

A UNITED PEOPLE.

"If the people of the British Empire should have learned any one lesson well, it is that national strength is based in union which is founded in justice, and national weakness in disunions and discords which are the direct outcome of unjust laws or unfair practices." Right at the present moment we need as a part of the Empire, and particularly as an independent portion of it, to remember these words.

EAST AND WEST

The first evidence of sectionalism is in the use of the words east and west. The fact that our Dominion is divided into provinces each with its own legislature, and the further fact that geographically the whole country is divided into districts by its lakes and mountains, make it very easy for the people to view all questions from a provincial rather than a national standpoint. It is very natural that the older provinces should be slow to recognize the development and claims of the newer section, and it is just as natural that the people of the rapidly growing west should imagine that their needs and their interests should be first matters of national concern. It is evident that there must be some give and take in a country like this. Yet there must be fair dealing. In matters that concern the west alone, there should be no interference by the east, even although parliamentary rules will permit it. For example, the building of the H. B. R. is a matter that directly concerns only the west. It will affect the east only in a negative way. Here the west must be free. In the matter of tariff for revenue the interests of all the sections of the Dominion must be carefully weighed. It is not to be expected that any schedule will suit all localities.

But there is a possibility of unfairness concerning which there has been more than one rumor. It is said that the general elections will be forced upon us before the end of this year and that the west will have to be content with a minimum representation, because the decennial census tables will not have been completed before the day of voting. It is said that a factor in deciding upon the date has been the fear that the west will become a dominating force in parliament. It is to be hoped that this whole story is only rumor, and that no robbery such as is indicated will be practised.

There is only one way of preserving peace and promoting our welfare and that is by being absolutely fair. East and west do not have to quarrel. They can help one another. They are necessary to one another. What they both must do is to remember the Golden Rule, for it applies to nations as well as to individuals. The east, and more especially one section of it cannot be allowed to dominate the west.

RACE AGAINST RACE

The second form of sectionalism is found where race lines up against race. There must be in Canada no struggle of this nature. As a part of the Empire we must stand by the principle that this is an English-speaking land, and that our language must prevail. English schools, English teachers—these are necessary in every district of every province. If non-English people do not like that condition let them keep away from Canada. The day will come when even in old Quebec the people will demand a knowledge of the language every Canadian should know and when even in the German districts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan every one will insist on speaking the English tongue. Nor must any one non-English tongue be accorded privileges not granted to all others. When a few people in a new country organize themselves and call a first parliament, surely the acts of that parliament are not to be accepted as binding for all time. Wherever the law discriminates in favor of one class it surely discriminates against another. No act of the Canadian parliament nor of the legislatures must set French above German or Icelandic above Scandinavian or Polish above Ruthenian; but the good old English tongue must be the recognized speech in court and parliament and school. In social and business relations men may speak whatever tongue they please.

RELIGION AGAINST RELIGION

It was to be expected that old world terms would be transplanted to the new. Nothing remains in the blood like religion. But there was never any excuse for recognizing these terms in Canadian legislation. A church is a spiritual organization, instituted for spiritual ends. The state is a human institution for human ends. The two should be co-operative, but absolutely independent. When the self-seeking Governors of

Canada prior to 1841 began the practice of consulting the Archbishops with regard to legislation they transgressed the rights of man and the law of God. They instituted a state of affairs which made it possible in 1867 for the fathers of Confederation to submit to a foreign authority for his confirmation the British North America Act, before even it was laid before the representatives of the Canadian people. And that is not a whit worse than that in legislatures and in parliament today the heads of denominations should be consulted as to the propriety of contemplated measures. "Of all forms of inequality the most objectionable is that of singling out a particular church for special favors, because doing so is not merely repugnant to our innate sense of justice but offends the conscience." There is only one solution to the question. It is for the state to permit absolute freedom in religious matters, but to accord favors to none. No bishop or clergy to be consulted with regard to legislation, no recognized standing for ecclesiastics as such in state processions, no special provisions as to schools and tax-exemptions, no favors when it comes to appointments in the civil service. Equality of opportunity is a law for every citizen. Just as an old English ruler said, "No foreign priest shall tithe, or toll in our dominions," so we must say, "No priest—Catholic or non-Catholic—shall dictate legislation in our Dominion."

TOWN AND COUNTRY

There is, unfortunately, at times, a misunderstanding between town and country. There are few, for example, who have not heard the cry "Winnipeg against the Province." Now, this is of course nonsensical. The city needs the country and the country needs the city. The centralization of manufacture has driven people to the towns. The proportion of population in Canadian towns is probably more than three times what it was fifty years ago, probably 40 per cent. of the whole population. This gives the farmer five or six times as much to do as formerly. To do it he requires machinery, clothing and other necessities of life, all of which comes from the town. The upbuilding of the towns is the first necessity for the farmer if he is to have a market, the success of the farmer is the first concern of the townsman, if he is to get food and shelter at a reasonable price. Those who have read Roman history will remember the story of "The belly and the members." Let them apply this to modern social conditions and they will see the folly of opposing any trade or calling that is necessary to a country's welfare.

FARMER AND MANUFACTURER

Here is an illustration of the preceding paragraph. To object to an unreasonable tariff is one thing to strangle manufacture is another. In the past some of the manufacturers have been unreasonable beyond endurance. The western farmers are but seeking fair treatment. As we understand it they are not as a class seeking some special privilege. If they were they should be opposed by every good citizen. They are asking redress, which is quite a different thing. The organization of classes for the purpose of seeking special privileges is always wrong. A farmers' association would be just as justifiable, but also just as hateful as an association of manufacturers if the purpose were as indicated. Fortunately there has been no organization with such purpose up till the present, and there is not likely to be if wise counsel prevails. What the farmers have been demanding is a good fighting chance, and they are going to get it, even if the proposed reciprocity arrangements do not give them much relief.

MIDDLEMEN AND CONSUMERS

Here again we are at an old question. The statements made a year ago in these columns were challenged at the time. They have been more than verified since. Whether a poor artisan is buying the product of the soil or the factory, he invariably pays very much more than he should, and this because of the exactions of those who act as middlemen. But middlemen there must be, and they are not all rascals. More than that, they are not all making money. The worst of it is that those who are making most are daily receiving fresh gifts from parliament. Do you know, you dweller on the plain, how much you pay because your representatives in parliament had not the courage to stand up for your right? Do you not see that there is only one solution for your problem? You have the power in your hands if you will use it. In all the legislation of today in so far as it bears on the cost of living,

the one man who has never received consideration is the consumer. Until he is fairly treated there will be national unrest and dissatisfaction, for, as was said in the beginning, national unity depends in the long run upon the prevalence of fairness or justice. You can make justice prevail if you only have courage and independence and are anxious that every man should have "the square deal."

THE RECIPROCITY NEGOTIATIONS

Now all the cases just quoted are but typical. It is because men cannot rise above their personal and class interests that there is such bitterness and such disagreement on all public questions. Nothing better illustrates this than the matter which is before the public at the present time—the matter of reciprocity. What seems a wise provision to some, seems gross injustice to others who follow a different calling or who are differently placed geographically. This takes no account of the professional politicians who will differ as a matter of course. There must be two sides to play any game.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFERENCES

If the negotiations go into effect it is evident that the route of trade, in so far as farm produce is concerned, will be altered. Of course the railroads will be affected. So will Fort William and Port Arthur, so will Winnipeg—now the greatest wheat shipping district in America. But will there not be compensation in lowered traffic rates to meet the new form of competition? Will not the gain even for these cities counterbalance the loss? As for the west generally, there is everything to gain from an outlet to the south, and the entry without duty of vegetables and fruit will be to the middle classes a great boon, for up till now fruit has been a luxury that can be enjoyed only by the wealthy. Away in eastern Canada, where the staple industry is different from ours, no doubt the proposed scheme will be received less graciously. The question in so far as it is a question of dollars and cents is, "How will it affect Canadian trade as a whole?" The fortune of a particular town or city is neither here nor there.

INDUSTRIAL DIFFERENCES.

It was natural that the millers should feel alarmed at first, but on second thought they realize that it is not their loss, but a loss to the consumers. The price of bread will rise and the miller will lose nothing. Indeed, all through, the manufacturers will lose nothing. They never stand to lose, and never will until parliaments take on a new complexion. But the consumer of bread and meat will find a difference, and it is questionable if among the poorer classes this will be compensated by permission to buy spring vegetables at a lower price. And so we may expect a smile from the farmers, a groan from the railroads, a look of indifference from manufacturers, except in so far as they see in the measure the beginning of a new policy which may prove disastrous; but the poor wage earner—well what does he count for anyway! Now there must not be too much attention paid to complaints of individuals, nor to praises of individuals, the question again is, "How will the measure affect the comfort and wealth of Canadians as a whole?"

THE REAL VALUE OF RECIPROCITY

This question is not to be answered by looking at the present effect of the legislation, but by considering what the end may be. And that end it is not difficult to foresee. Where there is free exchange of products between two nations there is no war; Canada and the United States will undoubtedly become more and more friendly, not only because reciprocity will be extended to other commodities, but because there will be an increasing proportion of Americans on the Canadian side. Nor need this in the slightest affect the relation of Canada to the mother land. Let it rather be said that it will draw together the Anglo-Saxon people of the world into a friendly combination that nothing can successfully combat. An Anglo-Saxon alliance—but not a legislative union—is what the world needs today. Such alliance is more possible than it was a month ago because of the recent negotiations.

This conception of a freedom-loving race working for world emancipation is enough to make individuals and classes forget their petty interests. The greatest moment in the life of an individual is when he gets the community view.