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BRITISH WAGES. THE statement of Mr. Will Crooks, labour member for Woolwich, that sixty per cent. of the adult workers of Great Britain are receiving less than \$5.50 per week wages, points to a condition of general poverty, which evidently demands a radical change in the economic policy of the United Kingdom. His suggested remedy of a compulsory minimum rate of \$7.50 holds out no hope whatever of permanent or even temporary relief. These things have a tendency to adjust themselves without regard to mere legislative restrictions regarding rates of wages. The reply of Mr. Tennant, the Under-Secretary of the Board of Trade, that, the change would cost \$88,000,000 a year, and would tend to increase the cost of production, and invite foreign competition may be represented as unsympathetic, but it is not necessarily so. The logic of facts is often coldly unsympathetic, but that does not exonerate ministers from the responsibility of telling the truth, as they see it. Unintentionally, no doubt, Mr. Tennant and Mr. Crooks made a strong argument in favour of tariff reform. Mr. Crooks showed the existence of intolerable conditions among the wage earners. Mr. Tennant showed that the natural remedy is the minimising of foreign competition. If Mr. Chamberlain had made the same statement as Mr. Crooks, regarding the wages of sixty per cent. of British workers, he would have been denounced for exaggerated sensationalism with partisan objects in view. If Mr. Balfour had suggested that the remedy for this awful state of affairs lay in minimising foreign competition rather than a socialistic legislation about the rate of wages, he would have been anathematised for economic heresy; for venturing to criticise the economic system under which the free-traders boast that England is still the most prosperous country in the world. "Manu est veritas, et praevalabit."

**THE FARMER,
THE CONSUMER
AND THE MIDDLEMAN.**

SOME wise people fail to see how it is possible for any argument to be used against the Reciprocity Agreement in Canada, which will not tell in its favour in the United States. For instance, if one of the effects is to be a levelling down of prices obtainable by the Canadian farmer for his produce, the effect must be, according to them, a tendency to reduce the cost of

living in the United States. Senator McCumber, of North Dakota, does not share this view. He claims that the only person in the United States to benefit will be the middleman. He bases his opinion upon the undeniable fact that the amount which the duty upon raw materials adds to the cost of food products in the United States bears so small a ratio to the retail cost in the American home markets, of those products, as to be scarcely worth consideration. He says with great truth: "The money which the consumer pays for food products in the United States, is not paid to the farmer, who supplied the raw material. It consists principally of the enormous price paid for the labour devoted to the manufacture of articles of food, their transportation, handling and marketing, added to the thousand-and-one little payments, which we call over-head charges, all imposed on it after it leaves the farmer's hands." As an illustration, he takes the case of wheat. A bushel makes seventy-five cents loaves. If the ten cents a bushel duty were added to the cost of the baked bread, it would increase it exactly one thirty-seventh of one cent a loaf. Taking the duty off wheat, we decrease the cost of bread by the same amount. Will the duty make any difference in the price of bread to the consumer? To ask the question, is to answer it. Another case instanced is that of beef. A 1,200 pound steer sells for \$50 or \$60. Butchered, it dresses down to 800 pounds, and beef and by-products retail for \$133. The Senator observes: "The retailer gets 125 per cent. more for it than the farmer did, and followed to the first-class restaurants we find that the beef for which the farmer gets but \$80 is disposed of to the ultimate consumer for not less than \$2,500."

WESTERN CROP PROSPECTS. M. R. C. E. McPHERSON, of Winnipeg, assistant passenger traffic manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway, who

was in Montreal this week, says: "The West expects the largest crop in its history. A larger number of new settlers have come in this spring than in any previous corresponding time, and they are of a very superior class. The conditions for a bountiful harvest are excellent and everybody is content over the prospects."

