

ernment of Canada owes the Montreal Harbor Trust considerably over \$1,000,000, as a relict of the old Lake St. Peter dredging. We were aware that that Trust handled several millions of public money; but of this alleged debt we now hear for the first time. Mr. Bickerdike was looking for the wherewithal to build elevators, and his happy memory suddenly flashed into activity with this new find. Well let us see how he makes out his case. Meanwhile, it is strange that all the other members of the Montreal Harbor Trust were, till now, equally oblivious of this debt which Mr. Bickerdike has unearthed. No such idea exists in reality. In the discussion in the Commons on the subject, Mr. Bickerdike pretended that the Lake St. Peter's Canal was not built for the benefit of Montreal, and the assertion was met by an emphatic contradiction by Mr. Dobell. It is now an open question whether Montreal or Quebec ought to be equipped as the principal port of the St. Lawrence. Mr. Brock showed that the question is a larger one than the question of any one port. "The real object," he said truly, "is to obtain for the producers of Canada the best possible results from their labor and their investment."

### THE TARIFF ON WOOLEN GOODS.

The condition of this country at the present time is so prosperous that it is naturally to be expected that all the various manufacturing interests should be fully employed. In most cases, this is so, but there is one very important exception—an exception which means not only the partial loss of some \$15,000,000 worth of invested capital, but the diminution of earnings of probably some 12,000 people throughout the Dominion. Not only is an important industry facing what looks like practical ruin, but several kindred interests tributary to woollen manufacture are seriously jeopardized, and a profitable market for those farmers who own sheep bids fair to be injuriously affected. On visiting some of the large Canadian carpet factories, a few days ago, we were struck with the large number of looms which were standing idle—probably 50 per cent. of the whole. Naturally we asked what could be the cause of this anomalous state of things, and were told that the reason hinged upon the preferential tariff. Per se, the carpet and other woollen manufacturers make no objection to the granting of a preference to British goods. They do object, however, to the abuses which have crept in under its name. What they want is that when a piece of goods arrives in this country, and pays the minimum duty, it shall have been made entirely in Great Britain, not in Germany or some other country. If the boast of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, as to the way the Germans are shipping goods into Canada by way of Great Britain, were not sufficient to prove that this is not the case, the recent discovery in Montreal of several German newspapers tucked up between the folds of some dress goods, purporting to be British-made, and done up carelessly in British shape, should dispel all doubt. And this is just where a great difficulty enters. How are we in Canada to distinguish between the goods honestly made in Great Britain and those made in some other country? Some articles, such as Geneva watch cases, glassware, collars, etc., can quite easily be marked with a stamp showing the place of origin. But in the case of dress-goods, rugs, carpets, and many other things, the only reliance is on a detachable ticket; and

it is not too much to say that in many cases this ticket is detached, and another put in its place. To satisfactorily render such a fraud impossible, even at the British warehouse, would need the services of an army of inspectors or detectives; how, then, are we in Canada to differentiate? Canadians want to import goods of British manufacture, rather than those from foreign countries, and are willing to pay for their preference, but they are not prepared to submit to a bare-faced fraud, and this is what the present state of things amounts to. The figures given in last issue, as to the comparatively small increase in woollen exports from Bradford to Canada, are, in the face of recent developments, easily explained. Our largely, indeed alarmingly, increasing imports of woollen goods are accounted for, not by an increase of English exports, to which only the preferential tariff rightfully applies, but, to the increased output of foreign goods fraudulently shipped to this country by way of British ports.

As for a remedy, it is hard to say what can be done. So far as we can see, the only course is for the Government to raise the tariff on carpets and other woollen goods to such an extent that when the preferential percentage shall have been subtracted, there will still remain sufficient protection to protect the home manufacturer. Even then, we shall have no absolute guarantee against the perpetration of a certain amount of substitution of marks; but the incentive will be relatively lessened. It is a pity the Government shows no inclination to make any alteration in this direction. The total amount of woollen goods imported into the Dominion has increased from \$6,295,057, during the fiscal year which ended with June, 1897, to \$8,933,007, for that which closed in June, 1900. Moreover, in the three months of July, August, and September, 1900, immediately following the imposition of the increased preference, the amount was \$3,244,691, which, in proportion, would make nearly \$13,000,000 for the year. No wonder that some large mills in this country are only working to half their capacity, and that many of the smaller ones are closed down. It is time that something was done.

### THE FIRE INSURANCE ABSTRACT.

To those who have money invested in fire insurance companies, the abstract from the report of the Superintendent of Insurance at Ottawa, presented on another page, will be but sad reading. It shows that the total net amount of losses incurred during the year 1900 was \$8,090,570, compared with \$4,568,393 for 1899. The number of companies reporting to the Superintendent of Insurance, is thirty-eight, of which nine are Canadian, twenty-one British, and eight American. Of the above-mentioned losses, the sum of \$1,015,900 was paid by Canadian, \$5,518,126 by British, and \$1,245,975 by American companies. The figures for the previous year were \$637,101, \$3,867,212, and \$677,725, respectively; so it will be seen that the fire waste for 1900 showed a most lamentable increase all along the line. To come to the subject of income, the increase of business is satisfactory, so far as it goes. The net cash for premiums received by all the companies doing business in this country, was \$8,303,213, as compared with \$7,910,492, for 1899, and the gross income was \$9,840,435, and \$9,242,072, in each case. The net amount