

become law unless passed over the President's veto by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress. It would be impossible for any such undemocratic procedure to occur in this free country. No ministerial council could exist a day in Canada in the face of a vote by the representatives of the people in the House of Commons assembled, expressing a want of confidence in their policy. This freedom of the people of Canada is in strong contrast with a condition recently prevailing in the United States where, after an overwhelming and disastrous defeat, the defeated party continued to hold office and enforce a law that was so signally denounced and repudiated by the people. How ridiculous, then, for *The Illustrated American* to offer "freedom" to Canada as a result of annexation, when by annexation the people of Canada would surrender a larger measure of freedom than the American people ever knew.

PROTECTION IN GREAT BRITAIN.

At a recent meeting of the Belfast (Ireland) Linen Merchant's Association, discussing the effect of American tariff on the linen manufacturing industry, surprise was expressed that the United States, where the industry to be protected was a very small one, should impose as high a duty as that indicated in the McKinley bill; that the industry there consisted only of the manufacture of the coarsest fabrics, and the taxing to such an extent of the consumer for the benefit of a few manufacturers seemed as unwise as it was unexpected. Mr. Ward, the secretary of the Association, said:—"It would appear, however, that an impression widely prevailed that with a sufficient amount of protection the linen industry could be built up in the United States, and many could not understand why a great manufacturing nation, fertile in the invention of labor-saving machinery, could not manufacture linen goods as they do cotton, wool and silk, thereby utilizing a large quantity of flax plant annually grown in the Western States for seed."

Regarding this the Manchester, England, *Textile Mercury* says:—

"It appears mere waste of words to condemn the Americans for raising the duties on linens because the industry "to be protected" is a very small one, confined mainly to the production of coarse goods. Those who believe in protection do so because it enables industries to be built up where none before existed. That is why the United States has raised the tariff on linens, and although Belfast may energetically protest that it is physically impossible to establish a linen industry in the Republic, Americans are not likely to give much heed to the statements of such an interested observer. Belfast must follow other methods if it wishes to loosen the coils which are gradually crushing the life out of our foreign trade. Dogmatic statements to the effect that protection is injurious only to the countries adopting it, while all the time it is enabling vast industries to be built up abroad at the expense of our own, are not worthy of the business men of this country. One can understand the London Chamber of Commerce condemning retaliation because London ship and produce brokers, financiers and the bulk of the commercial body in the metropolis are not so much interested in the prosperity of our home trade as in the increase of imports from the Continent into the London Docks. But although the interests of Belfast, Bradford, Leeds, Nottingham and other centres lie in a totally opposite direction, their manufacturers continue to play the game of the London importer, and, through him, of the Continental producer."

This sounds queerly coming from such an avowed free trade paper as the *Mercury* is. But it shows that Britishmen are beginning to comprehend that protection is not always as bad as it has been represented to be, and that free trade is not always the unalloyed blessing that Mr. Cobden thought it would be. In fact it is pointed out that there is a difference in the interests of the British shipowners, who desire free trade so that their carrying trade with foreign nations may not be interfered with, and British manufacturers whose interests are adversely affected by the indiscriminate importations into the kingdom of the cheaper products of other nations, and by the protective tariffs of other nations. Last year the Continental trade of Belfast in linens marked a reduction from the trade of the previous year of about seven per cent. Russia has raised her duty on all imports about twenty per cent; France is working out a considerably higher tariff; Spain will probably do the same thing; Germany imposes heavy duties on about all foreign merchandise, and Britain finds herself in the anomalous and disagreeable position of being the only considerable European nation that has not yet fallen into line as a protectionist.

Sir Henry Mitchell, at a recent meeting of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, speaking of the depression in the British textile trades, said that in view of the expiry of the French treaty early next year, and of the "frightful effects" which "these constant impositions of higher duties have upon English trade," it was the duty of the Chamber to do all they could to prevent the imposition of higher tariffs upon British goods. The *Textile Mercury*, explaining the ground it has taken in advising that Britain should adopt some policy of retaliation against nations that enforce high tariffs against British merchandise, says:

"We are free traders,—more earnestly so, perhaps, than those who condemn the slightest suggestion as to retaliation. It is because we are in favor of free trade that we advocate judicious retaliation, by which alone can the present obstructions to trade be removed. This country does not enjoy the benefits of free trade at the present time, however strongly some of us may protest our devotion to the doctrines of Cobden. There can be no free trade in England while the rest of the world continues to shut the door of commerce in our face. We may continue to buy of those who will not allow us to sell. But that was not what Cobden expected we should have to do when he led the country forty years ago; and it is not free trade—it is trade carried on under every possible disadvantage that the ingenuity of our competitors can devise. We wish to see these disadvantages removed, and retaliation is the only method by which such a result can be obtained."

We accept this testimony. Britain does not enjoy the benefits of free trade, and it is beyond any effort that that country can put forth to derive any greater benefits from it than she now has. It requires more than one to make a bargain, and Mr. Cobden made a vital mistake in supposing that because of the prestige Britain had fifty years ago she could, through his free trade policy, force and coerce all the other nations of the earth to accept and practise it. The mill of the gods grinds slow, and free trade is tottering to its fall. Protection will win.

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