on Thursday and Friday in the budget debate is worn out, in a state of decay, and in fact worn out from mere age. It has already been heard in whole, or in part, four times in the House of Commons this year, and this is surely all the work that a poor, weak speech ought to be asked to do. The speech in question, like

all Sir Charles' great speeches, is a scrap book oration. What would the leader of the opposition do without his scrap book? Sir Charles Tupper is the greatest scrap book orator in America, with the exception of his son, Sir Hibbert. The latter has even improved on the methods of his sire and, having a smaller allowance of brains, makes it up by keeping a larger scrap book.

But, to return to the speech of Sir Charles, there must be a limit beyond which a speech ought not to be used. We have laws to prevent cruelty to animals, why not have similar laws to prevent cruelty to audiences by inviting them to come to a fresh debate and then firing off an old speech at them—a hoary headed veteran of the political arena. This is what Sir Charles Tupper has been doing this year to the disgust of his friends and the delight of his enemies. Day after day we have the same stereotyped language, marked with abundant laudation of Sir Charles himself, who is, in his own estimation, the greatest of men. All that has been accomplished in Canada during the past three years has been his work, and if Sir Charles should really conclude that the world still be retained. We never expect to hear a speech by Sir Charles of which he is not the hero.

There is no man in parliament who seems to give the opposition more concern than the Hon. Mr. Paterson, minister of customs. It is all on account of his voice. Mr. Paterson is no whisperer. He speaks right out and means to be heard. Moreover, he has a habit of getting together an array of facts and figures which the opposition cannot answer, yet which they cannot very well ignore. They revenge themselves by making reflection on Hon. Mr. Paterson's voice and the distance it can be heard. Mr. Paterson made a great speech in the budget debate on Friday following Sir Charles Tupper and he did not at all please the opposition. This is bad for the opposition, but good for the cause of truth and justice.

AN UNFOUNDED CHARGE.

Messrs. Bourassa, Monet and Angers, three Liberal members of parliament, recently addressed a public meeting in Mr. Monet's constituency on the subject of Canada's part in the Transvaal war. From the reports published in the press these gentlemen appear to have repeated in substance the addresses they gave on that day. They were unjust, and that Canada should hesitate before committing herself to the policy of sharing in any of Great Britain's conflicts. They argued that our obligations were already large, and that it would be the part of prudence to take a non-committal attitude. This was precisely what they had said a few weeks ago in parliament; so that their speeches were devoid of any element of novelty.

We do not in any degree share the views of these gentlemen. We think, on the contrary, they are looking at the matter from a narrow point of view, and also without a proper regard for our relations to the Empire; but this does not prevent us from according to them the same right to their opinion that we claim for ourselves. They are Liberals and do not dispose of this view any more than we have never felt. We have never felt that the utterance of freedom of speech on all subjects relating to policy. To hold otherwise would be to disregard the very foundation of our representative system.

This is not, however, a very serious movement. It is confined entirely to the members of parliament, six of whom are Liberals and four Conservatives. Mr. Foster was figuring on this thing a matter, and desired to give the thing a favorable complexion. From the Liberal standpoint, he would say that the movement was limited to 11 per cent. of the government supporters from Quebec and 29 per cent. of the Conservative representatives from that province. We state the fact apart from percentages. The opinion of these members has not been the subject of any particular propaganda, and has not been taken up by a single influential journal. Following the fact of non-committal sympathy anywhere. The truth may as well be told at once that it has its principal source of life in the unenviable desire of one of the three speakers at the recent public meeting to speak a conspicuous place in the public eye, to pose as a daring fellow, a revolutionist and an independent. This is not a purpose large enough to induce any considerate co-operation, except on the part of those who see in it a means toward the injury of the government.

That this latter view is already receiving attention from those who have been slandering the race and disloyalty cry need not occasion surprise. The speeches of men like Mr. Bourassa are always capable of being given a distorted and misleading meaning, and such papers as the Mail and Empire are not above seizing upon them with that object in view. Following the meeting at St. John, that organ of Conservative opinion declared:

"Three of the ministerial members at Ottawa—Messrs. Bourassa, Monet and Angers—have commenced an anti-British crusade in Quebec. They are sufficiently credulous as to be tempted to believe that these three supporters of the government—one of them a paid employee as secretary to the Washington commission, and the other two most faithful followers on all occasions—are doing this thing of their own motion and of their own hat. But such a belief would be ill-founded. They are acting under the instructions of their leaders—Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. Tarte—and in behalf of these politicians." "These men are out out by the government to sow the seeds of disunion in Canada, of dislike towards the English-speaking population, and of contempt for the British Empire."

There is, of course, no warrant for the

extreme language just quoted. These men do not speak either for Sir Wilfrid Laurier or the government. In fact, they are taking a course diametrically opposite to the premier's sentiments or wishes. We do not say this on mere conjecture, but on positive knowledge. Moreover, the views which Mr. Bourassa and his friends expressed the other day in Quebec were identical with those which Sir Wilfrid Laurier ever heard in our Canadian parliament. These gentlemen are Liberals; and in this regard they are out of touch with their party. That they should take this course is a source of deep regret to their friends; but there is no help for it. It is as unreasonable as it is maliciously untrue to assert that they are playing a part assigned to them by their leaders.

It is equally unjust to say that they have commenced an anti-British crusade. They have not, neither in parliament nor in the province of Quebec, said one word against England. They have merely, in reference to the Transvaal war, taken the view held by Mr. John Morley, Mr. Courtney and many other prominent men in England. It is their right to do so, and nothing but a disposition to make political capital out of the affair, at the expense of the truth, has actuated the Mail and Empire in questioning their loyalty. Happily, Mr. Bourassa has made another speech since the one referred to above. He spoke in Lindsay, Ont., on Friday night last on the position of the French-Canadians in Canada, and in that address he left no reason to question his devotion to the mother country. The report in the Montreal Star, which paper would not be apt to give a favorable coloring to his utterances, reads as follows:

"The French-Canadian, said Mr. Bourassa, had a deep feeling of affection for the French of the old land, but they were thoroughly Canadian and British. Canada was their home, and they were proud to call themselves British. They had become British before the wars with Napoleon, and none had rejoiced more to the down-fall of the tyrant than had the inhabitants of Quebec. The conclusion of Mr. Bourassa's address was an earnest appeal for concord and amity between the French and English. 'Let us,' he said, and enthusiastic cheers, 'lose no occasion to find a common ground for the discussion of our differences, if differences there are. Let us be proud of our origin, of our great public men, of our traditions; let us shake hands like men and go all in our power to bring together all classes of men in this country in order to form under the broad protection of the British flag, a free, united and broad people.' (Loud cheers.)"

It will be seen from this that these Conservatives who allege that Mr. Bourassa is crusading against Britain are doing him a gross injustice. Surely he has not grown so narrow in this young country that he will place the brand of disloyalty on any man who happens to hold views contrary to those of the majority.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

It is just what might have been expected to find the Tories, who were shouting so loudly about the interests of Great Britain a month ago, now finding fault with the preferential tariff. They do not seem to take kindly to practical loyalty. The article which exists only on the lips seems to have their preference.

The protest of Dr. Leyds in regard to the borrowing of six millions by the British from the Egyptian army and his declaration that the government will regard Egypt as having abandoned its neutrality, is among the best jokes of the season. The Transvaal government seems to have all it can do just now to keep out of the British prison ships without worrying itself about the affairs of other countries.

There is some talk of building a cotton mill at Ottawa to employ about one thousand persons. The promoter says that he is not a Canadian cotton mill in Canada. If so the place to build it is St. John. The time will come when all the Canadian cotton mills will be on the sea coast, a moist coast climate being more favorable for the spinning of cotton than an inland climate. The promoters of the proposed Ottawa mill should recognize that fact and come this way.

In Sherbrooke Sir Wilfrid Laurier said that it was owing to the waywardness of public opinion that he was forced to 'perish' Canadian volunteers to go to South Africa. (Mail and Empire.)

Sir Wilfrid said nothing whatever about the waywardness of public opinion. He simply said the government had stayed its hand until warranted in taking action by the strength of public opinion. He was right. Not another colony stirred a finger until parliamentary approval had been secured, and in some of the colonies that approval was only had by a narrow majority.

Some Conservative papers are making themselves ridiculous by saying that Sir Charles Tupper is being attacked in Quebec because he forced the hand of the government in respect of the first contingent sent to South Africa. Sir Charles says it was public opinion that led the government to act. Sir Charles holds that his opinion is public opinion; but he is no more correct in that regard than in assuming, as he once declared, that he is the history of Canada.

Mr. Bourassa, who is being made the target of much coarse and uncalculated abuse at the hands of his political opponents, in a recent speech combated the idea held by many people that the English and French were face to face in this country in the same respect as were the English and French in Europe. It was impossible, he said, for any one who considered the subject, to continue to hold such an opinion. History showed that

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The Issue.

We have drawn the lines between honorable gentlemen opposite and ourselves. They have demanded the pound of flesh. I do not state the case too strongly. They have in effect said that if they had been in power in April, 1897, they would not have granted the preference to England. They have, in effect, said that if they come to power they will not grant any preference to England unless England shall give them equal preference. There, sir, we accept the issue.

In testimony of our faith in the system we have adopted, in the belief that it is best for Canada and best for England, in the belief that, to use the words of Her Majesty's colonial secretary, it is the policy that is "welding more closely the ties that unite the colonies to the mother land, we stand by that policy, and we are prepared to go further; and when I concluded my remarks, I shall place on the table of the House a resolution which declares that after the 1st of July next there shall be an increase in the preference to England, that from and after the 1st of July next the preference of 25 per cent. which is now the preferential tariff, shall be increased to 33 1/3 per cent.; in other words, that from and after that date, for every \$3 of duty imposed upon the products of foreign countries, there shall be only \$2 of duty levied on the goods coming from our mother land.—[Hon. W. S. Fielding, in his budget speech.]

Artillery Officers' Annual Meeting.

At the annual meeting of the 2nd Regiment, C. A., held on Saturday evening at the residence of Lieut. Col. Jones the following resolutions of sympathy were voted to the mother and family of the late Corp. Withers, who lost his life at Paardeburg: "The officers of the 2nd Regiment, Canadian Artillery, assembled at their annual meeting, desire to place on record the deep sorrow with which they have learned of the death of Corporal F. W. Withers, their late comrade, who was killed in action on Feb. 27th, in the South African campaign.

Corporal Withers was an example of the best type of Canadian militiaman, trusted by his officers and respected by his comrades. To die on duty in the face of the enemy and in the hour of victory is an honor vouchsafed to few, but of the many who have fallen in upholding Her Majesty's arms, none have it a greater degree earned a hero's death.

To the mother and relatives of the deceased we would respectfully tender our sincere sympathy.

Surg. Lieut. Col. Daniel, Major White and Capt. Baxter were elected the regimental committee. The band committee is Major Crawford, Lieuts. Barker and Robinson. The audit committee is Lieuts. Frith and Imeson.

Provincial Sunday School Work.

Rev. A. Lucas, field secretary of the Provincial Sunday School Association, was in the city Saturday on his way home to Sussex after a month spent in the work in York and Victoria counties. On Thursday last he organized Woodstock town convention and on Friday was with Mr. Adam convention. On Thursday next Rev. Mr. Lucas will begin a series of conventions in Albert county, beginning Thursday at Hopewell and continuing 10 days.

Big sleeves were considered a necessity on every woman's dress two years ago, but they are as antiquated now as the manner in which a country barber combs his hair.—[Atlantic Globe.]

Summer School of Science.

The Summer School of Science for the Atlantic provinces will begin its session at Bear River in late July. The attractiveness of this spot will draw many enthusiastic students from all parts of these provinces and probably many from other places to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the school to combine most delightfully instruction and recreation. No more charming place in Nova Scotia could have been selected, and the historical interest attached to the adjacent Annapolis Valley will attract many students. Those who wish for information concerning the objects of the school and other points may obtain a calendar from the secretary, Mr. J. D. Seaman, Charlottetown, P. E. I.

It is the rule of the White House that no bird shall be allowed to waste, or even live within its walls. The wife of President Hayes made this rule years ago, and it has been preserved as a sacred preference. When Mrs. Cleveland first went to the White House to live after her marriage she had a pet canary. But the rule against birds was explained to her, and she gave the bird away. Mrs. Harrison also started to bring a couple of canaries home from Indianapolis before she learned that the birds were tabooed inside the White House.

"It amuses me to hear Hopperdyke say he is a man of few words."

"Well, he is, but he can talk you to death with the few that he does know."

—[Chicago Tribune.]

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