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THE TARIFF CHANGES.

WHEN the new tariff came down THE REVIEW declared that merchants should judge it entirely by its results; if it brought business prosperity it was a good tariff, and time was necessary to prove this. That opinion we still adhere to. We assumed that the tariff had been prepared with great care and prudence, seeing that the Government took several months to frame it and consulted with apparent candor nearly every business interest likely to be affected by the changes.

Hardly a month elapses before another batch of tariff changes are brought down, reversing previous arrangements and once more setting the branches of trade affected by the alterations to work figuring out where they stand. All previous Governments have done this sort of thing, so that the present policy is not a new thing originating with this Ministry. Now, we can quite see that where new duties bring results that were not expected, and which unintentionally injured some line of business, it is wise that changes should be made. It shows the right spirit when a Government listens to genuine grievances and honestly endeavors to correct them. That is what a Government is for, since Ministers of the Crown are not our masters, but our paid servants, and are bound—keeping in view always the interest of the whole country—to do what we demand.

What we complain of is that tariffs are framed and then subjected to subsequent tinkering without the Ministers being quite sure what they are driving at. Some one advises them, and out of the secret recesses of the Privy Council chamber there emerges a bill which a man could often fall down and worship without breaking the First Commandment—seeing that the bill is like nothing in the heavens, or the earth, or the waters under the earth. Generally it is not worshipped, but sworn at. Why should we merchants beat the mercy of a parcel of lawyers, doctors, farmers or professional politicians? No doubt all Governments are more or less made up of this class of individuals, and personally they are estimable men in their private capacities. But are we forever to have the business

interests of the country dealt with in this blundering, senseless fashion, and changes of tariff, striking at existing conditions of business without due consideration of the effect, fired at us just as it pleases the Government of the day to listen or not to listen to the representations made?

We have repeatedly argued for a commission of business men, with the consumers represented on it, to advise the Government when a tariff is overhauled. This is not an impracticable suggestion. It is perfectly feasible. The Ministers need not accept the advice of such a commission, but its advice could be published, and if the Government departed therefrom, reasons, and good reasons, would require to be given before the merchants and consumers of the country would be satisfied. Why do all Governments avoid this course? Well, we do not want to attribute bad motives, but we greatly fear that Governments are ashamed to confess that they are not business men enough to frame a tariff themselves, and, besides, they prefer to deal directly with the large commercial interests because that gives them a political "pull," and may prove useful in elections. Is this true or false? Is it not notorious that certain manufacturers had a "pull" with the late Government? Is it not equally evident that some phases of this tariff—leaving the duty on agricultural implements, taking it off barbed wire, reducing it a trifle on coal oil, raising it on cottons—were dictated by political considerations?

This being so, it is time merchants as a body dissociated themselves from too intimate connection with any party. Let them press for tariff changes framed by business men, after long and thorough inquiry, not by lawyers and politicians who see a few deputations and then think they know it all. Merchants have a right to be consulted in this matter. The Government is not going to pass a Prohibitory Liquor Law until a vote of the people is taken. But a Tariff, an infinitely more important measure to the merchants of the country, is framed in secret and then thrown at us to take it or leave it. This is not wise, not necessary, not good business. A tariff carefully drawn ought to remain in force for a term of years, say ten at least. This country would greatly benefit from a tariff more or less permanent, but such a measure will never emanate directly from any Government of politicians.

Our merchant readers know THE REVIEW well enough by this time to be sure that these strictures are not meant in any party sense. If any reader feels that they are too severe let him write and say so and we shall not hesitate to print his letter and answer his objections. Discussion is needed, because it will never do to allow commercial interests to be divided and tariffs to be bungled by party considerations.

THE USE OF CANADIAN WOOL.

A plea that should be heard, on behalf of the woolen mills, is that they use a great deal of Canadian wool. It is used either for mixing with the finer wools from abroad, or almost entirely by itself in making up the well-known durable fabrics which are made in Canada up to a high grade of perfection, and, on this account, are in demand abroad. Mills which avoid shoddy or cotton as a rule, and depend on the quality of domestic wool for certain fabrics, do a large business with the farmer. It is not desirable that the farmer should be any further crippled than he is now in finding a