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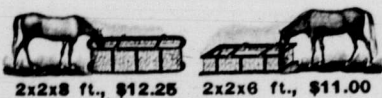
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**Grain Growers' Grain Co.**  
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## Canada's National Policy

Continued from Page 7

port duties taxes the home consumer. For that reason, I repeat, retaliation is a dangerous blunderbuss, apart altogether from the fact that experience shows it to be much more likely to provoke a war of tariffs than to secure the abolition of the foreign import duties. We must all admit that Free Trade on both sides is better than Free Trade on our side only. But if the foreigner will persist in a mistaken fiscal policy, that is no reason why we also should do so. Surely half a loaf is better than no bread.

### The British Preference

But it may be said that whatever the economic weaknesses of the "national policy" of Protection, it has this great political advantage that it enables Canada to give a preference in her markets to the products of the mother country, and thus to supplement the intangible bonds of sentiment by the ties of material interest. It is, however, hardly necessary to remind you that this policy of preference is, as it has always been, largely a make believe. It has not been effective for its professed purpose. It has not turned a greater share of Canada's import trade into the hands of the British. Under it the rate of increase of Great Britain's trade with Canada has not been much greater than that of France and several other countries, while it has been very much less than that of the United States. In this connection it is rather amusing to notice that Canada's rejection of reciprocity with the United States in 1911 is supposed by many to have been dictated by her loyalty to the Empire, yet in the following calendar year (1912) her imports from the United States increased by nearly 26 per cent.

The truth is that the fraction of Canada's trade with the United States or other countries which any possible tariff preference could divert to Great Britain, is, at the best, very small. And, as we know, the preference does not give, and was never meant to give, to British trade an advantage such as would admit of serious competition with the protected "infant" industries of Eastern Canada. Still less have the powers that guide the commercial policy of the Canadian government ever dreamt of granting to Great Britain what she gives to them and to all the world, namely, Free Trade, in the sense of taxation of imports for revenue only and not for protection. That, however, I am glad to see, is the policy of the Grain Growers. But even Free Trade with Great Britain can only be described as economically sound policy if it is to be regarded as a half-way house on the road to Free Trade with all the world. I have no faith in a policy which seeks, in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's phrase, to force trade "against the laws of nature and geography."

But, whatever may be thought of Canada's policy of trade preference, this much must be said: She has never sought to make it conditional on the adoption by Great Britain of a policy differentiating in favor of her goods and against imports from foreign countries, as "tariff reformers" in Great Britain have so often suggested. However illusory and ineffective the preference may have been made at the instigation of the protected interests, it was meant by the Canadian people as a genuine offering on the altar of Imperial sentiment. And Canada at least has never sought to make reciprocity in trade preference the measure or condition of her loyalty to the Empire. She has all along recognized that the economic test of Imperial unity is an utterly false one, and that the bonds of the Empire are other and stronger than those of mere material interest. We cannot sound the depths of the loyalty of the over-sea dominions with an economic plumb line. Great Britain's hold over the dominions is certainly not due to their perception of its economic advantages to them. The average Manitoba farmer, for example, while thoroughly loyal, must often, under present conditions, be keenly conscious of its economic disadvantages. In my opinion, they do a great dis-service to the cause of the Imperial connection who seek in any way to associate it with the

maintenance of the present Protectionist policy in Canada.

### Practical Abuses

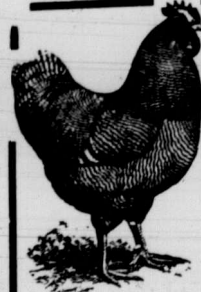
Even in the exceptional cases in which Protection might be plausibly defended in theory—such as the case of young industries in new countries—it is nevertheless always practically expedient to adhere to the broad rule of taxation for revenue only. For once you deviate from this broad principle of Free Trade—once you grant temporary protection to some promising "infant"—you are soon met by plausible pleas for similar concessions to others. Then your original favorite discovers that by giving protection to these you have in some way injured it, say by raising the price of the raw material it uses, for the manufactured product of one industry is the raw material of others. By way of compensation, more protection is demanded. Thus, as Fawcett says, "Fire is not more certain to spread amongst inflammable material than is Protection, when once sanctioned, to embrace a constantly increasing number of industries within its influence." Moreover, the "tomorrow" when the protective duties can be taken off never comes—is, in fact, in the opinion of the protected industries themselves, more remote than ever. At the present day, in the United States and in Canada also, you have numerous industries that have grown hoary with age, yet still proclaim that they are promising "infants," needing the feeding bottle of Protection, with only a little more milk in the shape of higher duties.

### The Moral Effect

Every readjustment of the tariff thus becomes the occasion of a struggle by interested groups for supremacy in the legislature, and the outcome is that wretched system of "log rolling" and "wire pulling" with which the United States is familiar. It destroys the purity of public life. It poisons the political and social atmosphere. Protection under modern industrial conditions requires for its success an all-wise and omnipotent despotism; it is utterly inconsistent with a democratic regime. And further, the increasing complexity of industry, especially in view of the well known "red tape" of government methods, renders its wise guidance by the state an increasingly hopeless task. The finance minister says: "The tariff of a protective country is a structure, one part being dependent upon another part." A glance at the Canadian tariff itself shows it in very truth to be a fearful and wonderful structure, fashioned with reference to every interest but the commonweal. Even agriculture is considered, for are we not told that while the average rate of duty upon dutiable goods is 26 per cent., the duties upon agricultural implements are chiefly 17½ to 20 per cent., and in the case of harvesters, reapers and mowers the rate is reduced to 12½ per cent. Governmental interference with industry inevitably checks that tendency to variation, which is the principle of all progress. "The statesman," says Adam Smith, "who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals, would not only load himself with most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it."

The most pernicious of all results of Protection in modern times is the growth of trusts and combines, which bleed the farmer both as producer and consumer. It is the irony of fate that governments should now be struggling to chain these monsters which they themselves, in their folly and presumption, have called into being. Protective legislation creates the trusts, whose mischievous activity in turn calls for further legislation.

The Canadian national policy, in fact, shelters class legislation of the worst type. Governments, under the shelter of the high ideals of national strength, have, in effect, revived on behalf of the combines the old right enjoyed by the feudal barons of the Middle Ages—the right of private taxa-



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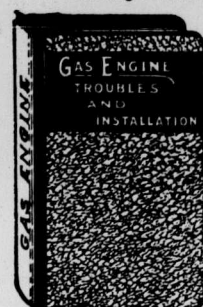
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