

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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BRITISH FREE TRADE.

British free trade is now face to face with what may be its last battle. Manufacturing and agriculture have almost given up the unequal struggle and the fact of being freely admitted by press and public that the old free trade policy, the policy which made Great Britain the world's greatest industrial centre, has outlived its usefulness, and is, under present conditions, the cause of the unparalleled industrial and agricultural distress which has thrown a million and a half people out of employment.

For many decades Great Britain was the manufacturing centre of the world. The raw products of the world were poured into the country free of duty and manufactured into commodities which supplied the world's markets. The industrial centres grew into populous cities, creating a market for her agricultural products which supplied but a fraction of her demands. She became a market for the agricultural countries of Europe.

In recent years the scene has changed. Germany, France, and Italy developed, industrially and from their protected factories poured their wares into England, Russia, Denmark, Poland and other large countries, finding free access to the British market, developed agriculturally with the result that the British farmer has been gradually crowded out. The Nottingham silk industry, once the greatest of its kind, has been demoralized by its inability to compete with the highly protected and government-assisted silk industry of France. Workers who found ready employment and earned good wages in the Nottingham mills are now walking the streets. Bradford, once the centre of the wool industry, is in a similar condition because French woollens are driving the British woollen goods out of the markets of the world, and even out of the British market.

The British press is very outspoken on the subject of protection and is issuing a warning that in the face of conditions as they are known to exist old policies must be scrapped and steps taken to save the country. There are conditions under which free access of foreign goods may be a blessing. These conditions existed for many years in Great Britain. She drew her raw materials freely from other countries and enriched herself by manufacturing them. When other countries, protected by tariff walls from competition, developed their manufacturing industries and poured their wares into the free markets of Britain. The inevitable followed.

We in Canada may well take warning from what has occurred in Great Britain. We are starving our agriculture by the almost free admission of agricultural products from a larger agricultural country than our own. We have developed our manufacturing by a measure of protection, but in the unequal agricultural competition we are losing ground and our industrial centres, our great home market is dwindling. Canada is awakening slowly to this fact; the attempt to revive the old humbug, reciprocity, and free importation of food and clothing to demoralize our agriculture and our industries, is becoming a forgotten dream. We need an awakening and a house-cleaning beginning at Ottawa, as the people of England realize that they need it and, in all probability will have it in the not distant future.

THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

On Friday next, Premier Mackenzie King leaves for England to attend the Imperial Conference. Questions of vital interest to the Empire and its overseas dominions will be threshed out at this meeting of the Empire's ablest men, questions in which Canada is perhaps more interested than any of the other dominions. Among the subjects in the agenda are questions of defence and of inter-imperial trade, on these two particularly the present Canadian premier does not see eye to eye with those of the other dominions and the outcome of the conference will be awaited with keen interest. The Ottawa correspondent of the Toronto Mail and Empire, discussing the intended departure of the Prime Minister, says in part: "No one has ever accused Mr. King of undue modesty, but in his first essay into the larger field he is as retiring as 'the shrinking violet'." He would gladly forego the fascinations of the London social life to escape conflict with the wily Smuts, the militant Bruce and Imperialistic Massey. They are all men of action, and Canada's Premier is for inaction in the European situation and Imperial defence, where these Premiers want decision and activity. They are not hampered in opinion or expression as are British statesmen, and will force the Canadian Premier into the open, as one who has come to a great Imperial Conference without courage or inclination to define Canada's position.

These requirements of the law imply that the drivers of motor cars are to use their discretion. On a clear strip of road in the country, where no obstacle intervenes the driver may go at speed. But in places where there is traffic, or where children or old persons may suddenly appear, or where the road is rutty or rounded, or where there are culverts, the covering of which is higher than the level of the road, they shall "go slow"—or at least slow enough to avoid the danger of accident. They also imply that when there is an auto accident there shall be an investigation to determine the care or carelessness of the person or persons in charge of the machine or machines involved in it.

HOW THEY HELP.

The management of the Canadian National Railways has placed an order for 23,000 tons of steel rails in the United States. This, while Canadian mills are obliged to close their doors because of the shortage of orders and while Canadian workmen are daily leaving for the United States in search of employment is something that requires explanation. It is probable that the rails are intended for the portion of the Canadian National Railways situated in the United States, but that is not an adequate explanation.

Echoes are still in the air from the noise made by Liberals in Opposition over the purchase of United States coal for the use of the Canadian National Railways, although the purchase was amply justified by transportation conditions and the consequent cost of carriage. If there is any justification for this purchase of steel rails at a time when Canadian industry is suffering it is up to the Liberal Press or to the railway management to state it.

The recent increase in importations from the United States and the falling off of our exports to that country recently referred to in these columns and in the Canadian press has occasioned considerable comment. The present heavy purchase of steel rails from the same source is an added aggravation and some adequate explanation of it should be made at once. "Buy at home" is Canada's present motto. It is being adopted by the people generally as the only means of placing Canada on her commercial and industrial feet. If our government ignores it as it evidently does, both in its business transactions and in its fiscal policy it leaves little room for hope. Canada needs a house-cleaning and a general awakening and the operation must begin at Ottawa.

Notes By The Way

If every driver of a motor car were careful and obeyed the laws, rules and regulations made for the drivers' observance, there would be very few auto accidents. There is no machine that is more completely under the control of the person in charge of it than an automobile. A horse may run away, though driven by the most careful driver. But the auto stops on the instant—unless some part of it has been broken.

That auto accidents are on the increase here proves that the number of auto-drivers who are careless or reckless is increasing, that a more rigid enforcement of the laws and by-laws to regulate the running of motors is required, and that whenever there is an auto accident, the circumstances in which it occurred should be investigated.

There is a general provincial law that "no person shall operate a motor vehicle on any public highway at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable and proper," and that "no person shall operate a motor vehicle on any public highway recklessly or negligently, or so as to endanger the life or limb of any person or the safety of any property." The law also provides that "in determining whether a rate of speed was reasonable and proper or whether a motor vehicle was operated recklessly or negligently, so as to endanger the life of any person or the safety of any property, regard shall be had to all the circumstances, including the nature, condition and use of the public highway, and the amount of traffic which at the time actually was, or might reasonably be expected to be on the public highway."

A bye-law of the City of Charlottetown sets forth that "vehicles requiring to turn or slow up shall give visible and audible warning, and if turning to the left into another street shall keep close to the curb, and if turning to the right shall do so only after passing the centre of intersection of the streets." Further, the law requires that "no vehicle shall pass or attempt to pass another vehicle while turning at a crossing." There are other bye-laws, honored in the breach by some persons, which would, if observed by all, tend to the reduction of the number of auto-accidents. Everyone who drives a motor car of any kind should be intimately acquainted with the rules and regulations governing their operation. Yet persons who have never studied these regulations, small boys and immature young women, and others who have not arrived at years of discretion, are occasionally allowed to drive autos. In some parts of the United States there is an "unwritten law" that no person who has taken even one glass of intoxicating liquor shall enter a car to drive it. Here and everywhere a like law should govern all motorists.

It has to be admitted that the "great majority" of those who own and of those who drive motor cars are sufficiently careful and sufficiently well-informed and discreet. For the rest there should be a much more rigid enforcement of the law than there is. Law enforcement is becoming altogether too lax. In respect to auto driving as in respect to the sale and use of intoxicants, altogether too much liberty is permitted to the thoughtless and careless—those who drive autos and cause auto accidents. The authorities, policemen, constables, everyone whose duty it is to enforce the law, should be more sedulous than they are in the prosecution of offenders against the law.

Wherever an auto accident occurs and is reported, an investigation should at once be held into all the circumstances connected with it, and the expense entailed should be charged to the person to whose laxity or carelessness the accident was due. If auto drivers knew that their disobedience of the laws by which they are governed would be exposed in an investigation, and that they would be liable to fine and imprisonment, there would be more care and fewer accidents. We note that officers of the law in Montreal are very watchful over auto traffic, and that those drivers who disobey the law, or the officers of the law, are severely punished—heavy fines as well as imprisonment being imposed. The danger is, of course, greater in large cities, and narrow streets than it is in Charlottetown. But carelessness and disobedience should not be permitted here to any greater extent than in Montreal; and punishment should follow as surely here as in Montreal or London or any other city or country. It is hoped that Exhibition week in Charlottetown will not be marked by any auto accidents, and that everyone, including the police, will be watchful and active in the prosecution of those drivers of autos who are not careful.

The Public Forum

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinion expressed by its correspondents.

Glen William Poll

TO THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN.

Sir,—I notice in your paper of the 17th inst., an attempt by Mr. M. H. Bonnell to clear away the onus of being mixed up with the attempt by himself and poll officials to change the result of the Glen William Poll after the Deputy Returning Officer had closed up the ballot box which contained the Deputy Returning Officer's sworn statement of the Poll—and the more Mr. Bonnell squirms over this incident the worse he is making his case.

It is hardly necessary to go over the matter again, but I would refer to the public to the apology and retraction which Mr. Murdoch R. McLeod signed and which appeared in the Guardian of the 8th inst., and I am satisfied that they will see at once that some interested parties made an attempt to have the returns from the Glen William Poll changed so as to favor Mr. Bonnell.

Mr. Bonnell in his letter says: "I called on the day after the Election and then inquired for and obtained the statement from him personally."

This establishes the fact that Mr. Bonnell received the Certificate the day after the Election. Again quoting from Mr. Bonnell's letter: "That letter was endorsed on the back of the Election Return and delivered to me by the Deputy Returning Officer several days after the Election."

That is that Mr. Bonnell obtained the Certificate the day after the Election, and that several days afterwards (during which time the necessity became apparent) he took it back to Mr. McLeod to endorse on the back the statement of the Deputy Returning Officer.

In regard to the fact whether the statement placed on the back of Certificate was made in pencil or ink does not matter, the fact is established that Mr. McLeod was induced to put the statement there—and as Mr. McLeod told me personally in presence of a witness that he was coaxed to put the statement on the back of the certificate, this is proof that Mr. McLeod did not run after Mr. Bonnell to correct a mistake, and the circumstantial evidence shows that a change was desired and urgently required by Mr. Bonnell so as to bring the total votes for the two candidates even, Bonnell, and his friends, hoping by this to get the Returning Officer's casting vote.

Here lies the secret, and "necessity is the mother of invention" to Mr. Bonnell the necessity appeared very strong and no doubt led to the invention of what took place.

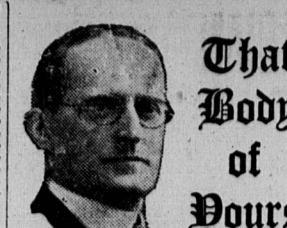
The stand Mr. Bonnell takes by his letter implies that the Returning Officer because he would not admit unlawful evidence as against the legal evidence per ballot box and returns, has failed in his duty but any person knowing the facts can only say that the Returning Officer Mr. Poole did his duty which was in full accord with the law. Mr. Bonnell's statement that his Agents had left the Poll before the box was closed implies a negligence of duty on their part which they and Mr. Bonnell may settle among themselves.

And, after all, summing up the whole matter if Mr. Bonnell was satisfied that a wrong had been committed, or if he even had a doubt that matters were not correct why in the name of common sense did he and his near Liberal friends not apply for a recount? which they had under the law a perfect right to do. The reason a recount was not applied for is obvious. Possibly fear of more damaging disclosures of other incidents of the campaign may have influenced them to be somewhat cautious.

Be that as it may I trust the less

more care and fewer accidents. We note that officers of the law in Montreal are very watchful over auto traffic, and that those drivers who disobey the law, or the officers of the law, are severely punished—heavy fines as well as imprisonment being imposed. The danger is, of course, greater in large cities, and narrow streets than it is in Charlottetown. But carelessness and disobedience should not be permitted here to any greater extent than in Montreal; and punishment should follow as surely here as in Montreal or London or any other city or country. It is hoped that Exhibition week in Charlottetown will not be marked by any auto accidents, and that everyone, including the police, will be watchful and active in the prosecution of those drivers of autos who are not careful.

sons learned will have a beneficial effect on candidates, their Agents and officials in future. I am, Sir, etc. ALBERT P. PROWSE. Murray Harbor, Sept. 18th, 1923.



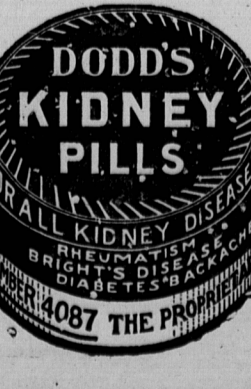
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