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The Issues

IN THE

CAMPAIGN OF 1900.

A SHORT AND PLAIN STATEMENT OF FACTS.

PAST AND PRESENT.

No man who has his eyes open can fail to see that a great change for the better has come over Canada since 1896. It would not be reasonable to claim all the credit for the happy conditions which now prevail for the Liberals. Providence has smiled upon the land, and the Dominion is sharing in the prosperity which extends over the world. But this much is at least true: We would not have advanced as we have done if the advent of the Liberal party had not changed conditions, and removed obstacles which stood in the way of natural progress.

In the first place, the country was in the throes of racial and religious controversy. The Manitoba School question menaced the peace of the entire Dominion. Who can doubt that if the Conservatives had succeeded in 1896, and had endeavored to carry out their policy of coercion, we should have been in danger of a rebellion? The triumph of Sir Wilfrid Laurier at the polls removed that burning and troublesome question at once and forever out of the realm of practical politics. We could have no such thing as active and harmonious co-operation among the people of Canada while men of different races and creeds were at each other's throats. For that trouble and danger the Conservatives were responsible and for their removal the country is indebted to Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

There was another matter which operated directly against the commercial and industrial growth of the Dominion—the instability of the tariff. Not a session was allowed to pass without changes in the scale of duties. On one hand the Conservatives stood for protection, and yet they were undecided as to how much or how little protection would answer the needs of Canadian trade. They tinkered constantly with the scale of duties. On the other hand, the people had been taught to be suspicious of the Liberals. They were told, in language calculated to alarm, that if the Liberals once gained power they would immediately adopt free trade as it is in England; that the industries of the country would be ruined, and a commercial revolution be brought about. It is not surprising that in such circumstances capital grew more and more sensitive, that enterprise should be checked, that industrial expansion should go on slowly, and that the demand for labor should be fluctuating and unsatisfactory.

With the incoming of the Liberals and

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the introduction of the new tariff a great change spread over the country. Confidence succeeded to uncertainty. Capital flowed in from abroad. Activity began in every branch of trade. The wheels of commerce moved with a new impetus. Prosperity and progress were everywhere evident. The Dominion assumed a new and attractive status in the eyes of the world.

TORY PROPHECIES.

Every elector who can recall events between 1878 and 1896 will be familiar with the forecasts of calamity and woe which Conservatives and their press constantly presented to the people. If the Liberals should be placed in power it was said that Canada would go to the dogs. Going no further back than 1896, here are a few of the prophecies which appeared in the columns of the Montreal "Star," which in that year became the chief mouthpiece of Conservative opinion in Canada:—

- "Wages of all operatives will fall."
"The money in circulation all over Canada will shrink until scarcity of money will be a national cry."
"Employers of labor would be driven to increase the length of the working hours to compensate for the loss of trade."
"Americans, Germans and Swiss will immediately invade the Dominion as a slaughter market, and when the factories and shops have been destroyed and Canadian mechanics driven from the country, will put up the prices of all imported goods, with the certain result of increased expense to every family."
"Work for all wage-earners will grow scarcer and scarcer every month, until the whole character of the industrial life in Canada will have been changed, with corresponding depression throughout the country."
"All bank and joint stock companies' shares will suffer continuous impairment."
"All railway and steamboat companies will be affected by the vastly reduced number of passengers."
"It will take twenty years, even with the abolition of the condemned revenue tariff, to climb again to the post where Canada stands to-day, and we believe tens of thousands of families will be pauperized beyond the possibility of recovery."

Nor was this all. On the floor of Parliament, after Mr. Fielding had introduced the new Liberal tariff (which remains the same to-day) Sir Charles Tupper spoke as follows:—
"The result is that this tariff goes into

operation, and the industries of this country are already paralyzed in consequence, while hon. members gloat, vindictively gloat, over the destruction of Canadian industries. I was reading the wail, the sorrowful wail, of these industries in the Montreal Gazette, where one manufacturer after another declared that their industries were ruined, that their mills must close, and that they saw staring them in the face a return to the deplorable state of things that existed when the hon. gentleman (Sir Richard Cartwright) that last addressed the House was in charge of the fiscal policy of the country. I say that a deeper wrong was never inflicted upon Canada. I feel that so far from rejoicing at it from a party standpoint, I deplore from the bottom of my heart the ruin that is going to be inflicted upon the best interests of Canada and upon its great industries. Still, I hesitatingly say that, from a party point of view, the gentlemen are doing our work. They are showing the people of this country that no reliance can be placed upon the most solemn declarations that they may make, either in the House or out of it. They are showing the people of this country that, having obtained power, which was all they wished for, they are now prepared to abuse that power at a cost of the sacrifice of the industries of Canada."

An announcement like the foregoing, from the leader of the Conservative party, is glaringly inconsistent with latter utterances on the subject of the tariff. When good times had come and prosperity was everywhere evident, then Sir Charles Tupper changed his tune. He declared that the National Policy was still in force. When, however, the new tariff was first brought before him, and after he had become familiar with all the changes involved therein, he did not hesitate to say in the language quoted above that it meant "the destruction of Canadian industries." What follows will show how far astray were the Conservatives in their prophecies of ruin.

THE GROWTH OF CANADA.

Contrary to the dark predictions of the Conservatives Canada has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity since the advent of a Liberal government. In fact, the results are so astounding that few people seem to realize the full measure and meaning of what has taken place within the short period of four years past.

Take first the foreign trade of Canada, which touches the interests of all classes in every part of the Dominion:—

Table showing Total trade in 1878, 1896, and 1900, with annual increases.

Table showing Liberal Period trade figures for 1896 and 1900.

Table showing Liberal Period trade figures for 1896 and 1900.

That this immensely increased volume of trade has carried with it an increase of capital in the country is apparent from the bank returns. The deposits of the people in the chartered and Government Savings Banks, quite apart from those in the other savings banks of the Dominion, have grown as follows:—

Table showing Chartered Banks, Post office & Gov. Sav'gs Banks, and Total for various years.

This showing is sustained by the history of note circulation. The note circulation of the chartered banks and the Dominion Government has been as follows:—

Table showing note circulation for various years from 1894 to 1900.

The circulation of \$1 and \$2 Dominion notes—which are used in making up wages, payments and in shopping—shows a corresponding increase:—

Table showing circulation of \$1 and \$2 Dominion notes for various years.

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Table showing circulation of \$1 and \$2 Dominion notes for various years.

The bank clearings at six of the chief cities of Canada—Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Halifax and St. John—have swollen enormously, as the following table shows:—

Table showing bank clearings for various years.

In the same way the traffic of the railways has grown. Here are the figures:—

Table showing railway traffic figures for various years.

No one can successfully question the fact that the population of Canada has grown very largely during the last four years. The general prosperity which has prevailed has kept our own people from going abroad, and has also induced many thousands to settle in our land. The record of immigration since 1896, has been as follows:—

Table showing immigration figures for various years.

TAXATION.

It is charged by opponents of the Government that Liberals undertook to reduce taxation, and instead of doing so have actually increased it. This is a charge which goes right to the bottom of the fiscal policy of the Government, and if it could be established would certainly weaken the Liberal cause before the people. Happily, however, it is a matter which will bear the closest analysis, and the more it is discussed before intelligent and fair-minded electors, the stronger and more convincing becomes the Liberal position. It is only necessary to have the

facts clearly in hand, and to fully and candidly present them.

Taxation in Canada means customs duties. There are other forms of taxation, but they do not enter into the controversy between parties. In the last analysis the question at issue turns upon whether or not the tariff has been lowered or raised. Nothing is easier to establish before the people than that the tariff has been lowered, and that the rate of taxation has been decreased.

Here are the facts:—

Table showing imports for consumption and duty collected in 1896 and 1900.

A reduction of 3.52 per cent. in the rate is equivalent to a reduction of 14 per cent. of the rate, and to that extent the present Government has lowered the burden of taxation upon the people. No juggling of figures can change that fact, which is the essence of the whole matter.

Opponents of the Government, however, never under any circumstances allude to the rate of taxation. They always speak of volume. They take advantage of the very large increase in the business of the country since 1896 to dwell upon the amount of money collected. They say: "The Liberals undertook to reduce taxation, and yet in 1900 they collected \$7,500,000 more from the people than in 1896. They have broken their pledge."

The answer to this unfair presentation of the case is easily made. The Liberals at no time ever undertook to reduce the volume of taxation. It would have been absurd for them to have done so. The Government has no control whatever over the total amount of money that will be paid into the treasury in the form of customs duties. The Government can only control the rate of duty, and in the exercise of that control the present administration lowered the rate to the extent shown.

The reason why more money was paid as customs duties in 1900 than in 1896, was because in 1900 the people imported \$183,209,273 worth of goods for consumption, whereas, in 1896, they only imported \$110,587,480 worth. That was a matter which the Government could not control. The people, in their prosperity, did it voluntarily. What, however, would have been the result if the Foster tariff of 1896 had still been in force? Instead of paying \$28,866,986 the people would have paid \$33,490,655. So that on the business of 1900 the saving to the people was equivalent to a direct reduction of \$4,623,669 in the volume of taxation. They would have paid just that much more under the Tory tariff. And taking into account the business of the three years since 1897, the year of the tariff changes, the money left in the pockets of the people, which would have been taken out under the Foster rate of taxation, exceeds \$11,000,000.

Many analogous cases could be drawn from everyday life to illustrate the absurdity of the Conservative argument in respect of taxation; but this one will suffice:—A new company gets control of the St. John Street Railway on the promise that they will make street railway travelling cheaper. On taking charge they reduce the price of tickets from six for 25 cents to eight for 25 cents. In doing this they absolutely and honestly keep their pledge. They can do no more. At the end of the year, however, Mr. Foster goes to the President of the Company and says:—"You have not kept your pledge to make travelling by street railway cheaper. Last year my street railway fares amounted to only \$3.00, whereas this year they have gone up to \$4.00. Street railway travelling has become dearer instead of cheaper." Would not every fair-minded man see the completeness of the President's answer when he said:—"True, you have paid \$1.00 more this year than last. Last year you rode 72 times for \$3, and this year you could have ridden 95 times for the same amount. But you chose of your own accord to ride 128 times this year, and therefore you paid \$1 more on the whole. Had the old rate of six tickets for a quarter been kept in operation you

would have paid \$5.75 for your 128 rides. In a nutshell that is the case of taxation.

The Conservative view of taxation will not bear consideration in the light of the preferential tariff. It cannot be denied that upon every dollar's worth of dutiable goods imported from Great Britain one-third of the duty is remitted under the new tariff.

Then there is the matter of postage. Postage is a form of direct taxation which reaches everybody. Will it be denied that the Liberals have reduced the ordinary postal charges by one-third?

If necessary a very long list could be given of articles which were placed upon the free list in 1897, as well as of articles in respect of which the duty was at that time reduced. These reductions must have been felt at the time to have been very considerable, otherwise Sir Charles Tupper would not have felt justified in commenting on the new tariff in the terms which are quoted on a preceding page.

It is the custom of opposing speakers and journals to divide the total revenue of the country by the population, and thus figure out that each family pays so much more into the treasury than in 1896. Intelligent electors will smile at such tactics. They know that taxes are not paid in that way. Taxes under our system are paid on imports, and the man who buys a basket of champagne, or a cabinet of silverware, pays more into the Dominion treasury than the average working man or farmer need do in ten years. It could be very easily shown that nearly the entire increase in customs receipts has come from the importation of luxuries. In good times the people who are making more money will buy what under other circumstances they would do without.

THE EXPENDITURE.

One of the charges upon which opponents of the Government hope to largely influence public judgment is, that while the Liberals were committed to reduce the annual expenditure account, they have increased it. This allegation they expect to establish by doing three things:

- First—By misrepresenting what was the pledge of the Liberal Party in respect of the expenditure.
Second—By unwarrantably minimizing the figures of 1896 and exaggerating those of 1900.
Third—By concealing the facts in relation to the accounts of 1900, and the circumstances under which increases have taken place.

As this is a matter respecting which there is much need for light and information, touching as it does the important question of capacity to govern, under new and rapidly changing conditions, it is well to study carefully the facts. Let it first be clearly borne in mind that the Liberal Party, in adopting a general platform in 1893, did not say a single word about reducing the expenditure. The exact words of the resolution placed on record are as follows:—

"We cannot but view with alarm the large increase of the public debt and of the controllable annual expenditure of the Dominion, and the consequent undue taxation of the people under the governments that have been continuously in power since 1878, and we demand the strictest economy in the administration of the government of the country."

It is of no consequence that individual Liberals may have expressed other views on the subject. This was the pledge of the Liberal Party, and the only pledge in that regard.

What were the circumstances which, in 1893, warranted this demand for the strictest economy? They were sufficient to make the situation exceedingly grave. The Conservatives had assumed office in 1878 on a clear and definite pledge to reduce the expenditure. The outlay in Mr. Mackenzie's last year had been \$23,503,158. This the new economists ran up year by year until in 1893, when the Liberals met in convention, it stood at \$36,814,052. At the same time the public debt grew from \$140,362,069 in 1878 to \$241,681,039 in 1893. Nor was this all. The outlay was in many years larger than (Continued on page five.)

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