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### THE NEW BOOK DUTIES.

**T**HE tariff, as regards books, has been entirely remodelled since the last issue of BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER. The protests of the trade from Nova Scotia to British Columbia produced their effect, and the new duties, on the whole, are regarded by booksellers and the reading public generally as much more satisfactory, and, with certain exceptions, a fair arrangement.

Briefly summarized, the new tariff provides for a duty of 20 per cent. on paper-covered books and novels, and 10 per cent. on cloth-bound books. The clause suspending the importation of reprints of British copyrights is struck out, and these will come in from the United States as heretofore. Free books for colleges are still allowed to come in, and books for public libraries, mechanics' institutes, schools, etc., are also free. A concession is made here, so that the bookseller may supply these institutions from stock, and the duty on those

sold in this way shall be refunded. A new feature is that books "on the application of science to industry" are added to the free list. This, it seems to us, will tax the defining powers of Customs appraisers to the utmost. Music will be dutiable at 10 instead of 20 per cent.

In general, the changes are in the right direction. The 20 per cent. on cheap books is less than the old rate of 6c. per pound. The duty on bound books is about where it was, as under the 6c. rate the average duty on a good bound book was about 8 to 10 per cent. The bookseller will value the privilege of refunds of duty on books supplied to libraries from stock. Under the latest law it appears that United States books, that is, books printed and bound in the States and registered in England for copyright, are not British books, and will not get the advantage of the minimum tariff towards British products. Toy books and juvenile books will come in at 10 per cent., not 20 per cent. On all these features of the new arrangement the trade will not make much complaint.

The real difficulty that remains is on the question of the copyrights. The first enactment of the Government prohibiting the importation of cheap American reprints had the effect of stirring up the English publisher. He was vastly pleased at the prospect of supplying the Canadian market himself direct, instead of throwing it in, as hitherto, to the United States publisher as part of the

American market. A great sale of "colonial editions" promised to set in, the cheap American reprints being forbidden to enter Canada. But the Government have gone back to the old arrangement. Cheap reprints may once more come in, and as many of these are copyrighted in England the importation must be at the bookseller's risk. This is a very awkward matter for the trade. As will be seen in another column, the Government, replying to Mr. Robertson, claim that while they will allow the entry of reprints and will accept the duty paid on them, they are not going to protect the bookseller from action that may be taken by the English publisher. This we do not consider altogether fair. The Government is certainly a party to the bringing in of books that ought legally to be excluded, because duty is accepted on them. It is, of course, primarily a legal question, and we do not claim to be a final authority on matters of law. Still, it is a moral question as well, and the Government has no right to allow the entry of a book here which should not legally be circulated in Canada.

By letting him take his own risk as to what books he shall import, just consider the position in which the bookseller is placed. The Government has, by its recent legislation forbidding import of reprints (a prohibition now withdrawn) stirred up the British publisher to a closer inspection of the Canadian market. He will prosecute the bookseller who has reprints of copyrights on the counter for sale.