CURRENT COMMENT

The Pros and Cons of the Tariff

A commission is to enquire into the conditions that may be necessary to consider in revising the tariff. There is an impression that some people wish to impose a McKinley tariff on Canada; and there is another impression that some people wish to have free trade of the British variety in Canada. No one knows exactly what the country wants in this direction, because there has been no direct question on the point before the people for decision for nearly a quarter of a century. It is certain that there are extremists and moderates on both sides. It will probably be necessary for all parties to get away from pre-conceptions and pre-judgments and form new opinions on the basic facts that may be discovered. A few of these are obvious as darkness at midnight, which is much the same whether a man can see or is blind. To fight over free trade and protection is the partisan way. It is not likely to advantage the country much. One thing to remember is that in British Colonies all over the world some have thriven under protection, some have suffered by it; some have thriven under free trade, some have suffered under it. This means that more than the one principle or the other must be considered in choosing between them. And this again means that the time-honored procedure of British politics, advance by compromise, is the method of reaching a practical policy. Beyond this is the very patent fact that the revenue has to be raised, and to a much vaster extent than was ever dreamed of in Canada before the war. Here again arises the choice to be made between direct and indirect taxation with the tacit preference of most people to be relieved of their tax contributions in homeopathic doses instead of in large gobs. A man will pay ten cents a day taxation in the purchase, say, of cigars, who will ascend to the clouds if requested to put his means at the service of the state to the amount of $35 about the time he thinks of going on a vacation. Students of British politics would be willing to bet on a compromise, but we are in a revolutionary era, and we are not so British in our traditions in regard to tariff as some people imagine. There is no doubt but Sir Henry Drayton's enquiry will be followed with interest by all who regard the payment of taxes as a proud and patriotic privilege and by others with the sad satisfaction of having lived a perfectly virtuous life.

An Unneccessary Blunder

As the weeks pass it becomes more evident that Hon. Mr. Drury has chosen to make the one mistake that he need not have made and thrown away the one great opportunity of making himself strong with the whole province. The unnecessary is the immoral in the ancient philosophies, and it has been an entirely unnecessary and gratuitous course to take to subject the Hydro policies to delay and obstruction as seems too likely to be the case. No one except the executive of the Independent Labor Party has suggested that anything wrong could or would be discovered in connection with the Hydro estimates or management. It is well known to everybody who has made himself familiar with Hydro affairs, as anybody can do that wants to since the Hydro Commission is always ready to supply full information on any point desired, that the utmost care has always been taken in preparing estimates, and the most skilled and expert advice obtainable has always been secured to check the results attained. It ought to be sufficient to establish confidence in the Commission that after fifteen years of service, with a band of hostile corporations watching its operations, no error has ever been pointed out in them. Investigation after investigation has been made, parliamentary committees have sat on the accounts, but nothing has ever been discovered in the least irregular. Sir Adam Beck lives in "the fierce light that beats about a throne" and the only criticism that can be made is that he is sometimes arbitrary. Without doubt at times he needs to be. But he has always been arbitrarily right. Had he been wrong the government would have had been out of office in a jiffy. His construction records are all within the estimates. His plans are endorsed by the most skilled engineers that can be found. No chances are taken on any detail of any phase of the power or radical proposals. And now all this has to be reinvestigated. One feature of the Hydro Electric organization not generally known is that the staff of engineers of the Commission are all men of the School of Practical Science of the Provincial University and have a patriotic pride and pleasure in placing their native province in the forefront of electrical science. The lack of confidence shown by the present government in their work is a reflection upon Ontario brains and ability that will not easily be forgotten. The government should be the last to dishonor the prophets of Ontario.

The Advance in Railway Wages

Another huge increase in the cost of living is due. The railway workers of the United States have demanded that their stock be watered to the extent of about 60 per cent. The United States Labor Board has granted from 18 to 27 per cent. of their demand, involving an aggregate pay increase of $600,000,000 a year. The effect is the same as though the railway companies had watered their stock to the amount of $10,000,000,000 and drew an extra dividend of 6 per cent. on this amount. It is almost impossible to get either capital or labor to consider the situation from this angle. Capital does not make such gigantic raids as this at one time, though it is undoubted that if all the water was squeezed out of all the corporations the country would be in a much better economic condition. The labor men decline to consider wage increases in this light and define dividends as what remains after wages are paid. But the effect as far as the public is concerned is the same. Capital and labor between them make demands which the public (consisting of course largely of both capitalists and laborers) must supply. If capital demanded six per cent. on ten thousand millions of dollars of watered stock there would be a tremendous howl, because everybody knows the country could not stand it. Can the country stand it any better when the demand comes in the form of higher wages? All other wage-earners must contribute to the levy. Capital also must contribute. Another general rise in prices must take place in order to supply the necessary revenue, and the consumer will carry the load. People who have been depending on fixed incomes and the salaried class which gets little or no increase are due for a period of still more rigorous economy and not a little privation and suffering. Can society continue at this rate? It is obvious to many that the industrial and economic revolution is actually going on, quite as much in Labor America as in Soviet Russia. Wage-earners aim at the greatest possible share of the profits of their labor that can be extorted. These demands will be made until our economic machinery breaks down, a period of adjustment and compromise will follow, and reason will reassert itself. Meanwhile it is well to prepare for the inevitable result and the difficulties that lie ahead.

The American Rebellion in Ireland

It is not too much to say that the Sinn Fein outbreak of murder and assassination in Ireland represents a war carried on by a certain section of United States citizens against Great Britain. De Valera, the "President of the Irish Republic," is a citizen of the United States. The funds that maintain the Irish assassination compaign are almost entirely American dollars and cents. Archbishop Mannix, of Australia, by his recent speeches in New York and the reception he elicited served to demonstrate exactly what the United States Sinn Fein program means. If funds were raised in any other nation, such as France, Germany or Italy, and a campaign conducted from one of these countries as the Irish campaign is being conducted from the United States, we know what action would follow. That the United States is allowed "to get away with" such behavior indicates a degree of obsequiousness on the part of Britain that she would not display towards any other power. The presidential election campaign is held to be responsible for much of the license permitted, but there is no real excuse for the financing and direction of such a campaign in the territory of any country against another friendly country. It could have been understood in Russia or Germany, but it is significant of how greatly the democratic conception of liberty has degenerated when such a state of affairs is possible. The murder of Commissioner Smyth, V.C., at the County Club in Cork, is one of the most diabolical acts on record. He was the newly-appointed Commissioner, and was falsely reported to have ordered the police to shoot on sight. The order was to the effect that when attacking parties or armed men refused to hold up their hands when ordered, the police could defend themselves by shooting. Such blots as these on the Southern Irish are a melancholy comment on the disappearance of the old-time chivalry and generosity of the Irish character. The perpetrators of these acts are not genuine Irish, however, but inspired by the worst spirit of the gun-men of New York and corrupted by the influence of the American dollar. The real Irish are sick of the whole situation and await the crisis of the American presidential election with the hope that sanity will then return to the "most distressful country."

Handicaps in the Yacht Race

Whatever may be thought of the great yacht race for the America Cup it will always be felt, as one critic has put it, that the challenger was not trying to beat another yacht, but the rules of the New York Yacht Club. To the ordinary man the size of the boats should be the only matter in which equally should be required. The handicap of crossing the ocean is quite sufficient for all other considerations. The handicap for sail area to the layman seems to be the most unreasonable of all. The more sail a boat can carry, compatible with seaworthiness, the more credit she should receive. If the object of the races be not to encourage the designing and construction of models of speed and seaworthiness then there appears to be little excuse for such an outlay of money. As speed primarily depends upon sail area, it appears to be absurd to penalize the development of the quality most required. The introduction of a new element in yacht construction was the feature of the first race in 1851, when the "America" crossed the ocean and, having been excluded by the conditions from the race in which she was expected to compete, was given a special race for a new challenge cup practically without conditions. There was no time allowance of any kind. An open race of this kind having been the first of the series it is obvious that subsequent competitions have been of a very different order, and the handicap provided almost impossible conditions. To win under such conditions, of course, makes a victory all the more notable. The weather conditions around Sandy Hook also supply a definite handicap, so that the element of chance in getting a favorable breath of air, or any breath at all, at a season when dead calms and capricious zephyrs alternate, enters into the decision to a greater extent than is compatible with true sport, which is first of all a test of skill.

EARTHRISE ON THE MOON.

As little Dolomite looked into the deep abyss of Plato's mouth, the silvery Earth, with its gleaming oceans reflecting the light of the Sun, rose high over the lunar volcano's rim.

Suddenly Little Dolomite came again—and spoke:

Out on my little journey to the mountains of the Moon, I gazed thru the cold, clear, transparent space at the shining Earth-world. It was like a great shining globe of quicksilver, reflecting brilliantly the light of the golden Sun. I could see plainly the blue-green continents of North and South America and the Great Isle of Cuba, 180,000 miles away; for I had departed from the earth less than one second of time!

Here I am free! The absolute cold of the ether which fills boundless space, cannot cool the living flame that is the body of Dolomite.

Yet here it is 460 degrees below zero. Here the warm body of the Earth-man would freeze instantly to a solid statue of ice. And unlike Little Dolomite, who speeds onward wherever he wills to go, that ice-body where once had lived a man, would go whirling, like a stone, round and round in an orbit of its own in the eternal cold, in pathless space.

Here I see vast distances clearly among the stars, further than the Earth-man can see. All around the surface of your world is a dim haze that is like a veil, a halo; and it is thru this mist that men must see the stars. This is the atmosphere you breathe—an ocean of air, wherein you walk or fly as beings in the ocean crawl or swim. But in the outer space there is no mist. All is the boundless, transparent material which is called by the Earth-man "ether."

I can see Neptune the most distant of all the worlds which whirl around the Sun, as does the shining Earth. Yet traveling at the rate I speed, I can reach it in four hours and two minutes of time! But if the Earth-man could live and fly in the outer spaces, at 100 miles an hour, he would have to live 3,000 years to complete his journey. Had a man lived since 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus, and gone at this rate of speed steadily toward Neptune he would not reach that planet until the year Two Thousand.

But on—to the Mountains of the Moon! Here I see Luna, the Moon-world—not brilliant like the Earth, with silvery seas—but dull, with yellow deserts, mellowed by the shadows of great volcanic pits and cones; its surface scarred with colossal cracks and jagged by tall mountain crags; a torn moon surface where once in the long-ago, millions of years ago, there was a storm of giant rocks and boulders and flying mountains, hurled from the outer spaces, which filled vast circular pits and deep gorges the whole surface of the Moon.

I am now on the Luna-world. I am on the great Plains of Imbrium—a vast, bleached, level wilderness, streaked with white volcanic dust—the burnt-out cinders of a world where once may have been laughing life—a cold still immensity of desolation where once rippled the waters of a silver sea. Two hundred miles away rises the ragged crater-lip of the volcano Plato. Here it is vastly cold, and still, for here is little atmosphe re—only the silent "ether" of space.

As the sun sets here, the long shadows of the Mountain Plato are black against the pale floor of the Sea of Imbrium. I speed into these shadows—on up the deep canyons and steep crags of the Moon-Mountain, as the sun sinks over Luna's edge, leaving me in darkness, looking into the black mouth of a volcano—a vast pit, 60 miles in diameter—and deep down into the heart of the Moon!

As I looked into this deep abyss of Plato's mouth, the silvery Earth, with its gleaming oceans reflecting the light of the Sun, rose high over Plato's rim—and lo! the Luna ground trembled and the granite mountain peak on which I stood, moved from beneath my feet! And sank down, down into the darkness below, with never a sound!

This mountain peak, which had stood for a million centuries, thus sank forever from the light of the stars.

While the Moon quaked and trembled from pole to pole, I stood suspended above, where once had been this giant wall of stone, but where now the light of the dazzling Earth shone thru a vast new gorge across the desolate Plains of Imbrium. And as I hung suspended there, a thin gaseous vapor rose from the abyee beneath; and this, forming an atmosphere of its own, brought to my senses a faint whispering sound!

Perhaps it was the last sound that will ever break the stillness of the Moon. And as I still peered into that vast pit, there came up from the deeps of the Moon a dull red glow, of the fires that are dying in the heart of the Luna globe.

Then again out into space I sped with the swiftness of light, on my way to the Red Planet Mars.

The Earth-man has called this planet "Mars," in honor of his savage god of war. But to me its red-gleaming is the light of an Eternal Love. For the beings of Mars know only the dim memory of war. They know no hate, nor anger nor strife. They know only love—for each other and for all, and for every Thing. As it will yet be on Earth!

Oh, if the Earth-man could only know that we of Mars are among them—often! But only I am visible to the eyes of the Earth-beings. If they could only know that the Martian men ("Tzarth") love the Earth-men as their own brother-beings. Ah, there are secrets which Little Dolomite may not tell! But when wisdom is in the Earth-man's heart, then will his mind know all.

But on the Planet Earth and on the Planet Mars, we are brothers in one common state—in this, that in neither of our little worlds are the wonders that be in other wondrous realms. In the far spaces, hurtling thru the boundless ether, there are "dark" worlds which know not the light and warmth of suns.. And yet within them is a myriad, wondrous life! Vast hollow shells they are, rolling in darkness, onward to a certain end—and within them is loving Life, without need of the light and heat of suns!

As I sped swiftly onward, I came upon an asteroid—a vast, ragged flying mountain of stone. It was moving slowly toward Mars at a speed of 10,000 miles a second. In the distant sunlight (for the Sun shines eternally in outer space) this flying mountain flashed and gleamed like a thousand precious gems, carved for the god of all the stars.

Alighting upon this wondrous rock, I found a Treasure—a treasure that is more dear to the heart of some men of the Earth than is even—Love! Of this Treasure I will tell when I return to the Earth-man's world.

And Dolomite was gone.

(Little Dolomite will return to the Earth one month from to-day, and his message of the Treasure of the Asteroid will be told in these columns.—The Editor.)

ADVICE TO GIRLS

By Rosalind

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Roselind welcomes letters from readers of this paper asking for advice on any subject. Do not write too long a letter, and write on one side of the paper only. Send your inquiries to Rosalind, 515 Manning Chambers, Toronto, and they will be answered in these columns.

Dear Rosalind:—

You are so good about answering other girls' questions that I feel free to bother you. I used to think lots of the questions were silly and childish, but now I know that they are all vitally important to the writers. So I am hoping you can find time and space to give me some much-needed advice. My boy friend is twenty-one; not handsome, but good and kind-looking, clean-living and a real man. He is one of our returned heroes.

I am twenty; better not describe myself or people will think I hate myself—I'll just say I'm very much in love with the aforementioned young man. This is what bothers me: He is inclined to be selfish, though when he went to France, he told me he loved me and asked me if I loved him enough to wait for his return. I readily gave my promise, and frankly, I think I kept it quite well, as I stayed in the three years he was away and "Kept the Home Fire Burning." He has been back now for some time and during that time, has shown in every way that he loves me dearly. Believe me, no matter what he does, he is sincere in that respect. Wouldn't tell a lie to me for anything. No, he isn't a "Goody-goody" but purely manly. But these little selfish things hurt me dreadfully. For instance, one Sunday he was taken ill at my home, and had to go home right after tea. Then on Tuesday he wasn't feeling well, and had to go home quite early. Wednesday, we went to a dance, and I suggested coming home early in view of the fact that he wasn't well, and was glad I could do it for him. Thursday we stayed in. So you see I didn't have a particularly enjoyable week, did I? However, Saturday night, he was feeling his old self again, and went dancing with a bunch of boy friends and a "Whale of a time." Don't you think in view of the many nights that week I had gone without any pleasure myself, that he could have shown his appreciation by calling me up and asking me if I wouldn't enjoy a nice dance as he was feeling so well? I may be awfully funny, but that struck me as being particularly selfish of him. What is youd opinion?

When a man asks you to wait for him to come back from Over There, and tells you how much he loves you, would you consider yourself as more than a "Friend?" This young man has been my "Steady Friend" for four years now, and seems quite serious, but never mentions anything about our future. What would you do in my case? Remember, I love him, and I am sure he loves me too.

Trusting I haven't taken up too much of your valuable time and space, and with sincerest wishes for the success of your Page, and thanking you in advance for your kind attention to my letter, I am, believe me,

A sincere well wisher of your Page,
"CHERIE."

Dear Cherie:—

Thanks for your kind wishes. I don't know that I should label your boy friend selfish, exactly, on the score of that occurrence. Do you know I have noticed a tendency on the part of some of the returned boys to want just to "flock together" once in a while. Would you think you were selfish if you joined some other girls in, say, a theatre party some evening when you had no special engagement with your boy friend, and had already been with him more or less four evenings of the week. Perhaps you think you wouldn't care to do it, and feel hurt that he should enjay himself without you. Don't try to draw the "tie that binds" too tight. If the boy is fine, as you say, in other respects, he will realize his want of consideration in time; but when you are inclined to accuse him of selfishness, ask yourself candidly if you are not being a little exacting. Undoubtedly you have reason to believe he holds you as more than a friend, but you are both very young, and the boy may want to put his circumstances on a settled basis again after his long absence and get his health back soundly before discussing your future. I can't see, "Cherie," that you have much to wory about. Everything will come all right if you are sensible and not impatient.

ROSALIND.

Dear Rosalind:—

I read your "Advice to Girls" weekly and find it interesting.

I am 19 years old, but to date I need no one's advice. For I have the most blessed thing in this world, "A Mother." One who agrees on most things Ido, for we live for each other.

Now I read a letter from one who calls herself "Cheated" and I think it a good name in a case like hers. But, dear Rosalind, won't you give her my address and name, and tell her to come to see me. I have no boy friends. But lots of girl friends, which I prefer. But one more is never too many. My "Mother" would also help her and see that she is not lonesome any more.

This is a minister's house, and she could meet lots of people if she is nervous at first. Why we would just keep her to ourselves.

We could sew or knit, or go some place together for I am sure we would become congenial friends. Do please arrange this for me.

BETTY.

Dear Betty:—

Your letter is as sweet and kind and enthusiastic as any friend could want. But how can Cheated come to see you when you don't live in the same town. Betty, dear, these letters come from all parts of Ontario and farther, so you see you cannot have Cheated for anything but a paper friend. I shall forward her your stamped, addressed envelope, and I know she will write to you at once. Write to us again and tell us how the correspondence progresses.

ROSALIND.

Separate highways for the use of motor trucks is forecast, due to the rapid growth of motor freight transportation everywhere in the United States.