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Comments on the Customs.



THE CONSUMER CONSUMED.—Journals which are entitled to be regarded as Government organs are intimating the probability of an increase in the tariff rates at the forthcoming session of Parliament. These hints are, of course, received with manifestations of pleasure by certain Producers, who will be enabled to raise their prices by the amount of the increased duty. The Consumer is also called upon to rejoice, though, why he should be expected to go into raptures over an increase in the cost of living is something which only a Protectionist philosopher (like the Editor of the *World*, for example), could explain. Even that body of Consumers represented on the pay-roll of Protected manufactories, profit nothing by an increase of the tariff. The law does not stipulate (as it should, to be just), that each increase of protection to any industry shall be accompanied by a corresponding increase of wages in that line. This is left altogether to the inclination of the manufacturer, and as a rule, he much prefers to put the extra money in his own pocket. As to the Consumers in general—that is to say, the vast majority of the citizens—every cent of taxes, direct or indirect, above what is required for public revenue, is a robbery of them. But it is not the fashion with our rulers to take the Consumer into account. The Producer—or rather a few pet producers—are fattened beyond the similitude of a hog; and it is “the chief end of the man,” according to Protectionist statesmen, to contribute to the trough. It is time the Consumer was heard from. A few more increases of the tariff and he will be Consumed.

PROPOSED COSTUME.—If it turns out to be true, as indicated in the papers, that the Dominion Government intend asking for a vote of a large appropriation for purposes of “fortification,” then Mr. Coté’s suggestion of a uniform and mount for the Minister of

Militia, is highly appropriate. For a Government capable of the folly implied in such a scheme, motley’s the only wear. We ardently hope that in the words of the distinguished Mr. Pope, “there ain’t nothin’ to” this fortification nonsense.

THE MANITOBA FOUNDLING.—Manitoba has a new Government,—or at least a Government which claims to be new. There is some difficulty just on this point. It is suspected that the Harrison Cabinet now crying and mewling in infancy, is nothing but the Norquay combination in another shape. It is “Norquay” with Norquay left out, for the time being. The Winnipeg correspondent of the *Mail* (Jan’y 5th), states the situation as follows: “The same game which was concocted in Quebec, between Dr. Ross and Mr. Taillon, with the assistance of Sir John, has now been planned by Mr. Norquay and Dr. Harrison, doubtless with the same delt assistance. Mr. Norquay and Mr. La Rivière left the Ministry, a new Government was bunched together out of the old material, and strenuous efforts will be made to convince Lieutenant-Governor Aikins that the Harrison Government is an entirely new combination and not a mere revamp of the Norquay Cabinet, which has gone out disgraced. The object of this is of course to save Messrs. Harrison, Hamilton and Wilson, from responsibility for the sins of the Administration in which they were responsible Ministers till the last. The Government organ here has already shown Dr. Harrison’s hand with charming clumsiness. What will Lieutenant-Governor Aikins do should Dr. Harrison be defeated and, like Mr. Taillon, demand a dissolution? The general opinion is that he will do just as Lieutenant-Governor Masson did a year ago in Quebec, namely, ask him to name his successor, and, should he refuse to do that, dismiss him.”

A LARGE quantity of good serviceable indignation has been wasted upon “Presbyter,” the reverend microbe who, in a recent number of the *Mail*, denounced Methodism as “a synonym for all that is tricky in religion and morals,” and held up Methodists as, without exception, frauds and hypocrites. The *Mail* is being deluged with replies to this idiotic malevolence, and on many a platform preachers of all denominations have given vent to their angry feelings. The queer thing is that every writer and speaker begins by saying that a “man” capable of sending forth such wholesale slanders anonymously, and in the interests of “religion,” is unworthy of notice. Then they go on to notice him *in extenso*. They should treat him with silent contempt—as we do.

THE correspondence page of the *Mail*, by the way, has become the recognized stamping ground for cranks big and little—and Saturday appears to be their field day. Now that the journal is fairly out of the list of political organs, it appears to have resolved itself into a sort of Home for Incurables, or a Hospital for the treatment of Unfortunates afflicted with that troublesome complaint—*cacoethes scribendi*. But, after all, what is a Mail for, if not for letters?

THE New Year’s greetings extended to the Emperor of Russia by his loving subjects appear to have been somewhat Czarcastic, as the customary plot to assassinate him was found to be lurking in the back ground. There is no reason to doubt that the Russian people *do* wish their devoted sovereign a Happy New Year; surely nothing could testify this more strongly than their evident anxiety to send him to heaven!

SOME people in this country are quite convinced that there is a strain of homicidal insanity in the Russian blood; nothing else, they think, could account for these constantly recurring plots against the Czar. These good folks get all their information about Russia in the cable despatches, and they know just as much about the way that country is governed as the citizen of Iowa knows