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THE ADVOCACY OF WILD PROJECTS.

The silver question, but, more than all, the uncertainty about the tariff, has produced a condition of things in the United States without parallel in the history of that country. The consumption of pig iron, the fundamental article par excellence, is one of the most accurate barometers of industry; and in 1893 it fell short of the consumption in 1892 by no less than two million tons, or 22 per cent. A statement of this kind prepares one for gloomy reports from the labor market; but the reports are more than gloomy, they are harrowing. The police of New York have just taken a partial census of the unemployed in that city. In the thirty-three precincts nearly fifty thousand families

containing 200,000 persons have been reported on. Of these persons the number usually employed is 78,023, but at present 67,280 are out of work. Of the 50,000 families over 30,000 replied "Yes" in answer to the question, "Are you in need of assistance?" The enquiry was conducted under the supervision of professors of Columbia College, and President Seth Low of that institution says: "I cannot imagine a more impressive argument in favor of prompt action upon the tariff, which shall be decisive in one direction or the other, in order that the element of uncertainty may be removed from the pathway of a business revival."

In New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Brooklyn, the four largest cities in the Union, upwards of 300,000 men are idle. Food depots and relief works, backed by private charity, are doing something to diminish the suffering, but the amount of misery left unrelieved is appalling. Seventy-five railroads, embracing 32,000 miles about twice the mileage in all Canada—have gone into the hands of receivers. There are 175,000 miles of railway altogether, which ordinarily give employment to 825,000 men, but just now 160,000 men are working short time or at reduced wages or not working at all. Several thousand laborers on the Michigan iron ranges are out of work, and there is much distress in the Pennsylvania and Ohio coal districts. We in Canada have evidence of the depression in the daily arrival of Canadians from the United States, and of American workmen too. In the Province of Quebec hundreds upon hundreds of French Canadians have returned from the New England mills, and the labor market is seriously disturbed in consequence. A despatch from Acton, Ont., says the places of a number of factory hands who have gone on strike for higher wages have been taken by workmen from New York State, glad to accept the old rate. In recent debates in the House of Representatives at Washington such statements as these from the Republican side have gone unchallenged by the Democrats: On January 1, 1892, there were by count 251 iron furnaces in blast; on January 1, 1894, only 132. Of 70 anthracite furnaces 40 have gone out of blast. In New England 50 factories have been closed; in 117 wages have been reduced. The shrinkage in values and loss from bankruptcies during the last ten months have amounted to at least sixteen hundred million dollars, but this does not include the shrinkage in railroad stocks. It is not necessary to darken the picture by dwelling on the terrible scenes reported from the large cities. The New York Evening Post said the other day:—"We must do what we have never had occasion to do before—call attention to the appalling distress which prevails among the unemployed poor of this city. Thousands and thousands of persons who have always hitherto earned a decent livelihood are sinking down into blank destitution, from which recovery with broken health and spirits will be difficult." The Post is a candid paper on the anti-protection side.

There is depression in Canada, but it is not to be compared in extent or intensity with the depression in the United States. The reason why we are escaping so well is that the N. P. prevents the entrance of American bankrupt stocks into this market and the public mind is not greatly disturbed by the question of tariff reform, members of the Government having announced that the measure to be submitted at the coming session will follow protective lines.