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RICHIBUCTO, N. B. MARCH 29, 1900

THE PREFERENTIAL TARIFF.

The Conservative party has never forgiven Sir Wilfred Laurier for making their 18 years of flag waving ridiculous in the eyes of the people of both the old and the new land. After beating time to the tune of "God save the Queen" and forgetting that patriotism is best expressed in deeds, it was a startling thing to the Conservative leaders to witness the audacity contained in the offer made by Canada under a Liberal administration to the mother country Sir Charles Tupper had used his position of High Commissioner at London chiefly for the purpose of imbuing public opinion in Great Britain with the notion that all the genius for government, all the business ability and all the love for Queen and country which was contained in Canada lay in the confines of the Conservative party. "After us the deluge," was the positive opinion of that politician, who being unable to use adjectives except in the superlative degree, no doubt impressed the rulers of the home land with his sincerity.

When Sir Wilfred Laurier appeared in London, after the "deluge" had come in 1896, there must have been a widespread curiosity to see the Empire wrecker with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears the announcement of treason and disunion. To their surprise perhaps the people of Great Britain beheld a gentleman and a statesman, a man of French-Canadian heritage bringing to them not mere empty words of Canada's devotion but the proof of its reality in the free-will offering of a preference to British goods on the Canadian markets. Since that date Sir Charles Tupper has been discredited in the eyes of British statesmen. Hence the blind fury and consuming passion with which the ex-High Commissioner to London approaches the discussion of public questions in general, and Imperial trade preference in particular. The reason for the failure of the Conservative attempt to discredit this policy lies in the simple fact that their leaders contradict themselves and each contradicts the other. In a word they are engaged in a hopeless struggle with the facts.

Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Geo. E. Foster declare there has been no reduction in the general tariff of Canada and that this preference is a sham. The facts are that there has been a general reduction in the Canadian tariff amounting to about \$3,000,000 last year and that the Imperial preference is not a sham but a wholesome preference in favour of British manufacturers of 25 per cent. Last year British goods were imported into Canada to the value of \$37,000,000 as compared with an importation of only \$29,412,000 in 1896 shewing an increase of seven

and a half million dollars in our purchases from Great Britain. It is quite true that in the same period our purchases from the United States were much greater, but that was not on account of the preferential tariff but in spite of it. When we remember that British imports into Canada had steadily fallen year by year from \$1,000,000 in 1878 to \$29,000,000 in 1896 one must admire the "unparalleled audacity" (to copy one of the Tupperian phrases) of the men who deny that the British preference has been effective.

But the people of this Dominion did not undertake, when they offered the generous preference to British goods, to insure the British exporter against the slaughter prices of the American manufacturer any more than they undertook to buy raw material in any but the cheapest market. They simply undertook to give the British exporter to Canada and primarily the people of Canada itself, the benefit of bringing their wares into Canada at three-fourths the duty paid on foreign or American wares. To understand whether this was a real benefit let us examine the facts. In 1898-9 British goods imported under the preferential tariff were valued at \$26,597,442 and the duty paid amounted to \$5,885,292 or about 22 per cent. If the preferential clause had not been in operation the duty would have been nearly \$8,000,000 shewing a reduction in one year of \$2,000,000 due to the operation of the preferential tariff. This reduction would seem to be a real preference as well as a real tariff reform.

Sir Charles Tupper in order to belittle these facts, declares that the reduction in duty on American imports was "tenfold" the reduction on British imports. If this statement were exact it would mean a reduction of \$22,000,000 in the tariff or more than the entire tariff collections of 1896. So that either Sir Charles is mistaken when he denies tariff reduction or when he denies the reality of the British preference. As a matter of fact he is exaggerating always. The truth is that no preference Canada could give Britain would enable the latter to supply us with our raw material, the bulk of which naturally comes from or through the United States, yet it would be a monstrosity, if for that reason our raw cotton, anthracite coal, iron, hides, corn, &c., were to be taxed. On the other hand in many lines of manufactured goods a preference of 1/4 of the duty allows the British manufacturer to sell his goods in Canada in competition with the U. S. producer, and at the same time this preference is a benefit to the people of Canada as a real tariff reduction.

There is another side to this Imperial trade story, namely the effect of Canada's generosity on her own export trade with Britain. In 1873 the aggregate trade, imports and exports, between Canada and the mother land was \$107,266,624. In 1896 this aggregate Imperial trade had fallen to \$99,670,030, and in 1895 was \$7,000,000 less. In 1898 this Imperial trade had increased to \$137,499,735, shewing an immediate and enormous increase following the introduction of the Fielding tariff of 1897. It's little wonder with such a brilliant array of facts against them the Conservative leaders make such a fearful muddle of this tariff discussion and are driven from corner to corner in an attempt to find excuses for the era of commercial prosperity which has reigned in Canada during the past four years.

POLITICAL HUMBAG.

The attempt of the Conservative leaders to stampede public opinion by their anti-French Canadian crusade, has called forth

strong protests from the intelligent men of both parties who prefer the good of the country to the temporary success of a party. Moreover the determined opposition of the Conservative members of the House of Commons to the strong Imperial policy of the Laurier Administration is so thoroughly inconsistent with their blatant profession of patriotic Imperialism as to make them ridiculous in the eyes of the electorate. Never has this been better shown than in the debate in the House of Commons last week on the Preferential Tariff Resolution introduced by Dr. Russell, the Liberal M. P. for Halifax, N. S., and opposed by the Conservative leaders. To judge from the remarks of these Conservative orators from Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Geo. E. Foster down to Dr. Montague there is no loyalty but lip loyalty. Their loyalty fades from view when it commences to be practical or takes a form to touch the pockets of the people for whom they dare to speak. The Laurier Administration is attacked most bitterly for having granted the valuable concession of 25 per cent. tariff reduction on British imports without having Shylock-like first demanded from Britain the pound of flesh in the shape of a return preference to Canadian goods entering the British markets. It is idle to point out to these monopolists of patriotic Imperialism that such a traffic would reduce our patriotism to the barter of the market place. That in return for past favours, and to prove to the world our love for the flag was something more than a mere desire to feed more deeply on the bounty of the mother land, Canada had for the first time in her history brought a free-will offering of generous esteem for the acceptance of her mother.

As the Mail and Empire in 1878 retorted that if the National Policy was a barrier to our trade relations with Britain "then so much the worse for British connection," so the Tory leaders to-day assure us there can be no patriotism where our business interests are concerned. Listen to the brummagen type of Imperialism voiced by one of the Tory leaders, Dr. Montague, "When it comes to a matter of trade," he said, "we have 'as much right to ask a quid pro quo from John Bull as from any 'other party on earth.'" This must mean either one of two things. It may mean that all the talk Canada is making of its willingness to suffer for the Empire is in Conservative eyes merely lip loyalty, or it may mean that the Tory form of patriotism only shews itself when blood is to be spilt, i. e. of course some other fellow's blood. The deep, strong idea of Imperialism which waits not for ruin to come before it proffers assistance, which is willing to bear its share of sacrifice for the general good, which is more intent on shewing its generous impulses than of grabbing more than of right belongs to it, that form of Imperialism is absolutely incomprehensible to the flag wavers and the loyalty howlers of a defunct Toryism. Yet that is the form of Imperialism that the government of Canada has, with the almost unanimous support of the electorate, been exhibiting since 1896. As the Toronto Globe admirably expresses it:

"Of the patriotism that is ready to fight there will never be any lack in an Anglo-Saxon or British community. But patriotism is a matter of building as well as of fighting; and it is a mistake to create the impression that the every-day work, whether of a legislator or of a carpenter, is not patriotic if honestly done, or that patriotism is something to be displayed merely in flags and fireworks and in time of war."

The Empire builders are not confined to the brave soldiers who fight Britain's wars, but include

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on the illustrious roll the names of statesmen like Sir Wilfred Laurier who have solidified the various members of the confederacy, removed to some extent at least the distrust, suspicion and race hatreds which have been our heritage in Canada from bygone days and have instilled into our people a belief in themselves and strengthened their sympathy with the noble ideal of a united Empire. The attempts to belittle the great work of the past four years are on a par with the "Rule or Ruin" policy of Sir Charles Tupper in other respects. The latest feature of this policy as expounded in the Montreal Star is founded on the now accepted axiom of the Conservative party, "that patriotism must be made the plaything for politicians, the good by which 'the people of Canada may be driven to forget the past and place in power the arch conspirator who has dared to play with the passions of a patriotic people.'" The Tupper policy of 1900 is but a new edition of an old time political humbug.

THE SURPLUS.

The Budget speech of Hon. W. S. Fielding last week contained many pleasant announcements to the Canadian people. The predictions in regard to the expected surplus of last year were definitely announced as accomplished facts and the \$5,000,000 surplus is no longer a dream of Liberal imagination but the realization of Liberal administration. Better things are promised us for the current year, for the Finance Minister is bold enough to predict that he can beat his own record for surpluses and announces that with another reduction in taxation of a million dollars or more he can produce a surplus of seven and a half millions for the year ending June 30th, 1900. The St. John Sun is so staggered at the splendid shewing that it almost reads like a good Grit Journal as the following excerpts will show: "The exposition of the Canadian Budget," begins the Sun's editorial, "is a pleasant duty when trade is buoyant, revenues copious and surpluses prevail. Such was the happy

position of Mr. Fielding yesterday." So the Sun has at last discovered the trade of Canada is buoyant, its revenues copious and surpluses prevalent and all under Liberal rule. The Sun for the moment has lost its combativeness evidently or it never would be guilty of the following admission, "The predicted surplus of this year may or may not appear, while that of last year, amounting to nearly five millions, is a fact."

In addition to the magnificent shewing of Canada's finances, Mr. Fielding was privileged to be in the position to announce that the Imperial Government has agreed to secure legislation placing Canadian government securities on a par with Imperial securities as investments for trust funds. This means not only the ability of Canada to loan money in the future at cheaper rates, but it must also have the tendency to direct British capital more and more towards ordinary business investments in this country.

The tariff changes proposed are few, simple and, besides being all directed to tariff reduction, are such as to commend themselves to every loyal Canadian. The placing on the free list for example of machinery such as is not made in Canada for the manufacture of beet sugar means the bonusing of an important industry without any cost to the people of Canada except the remission of a duty which they never had, and were never likely to have under old conditions. The proposal to admit free of duty all the products of Trinidad, except spirits and tobacco, when such products are imported direct, is a sensible move towards capturing the important trade of that island which is now practically controlled in the United States. In return for their sugar, cocoa and asphalt which Canada admits free, Trinidad will admit all Canadian goods free or under a minimum rate of duty.

Of all the proposals decidedly the most important is the one to make the Canadian tariff prefer-

ence on British goods 33 1/2 per cent. instead of 25 per cent. as it is at present. As we show in another article in this issue, the British preference has been a real thing under the 25 per cent. reduction, and the additional advantage which it is proposed to give the Imperial products must of necessity mean a very great deal in these days of close competition to the British manufacturer. It is at the same time a dignified reply by facts to the sensational denunciations of the Government of Canada as traitorous and disloyal. The Star and its anti-Liberal sensations was laid out for political burial on Saturday last when the country learned of the proposed action of the Laurier Administration. Facts talk louder than words and our people have discovered who the loyalists of Canada are.

JOTTINGS.

The budget speech must have made poor old man Tupper wonder if the Conservatives were really entitled to the divine right of government in Canada.

The country prefers Fielding and annual surpluses to Foster and annual deficits.

Patriotism is a fine thing to talk about, but it means ever so much more when it is concentrated into action.

Oh yes! Sir Charles intends to introduce a British preference in the sweet by and by. But the people of Canada would rather have it done here than hereafter.

And now the Tories will agree that "business is business" and patriotism ought to be kept out of it.

Clarge Wallace's definition of patriotism apparently is that it is a political pea and shell game over the operation of which the Conservative party holds a monopoly. Now you see it and now you don't.

\$5,000,000 surplus for 1899. No wonder Mr. Tarte in 1898 said "just watch us next year." We are all watching for the \$7,000,000 surplus for 1900 and it will materialize.

That's the best of Liberal surpluses, they are real. Not mere figments of the imagination as many of these between 1878 and 1892 were.

RULE OR RUIN.

MONTREAL HERALD.

A few days ago we showed that the genesis of the much-to-be-regretted street rows in this city was to be found in the inflammatory articles appearing in certain Conservative papers, notably the Montreal Star. These articles were clearly written and published with the intent of exciting the sentiment of the English-speaking peoples of the Dominion against Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his Government. In other words, we held that the despicable crime of creating race hatred was being perpetrated for the sake of partizan advantage—a crime that, in a country like Canada, composed of two distinct races, falls nothing short of high treason.

Proof of the truth of our surmises as to the motive actuating the publishers of at least one of these Conservative papers has come with surprising quickness. We have in our possession copies of the Montreal Star containing two different versions of the recent troubles in this city. One of these versions was distributed in Montreal; the other was sent broadcast over the English Provinces. Referring to the procession of Laval students, the following statements appeared in these two issues:—

FOR THE ENGLISH PROVINCES. READER S

"At the head of the 'At the head of procession there is the procession there seen in the place of is seen a flag those honor the tricolor of men had no right to use it to replace the British flag."

Both statements are false. The flag really carried was the flag of the University of Laval, and the Union Jack was carried in the centre of the procession, in what was considered the place of honor. The one statement that the flag was one the men had no right to use, was meant to convey, by intendo, a false impression. The other statement was a direct falsehood, calculated to arouse in English minds, suspicion and hatred of the French Canadian people. No explanation of this extraordinary perversion of the facts has been vouchsafed. On the contrary, measures have been taken to give it a circulation far beyond the bounds of the paper's regular readers. The following, from the columns of the Sarnia Observer, a journal edited by a gentleman long and

prominently connected with the Canadian militia service, explains in some degree what these measures are, by whom they are being operated, and in whose interest:—

"The Montreal Star is again at its dastardly work of fomenting hatred between the English-speaking and French Canadian sections of the community, with no other object than causing trouble with the Government and endeavoring to arouse opposition to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on account of his nationality. It is sending out through the mails copies of an issue of the Star filled with inflammatory illustrations and incendiary articles concerning the recent riots in which the students of McGill College and Laval University disgraced themselves by rowdy exhibitions of partizanship in which those of McGill were the aggressors and originators. These infamous distorted accounts of the troubles caused by the students refer only to the acts committed by Laval, ignoring those of McGill, which brought on the riots. Copies of these papers have been mailed to officers of the militia (other than French-Canadian we presume) throughout the Dominion. The political purpose and significance of this shameful effort to poison the public mind by falsely colored statements is plainly established by the fact that the papers so mailed are being sent out under wrappers stamped with the House of Commons postmark and franked by the senior Tory whip, Mr. Taylor, M. P., who thus prostitutes his privileges by sending partizan newspapers through the mails free, and abets the millionaire aspirant for a senatorship, Hugh Graham, in defrauding the revenue out of the postage he should pay for sending his papers broadcast over the Dominion."

But more than this. Under the frank of the same Mr. Taylor, so The Herald is advised, copies of the Montreal Witness are being mailed throughout the country, with the reference therein to the Laval students blue-pencilled, while the reports of the McGill students' doings are ignored. We are informed that an order for a special edition of forty-five thousand of these papers were placed by a local news dealer.

What does all this go to show? That the Conservative party in Parliament, through its constituted officials, is utilizing the mis-statements emanating from Montreal for the purpose of creating racial antagonisms, and that instead of repudiating the nefarious work of men who would tear the races asunder with a wedge of falsehood, it is actually hammering out the wedge.