

# THE CANADIAN MANUFACTURER

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## THE GLOBE'S DAMAGING ADMISSION.

ON two or three occasions, of quite recent date, the *Globe* has made a most damaging admission, which our Free Traders would probably feel inclined to put among *Punch's* category of things that had better have been left unsaid. Thus says the *Globe*:—The uncertainty as to the date of the Dominion elections is doing injury to the country. Business is tending towards a state of stagnation, because people do not like to risk the chances. The present situation is unbearable, and should be brought to an end with all possible despatch. The country will do no good until it has been settled who is to have charge of its interests during the next four or five years. Already business has received a perceptible check from the prevailing uncertainty, and this must not continue. In this way the *Globe* talked up to the close of last week. The fact is admitted, but the inference sought to be drawn from it is miles away from the truth.

About eight years ago it became a settled fact that Canada had adopted a National Policy—a system of protection of home industries, generally speaking. Following this came a remarkable expansion of home production in various important lines. The country positively produced a great deal more of many commodities than before, thereby, as any reasonable man might say—adding to its aggregate wealth. New investments to the amount of many millions were made in *productive* enterprises, as distinguished from the mere buying and selling of commodities, and carrying them from one place to another. So apparent was this to everybody, that many amongst us who had stiffly opposed the new policy all through, felt compelled to admit that, once it had been adopted, and once extensive new interests had been created under it, a reversal of the same would certainly bring on a dangerous crash, and would have to be avoided, no matter what party was in power. All which was, no doubt, intended to be very reassuring, but somehow or other it was not reassuring enough. Not one-fourth of our business men, whether manufacturers or not, ever really believed that the Protection policy of 1879 would long be safe with a Free Trade majority in power. The protestations of Free Trade leaders, intended to quiet prevailing fears, were generally taken, and rightly taken, too, as mere "glittering generalities," which might mean anything or nothing. And business men's dread of the dangerous party in our midst has certainly not been diminished by Mr. Blake's recent re-affirmation of eternal war against the very fundamental principles of Canada's National Policy. He and his lieutenants repeat now what they laid down, after much deliberation, in 1882. Quite naturally alarm and distrust began to

spread, and the *Globe* invites the public to observe how delay of the Dominion elections is (or recently was) working injury to business.

The real truth of the matter is that there is only one contingency now before the country to create commercial distrust, and that is the possible success of the Free Trade party in the elections. From a business point of view, there is positively nothing else for the country to be afraid of. The opening up of a vast new country to the westward is only now just beginning in earnest, and Canada's transcontinental railway is only beginning to show what it is good for, and what it can do. Much has been said about the hasty rush into various branches of manufacture, a few years ago, in advance of the country's wants. Well, such things *will* happen, in importation as well as manufacture, also in building and speculation in real estate. Free Traders talk as if over-expansion were an evil incident to manufacturing alone, whereas it is common to *all* kinds of business. Given, a promising situation, or what is deemed such, increased facilities of obtaining credit, and enterprise is tempted to overdo itself. Under such influences, people may build too many cotton mills, or they may import foreign goods to such extravagant amount as to stagger the banks to draw bills of exchange enough to pay for them. Or they may build more railways than the country can pay for at the time; or go wild on speculation in corner lots or blocks of real estate. But what are you going to do about it all? As far as entering upon manufacturing enterprises is concerned, you can but give our own people a fair chance generally, after which each individual must look out for himself. A present point is this—that, after recent experience, the indiscreet expansion of manufacturing investments is not likely to be Canada's particular danger for some time yet to come.

The North-West rebellion is over, the Pacific Railway is just beginning to tell on business, and the Dominion finances are rapidly—even very rapidly recovering from the exceptional strain put upon them when the trouble came. A remarkable revival of business appears in store for Canada, only in one quarter does the commercial sky show any darkness at all for this country. Remove but that one thing—the apprehension of an Opposition victory in the elections—and forthwith the country is ready to advance by leaps and bounds.

Suppose it were to become a public impression, very generally entertained, that the Protective system, instead of being minimized and weakened in Canada, were on the contrary about to be greatly strengthened and enlarged. Would that cause any apprehensions of hard times, or of coming disaster? Or would not every commercial man "feel it in his bones," so