

# POLICIES AND POLITICS

## Sir Robt. L. Borden and the Tariff.

NO. 1.

"Mr. Gladstone was the only man among us all who infused commanding moral conception into the Irish movement, the only man who united the loftiest ideals of national life and public duty with the glory of words, the moral genius of Mazzini with the political genius of Cavour. He seemed to make Irishmen believe in themselves by the very force of his own belief in them."—John Morley.

Great crises produce great minds. The American Rebellion produced a Chatham, the Irish famine gave us Peel, and the desire for Home Rule in Ireland placed Gladstone before the world as the greatest Englishman of his time. Is it too much to hope that some Canadian statesmen will cease looking backward, and will see ahead a broad wise policy that will tolerate every religion, will recognize the rights of persons as higher than the rights of property, and will make this nation become a contented and happy people?

The policy of protection, of free trade, of bonuses to manufacturers, or to shipbuilders, of a revenue by taxing luxuries, of leaving foods on the free list, of a direct income tax—all these are strictly policies and not principles. From 1815 to 1845 it may have been a wise policy for Britain to have tariff protection. The repeal of the protective corn laws in 1846 and the adoption of free trade may likewise have been a wise policy for Britain up to 1900. Britain's free trade policy of that time brought a contemptuous smile from Bismarck, who laid the foundation of protection for Germany in 1860-1870. That which was Britain's food in 1870 was stigmatized as Germany's poison, and vice-versa. These trade policies are neither moral or immoral, for they are not principles. Whichever policy results in the great-

est good to the greatest number composing the nation, that should be the policy for Canada. Since 1878 Canada has had the benefits accruing from the so-called Tilley-McDonald National Policy. Driven to it by the rather unkindly attitude of the United States, Canada adopted that policy for the purpose of stimulating manufactures. The Liberal party of 1895 to 1900 continued this tariff protection, but strengthened British connection by giving tariff preference to all British goods. The most devout adherents to the Tory and Grit parties have to agree that, under the policies of these two parties, Canadian manufacturers are now solidly on their feet. It might be truly said that manufactures which cannot rise to stability with thirty to forty years of high protection had better be permitted to die out. To-day, in 1919, the conditions of living suggest that Sir Robert Borden might take a leaf out of Sir Robert Peel's statesmanship of 1840, and revise our tariff downward and not upward. For years Peel had been a protectionist. Nevertheless he saw that what was a wise policy up to 1840, had become unwise in 1845-46. On December 4, 1845, the London Times said: "The Royal Speech will recommend the Total Repeal of the Corn Laws." The continued rains had destroyed the crops in Great Britain and famine existed in Ireland. Dire necessity demanded a new policy. Recognizing that new conditions demand tariff changes, Sir Robert Peel introduced and finally carried early in 1846 the famous Bill repealing the corn duties. It is likely that Sir Robert Borden is now ready in Canada to emulate the distinguished statesman of 1845-46. If so, he will take away some of the thunder in the Joyline Liberal camp at Ottawa and, by a lessened tariff, force wealthy members of the Dominion Manufacturers' Association to accept smaller dividends than those revealed in the late investigation. The extremely high rents prevailing in St. John and other cities, and the high cost of food and clothes, are not equalled (except in rare cases) by the advance in wages. This condition cannot be remedied by a Tariff Commission which will report next December or January. By that time the agony of winter with coal at \$15.00