

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE

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IN THE DOMINION.

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Accepting the fairness of the proposal, how is it to be worked out? We see no better way than heavy taxation, collected in the form of license fees, the money thus collected to be applied to the treatment of roads. It might, in part, go towards annual oiling or tar spraying to abate the nuisance, and in part towards the construction of tar-macadam roads, which are practically dustless, and resist the severe wear of automobile traffic. Roads of this type are expensive, costing some eight thousand dollars a mile, hence would hardly be economical, except on a few main-travelled highways. For some less-travelled concessions and side-lines, sprinkling with oil at judiciously-selected periods is probably the best solution in sight.

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The present automobile tax in Ontario is so light as to be scarcely more than nominal. Perhaps it seems heavy enough to a person of scant means who has already strained his resources to buy the machine and keep it up, but such a one should not have bought. The man who cannot afford to pay taxes on an expensive city residence has no option but to sell. Likewise, we consider it a fair position to state that no one should run an automobile who is not able, through the purchase of his license to recoup the public for inconvenience or injury to roads, crops and person. There is reason to believe that a proposition to increase the tax on automobiles would not be seriously opposed by users of them as a body. The motorists of Ontario have, semi-officially offered to contribute 50 cents per horse-power, but very properly ask that they be given something for their money. This something should take the form of general road improvement according to some well-defined plan. The present automobile tax in Ontario is four dollars annually. A chauffeur pays \$1.00 for his license, and 50 cents a year for renewal. This taxation produces a total revenue of about \$25,000 a year. The Quebec Legislature has adopted the following tariff: For every motor vehicle used solely for commercial

purposes, \$5.00; for others of 25 horse-power or less, \$5.00; from that to 35 horse-power, \$10.00; from 35 to 50 horse-power, \$15.00; 50 horse-power or more, \$20.00. The Province of Manitoba last year introduced a Government measure proposing a similar schedule, except that cars having over 50 horse-power were to be taxed \$25.00. The State of New York imposes taxes ranging from about \$5.00 to \$50.00, according to power. The State of Massachusetts, to relieve local municipalities from the maintenance of main roads, has imposed an annual tax of from \$2.00 for motor cycles, and \$5.00 for commercial automobiles or trucks, up to \$25.00 for 50 horse-power and upwards. In England the tax ranges from about \$5.00 up to \$300, according to horse-power, the fund thus derived being administered by a newly-created road board.

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It is clear from the foregoing that the fair principle of taxation for road maintenance has been recognized and widely crystallized in legal enactment. There is, we believe, a strong case to be made out for a much heavier scale of taxes on motor cars in America generally, in Canada particularly, and in Ontario more particularly. Special provision might, perhaps, be made for temporary licenses for visitors, at a reasonable rate. The fund should, in our opinion, be earmarked for road improvement, with a special view to alleviation of the dust nuisance. Here is scope for a broad constructive policy which promises more than the ordinary ineffectual efforts to limit speed and determine just where a motorist should stop at the upholding of a distressed teamster's hand. What say our readers?

What the Imperial Conference Did.

With the return of the Canadian representatives from viewing the Coronation splendors of the King, and sharing in the Imperial Conference at London, the people, upon reflection, will realize afresh that, while supreme sovereignty is nominally vested in the Crown, the real power is with themselves. And the people are minded to have it that way, though they still like the ceremonial pageantry. It is an uninformed view to say that the investiture of the King is a meaningless function, or his office without its uses and safety in what we call a "Limited Monarchy."

An important decision of the conference between the British Government and the representatives of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa was the appointment of a Royal Commission to visit the overseas dominions, and report upon their trade, resources, and methods for development. The various Dominions share in the cost of this Commission. Unanimously, it was the mind of the Conference as being wiser to obtain information than to counsel taking a leap in the dark in regard to regulating the trade of the Empire. Nothing was done in the direction of what is called Imperial Federation by a suggested Council of Empire, which might involve the dominions in troubles that did not concern them, or, rather, in any surrender of the rights of autonomy, jealously guarded particularly by Australia, South Africa and Canada. At one of the functions of the conference, the Speaker of the South African Union Parliament, Mr. Molteno, defined true imperialism to be that each dominion should keep its own house in order and make its own corner of the Empire strong. The strength of the individual part was the strength of the whole. Each dominion is to be master of its own house, but contributing as much as possible to the well-being of the Empire as a whole. This combination of "The Five Nations" is indeed unique; there has never been anything in the world just like it before. Were some great nation to make war upon Great Britain, that power would be sure, at war with Canada or Australia, and would have no scruples about attacking their ports or their ships on the high seas; and yet these dominions retain inviolably the control of their own armies and navies, and the right to say whether or no they will fight with Britain in her wars. Assuredly, to the last man and the last gun and the last dollar, Canada would rally

to the aid of the Motherland. One very significant and important feature of this Conference was the fact that, behind a confidential veil, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, discussed fully and freely, as never before, with the overseas representatives, the foreign policies and relations of the Empire. This candid insight into the momentous alliances, intricacies and responsibilities of the Empire throughout the world will probably be of more far-reaching consequence than might be supposed by some who are disposed jauntily to hand out a new, cut-and-dried way of running the Empire.

Certain principles were laid down by the Conference regarding vessels and shipping laws which will tend to greater uniformity throughout the Empire.

Another step in advance was when the most-favored-nation clause was amended. Hereafter the overseas dominions will not be bound by this clause, but will be free to make treaties with whom they wish, and on whatever terms they can. The British Government will amend the treaty to suit the overseas dominions.

A resolution was adopted affirming the necessity of cheaper rates between Britain and Canada, and, if this were not forthcoming, that a State-owned cable would be laid between Canada and the motherland.

A forward step was taken to bring about more uniform naturalization of citizens within the Empire. Heretofore, a British subject in Canada was not necessarily one in any other part of the Empire, but the Conference decided upon a five-year term, which will make a citizen of one part of the Empire a citizen of every part.

The question of an improved penny postage was dealt with, and also the establishment of a common Empire Day, which will probably be June 3rd, the birthday of King George V., in which case Victoria Day will be dropped.

These Imperial Conferences are to be held every four years, but may be called at any time, should emergencies arise. By bringing the home and outlying Governments into closer touch for the discussion of their common interests, these gatherings are proving of inestimable value to their representatives and an educational boon to the people as the knowledge and sentiments formulated become known.

Pauper Labor.

Among all the excuses pled in favor of protection, one of the most absolutely false, hollow and indefensible is the alleged need of protecting high-priced labor from the competition of pauper labor in foreign countries. In the first place, any general, all-round protection of that kind is impossible, since the basis of each country's commerce is its exported surplus of certain commodities sold in the world's markets where they must meet other foreign competition from the countries which can produce them most cheaply.

As illustrating how a community in which high wages prevail can compete with another where low wages are in vogue, Congressman Redfield, of New York, made a lucid and convincing comparison in a recent speech. He saw piles driven in Japan, twenty women with ropes lifting the pile. These women were paid 20 cents a day. Yet it cost four times as much to drive those piles as it would have cost in New York. Cheap labor may be, and often is, dear labor. Efficiency, ingenuity, management and invention, are more important factors than wages in determining the cost of labor in the majority of industries. Of course, there are certain industries in which invention has not yet displaced hand labor to any extent. Leave those industries to countries where a woman's time is worth twenty cents a day, import the products, and pay for them with the exports of industries in which a man, with the aid of machinery, can earn two, three, four and five dollars a day.

Some readers of "The Farmer's Advocate" have been surprising themselves this dry season with the favorable results of even a light top-dressing of barnyard manure on the oat field.