

HIDES AND SHOES

The Boston Commercial Bulletin, the leading commercial journal of New England, which by the way is controlled by the present lieutenant governor of Massachusetts, while advocating the removal of the duty on hides, has been intelligent enough to see that the shoe manufacturers could not successfully contend for free hides unless they were ready to assent to free shoes. It has accordingly canvassed the tanners and shoe manufacturers of New England, asking this question:

"If hides are free will you consent to have your products free?"

Of the tanners twenty-nine replied in the affirmative and eleven in the negative. Of the shoe manufacturers 311 replied in the affirmative and 91 in the negative.

It is certain that at no previous time could a similar result have been obtained. New England is devoted to protection and a large majority of these responses were doubtless from business men who believe in that general policy. The average American business man believes in a practical policy that will build up this country. The sentiment revealed by this canvass is due to the development of shoe manufacturing in the west and the growth of the export trade. Competition at home is sharp. It is said that the factories of the United States can now make a year's supplies of shoes for our population in seven months. Ohio, Illinois and Missouri have made great gains in shoe manufacturing in the last ten years, while the census of 1900 showed that Massachusetts had 8,729 less operatives in 1900 than in 1890. New England is losing her domestic market, and under pressure is finding a foreign market. The foreign trade is growing rapidly, but it must be won in competition with the world and with rivals who have all of their raw material free. New England must import a portion of its raw material because the domestic supply is insufficient, and the supply of hides unlike that of most other commodities, does not respond to changes in price. Farmers do not raise more or less cattle because hides are high or low. The domestic output cannot be stimulated. The buyer must go abroad to supplement the supply. The duty is 15 per cent, and the American exporter of shoes is building up a trade despite this handicap, but he could build it faster if he had equal terms with his foreign rivals.

This is the situation confronting the shoe industry. There are two views that will be taken of it in the republican party and among protectionists. One is that the "good old wall of protection, over which have grown the vines of content and plenty," is threatened, and that these "mouthings" from Massachusetts are from "skulkers between the lines" who ought to be "skinned." The other is that the policy of protection has done its splendid work for the shoe industry, and that if new conditions now require changes in the schedules to further promote it, the changes should be made. The shoe manufacturers who are finding an outlet for American-made goods in all parts of the world

are employing American labor and making a home market for the American farmer, and if that isn't what the republicans of Iowa have been striving for all these years, what have we been aiming at?

The Philadelphia Press, one of the staunchest champions of protection in the country, makes clear which of these views it holds to, by the following paragraph:

"Over \$6,000,000 worth of boots and shoes were exported in 1902 and \$2,000,000 worth went to the United Kingdom, as compared with \$2,169 worth in 1892. That demonstrates great progress in that industry, and it should be encouraged by removing the duty on hides. It is a small duty, but hides have to be imported, and the duty benefits no one unless it be the big packing establishments which are practically united in a 'trust.'"

The duty on hides should not be unconditionally removed, but this country should seek reciprocity treaties with the South American countries ex-

porting them, thus obtaining concessions in exchange.—Des Moines Register and Leader.

To Examine Ocean Currents.

Newfoundland has long borne the gruesome name of "The Atlantic Graveyard," from the fact that her shores are lined with the bleaching bones of ocean vessels which have found there a final resting place. Now the Canadian government proposes to take steps to rob this spot of its terrors. An attempt will be made this summer to examine the currents in that part of the Atlantic ocean washing the south shore of Newfoundland between Cape Race and the French islands, to ascertain the character and extent of the indraft which is reported to set into the larger bays in that vicinity.

The marine underwriters are particularly interested in this undertaking, because in recent years millions of dollars have been sacrificed in shipwrecks occasioned by lack of information regarding the trend of these treacherous currents. They have never been tested properly, nor do any of the published guides to mariners give any in-

formation of the influence or set. Within the last 30 years hundreds of ships have been wrecked and countless lives have been sacrificed, due principally to the treacherous currents.

To carry out the examination of this locality the Dominion government steamship Guinare will be anchored in deep water on the steamship route on different points along the Newfoundland coast. The government has made the request that the masters of all transatlantic liners give the Guinare a safe berth in passing, as she will be unable to maneuver, and may at times be stationed some miles off the coast, about in the path of the liners.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A Word With Durbin.

If Governor Durbin of Indiana will accept a little advice from the south he will permit the courts to pass at once on the case of that negro murderer who caused all the rioting and bloodshed at Evansville. But Durbin doesn't want advice; the papers all over the country advised him what to do in the case of Taylor, the Kentucky murderer, and he is still protecting him.—Houston Post.

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