

MARCH 24th 1890.]

it really take place, and in any case, at such remarks as those of Mr. Foster in explanation of his delay in submitting the treaty for ratification. A Government is naturally supposed to have control of its own accredited agent and to hold itself responsible for whatever he may do in its name. Neither of the Great Powers concerned is likely to take kindly such trifling with their diplomatic dignity. If Sir Charles has, by taking too much upon himself, or by undue impetuosity, put his Government in so awkward a position, he can hardly hope to escape the consequence. Unfortunately his recall would not restore Canada's lost prestige.

History records many instances in which a number of contiguous tribes have been subdued, one after another, by some ambitious and powerful neighbour, simply because they were too selfish, or too deficient in foresight, to unite their forces at the proper time in each other's defence. A somewhat similar series of events is, it sometimes seems to us, taking place from year to year in this Province of Ontario, in the realms of restrictive and monopolistic legislation. One by one various professional and business interests are, in the name and guise of protectors of the health and property of the people, skilfully procuring from a professedly Liberal Administration and Assembly a species of legislation which is in its essence unjust to individuals and detrimental to the rights and liberties of citizens. The close corporations which have long existed and operated, under theegis of law, in the legal and medical professions, will at once suggest themselves as the most conspicuous examples; but the special and remarkable powers and privileges which have been conferred upon the members of these professions are very naturally stimulating many others to seek similar advantages by similar methods. Hence we see the spectacle, at every session of the Legislature, of the members of various trades and callings combining to procure such legislation as may enable them to suppress all competitors who may not be able or may not choose to identify themselves with the combines. These efforts on the part of these applicants are perfectly natural and their arguments are perfectly logical. By precisely the same kind of reasoning which has prevailed in the legalizing of the close societies, with all their extraordinary powers, in law and medicine, it can be shewn to be in the public interest that plumbers and undertakers and architects and the skilled practitioners in a dozen other callings should be granted similar charters. In fact, the tendency of Ontario's legislation, so far as it has gone and is now being sought, in this respect, is to bring back the old days when the members of every trade and business constituted a guild which none might enter save under such onerous conditions as its members chose to prescribe.

These remarks are just now suggested by the copy of a Bill, entitled "An Act to Further Amend the Pharmacy Act," which lies before us, together with a circular from the Medicine Manufacturers of Canada. Now we dare say that not only these medicine manufacturers but all those interested in the three or four thousand general stores and groceries, a portion of whose legitimate business would be arbitrarily cut off should the bill in question become law, have been accustomed to look on with indifference, possibly with approval, while some lawyer or other man or woman of education and intelligence, who had not procured permission from the lawyers' corporation of the Province, was forbidden to conduct the case of a client in the courts; or while detectives in the employ of the medical combine were pursuing, with a view to fine or imprisonment, some English or American physician, for the crime of trying to cure a suffering patient without having first obtained the leave of those to whom the Provincial Legislature has granted a monopoly of the emoluments of the healing art. They failed to make their neighbour's case their own, or to consider what was consistent with the rights of a free and intelligent people. But now their turn has come, and they cry aloud against the threatened injustice. Well, they are right so far, and we hope that their cry may prevail. The cloven hoof of downright selfishness plainly protrudes from beneath ostensible regard for the public safety, in the provisions of this Bill. Its effect would be, should it become law, to prevent any one but a registered druggist from selling the simplest medicine, such as castor oil, salts, senna, turpentine, or any of the useful or useless "patent" medicines for man and beast, which so abound in these days of scientific discovery and experiment. Such a law would not only be a gross injury to thousands of tradesmen, but would inflict serious inconvenience and loss upon the people, by increasing the price of various useful appliances, while it would be at the same time an insult to their intelligence. We hope not only that its passage may be prevented but that its discussion may be the means of opening the eyes of many to the injurious character and tendency of all such restrictive and class legislation.

THE SECOND TARIFF DEBATE.

"To admit that one has changed his mind is to admit that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday." The old proverb is a sufficient answer, if answer were needed, to those who think to break the force of Mr. McCarthy's arraignment of the tariff by proving that he at a former time supported the National Policy. A good deal of Dr. Montague's reply on behalf of the Government was devoted to showing that Mr. McCarthy formerly expressed different opinions from

those enunciated in his tariff resolutions and the accompanying speech. Mr. Ives, President of the Council, thought it not beneath the dignity of his position and the importance of the question to remark that Mr. McCarthy's movement would have been much more threatening to the Government if the belief of the country that he was still a Conservative and protectionist had not been dissipated, just as if the party name by which the speaker might be called could add to or detract from the weight of his facts and arguments.

Mr. McCarthy's motion was based upon several allegations of fact of the very first importance to the welfare and progress of the country. Of these the most important are the following:

That, under shelter of the protective tariff, many manufacturers have formed combinations and trusts which prohibit competition and create and maintain monopolies.

That the existing tariff has proved in many instances oppressive and burdensome to the great mass of the consuming classes, and especially to those engaged in agricultural pursuits.

That it is unfair and unequal in its incidence, and has been productive of discontent, verging on disloyalty, among those who suffer from its injustice.

These are very serious propositions. If and in so far as they are capable of proof, they unquestionably demand prompt and serious action—not necessarily, perhaps, the particular action recommended by Mr. McCarthy, but immediate action of some kind and the most effective action which the wisdom of our statesmen can devise. It would be a dark day for Canada, and we believe a darker day for the Conservative Party in Canada, should the leaders and members of that party accept the view implied in the taunt of Mr. Ives above quoted, and in other remarks by some of the Conservative speakers, which identifies protectionism and Conservatism, and thus irrevocably pledges the great Conservative party to stand or fall with the National Policy. What is there inherent in the principles of Conservatism which warrants its leaders in taking any such position? Protective legislation is essentially class legislation, but surely Canadian Conservatism is not so closely identified with old Toryism that it is bound to legislate for the few against the many, or for the rich and influential against the poor and obscure.

The question whether and to what extent the speeches of Mr. McCarthy and others made good the assertions contained in the three propositions above quoted is one which every intelligent Canadian ought to examine and decide for himself, with the aid of all the sources of information at his command. It is a question with which partyism should have, in the first instance, nothing to do, though the policies proposed by the party leaders would necessarily come up for consideration at a later stage, should the allegations be found true. Dr. Montague's policy