

between the two countries. In the meantime, Washington legislators are considering proposals for the increase of their tariff upon products imported from Canada. The United States lumbermen are demanding a big increase in the lumber duties, and it is also reported from Washington that the old McKinley tariff on agricultural products will be re-enacted by the new administration. The committee recently considered the agricultural schedule, and practically agreed to restore the McKinley tariff, which placed prohibitory duties upon agricultural products such as are imported from Canada. The effect of this prohibition of Canadian products from entering the United States, will be to force us to again turn our attention to a strenuous cultivation of the British market.

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THE tariff commission has come and gone. Considerable good evidence was placed before the commission, and a great deal of rant and rot was also talked. Those who delight to talk whenever an opportunity offers, were there, and there was about as much talking to the galleries as to the commission. The farmers had a big innings. They monopolized a large share of the time of the convention, and if they do not get what they want, it will not be because they did not place their views, and reiterate them before the commission.

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In this issue of The Commercial will be found an interesting paper on India, written by C. Wood Davis, in which special reference is made to the wheat exporting capabilities of that country. The conclusion arrived at by Mr. Davis agrees with the opinion expressed by The Commercial some time ago, to the effect that India, as a wheat exporting country had passed its zenith.

Extending Across the Border.

H. Shorey & Co., wholesale clothiers of Montreal, have recently placed on the market in New York and sold in a surprisingly short time the stock of a company formed for the purpose of waterproofing woollen fabrics by their Rigby process. This is an evidence of the way in which United States business men snap up a good thing when they see it.

We understand all the stock that Messrs. Shorey & Co. were willing to sell was taken up by two United States capitalists immediately it was offered to them; and from the inquiries they have had already from United States mills whose attention has been called to the wonderful process of making waterproof textile fabrics without interfering with their porous properties, it is anticipated that a large amount of money will be realized from the venture.

The Rigby process of waterproofing textile fabrics was the invention of John S. Rigby, F.C.S., a celebrated English chemist, who sold his right in its entirety to the Messrs. Shorey. We wish them well in their new venture.

An Ottawa telegram says. Minister Fisher has made further provision for cold storage facilities on ocean going vessels by contracting with the Dominion line for the equipment of three vessels to Liverpool, with accommodation for 250 tons in cold storage. This will mean three sailings per week.

The Tariff Commission.

The tariff commission opened at Winnipeg on Monday morning last. The first witness to present himself was John S. Thompson, of Waskada. Mr. Thompson wanted to know whether the commissioners would take any evidence outside of reciprocity and freight rates.

Hon. Mr. Fielding said the commission would have to give its preference to tariff matters, but at the same time would be glad to hear of any matters affecting the government of the country.

J. K. McInnis, president of the Patrons of Industry of the Northwest, was then presented. Mr. McInnis came to the point at once. He declared the Patrons wanted a tariff for revenue only. They desired that the tariff for protection be abolished as an unsound policy. The farmers believed the policy of protection was a delusion and they did not want it. Farmers were willing to bear their full share of taxation when that taxation was imposed for revenue only. Mr. McInnis also touched on freight rates, etc. He said his views represented the farmers of the Northwest generally.

A deputation next presented itself in relation to the fruit duties, composed of M. W. Rublee, K. J. Johnson and R. R. Scott, all wholesale fruiters of Winnipeg. They were accompanied by W. G. Bell, who represented the consumers.

Mr. Bell, being first speaker, contended very vigorously that the duties on fruit imported by this country were most unjust and a very heavy burden to the people. His contention was that these duties did not materially aid the fruit growers in the east, most of the fruit coming from California. Eastern Canada in many lines of fruit could not compete with California. For a few weeks in the year these duties benefitted the fruit growing section of Eastern Canada, but the people here objected to being taxed for a little corner in Ontario.

R. R. Scott spoke particularly of peaches, plums, strawberries and grapes on which he contended the duties were outrageously high, in instances as high as a hundred per cent. He opposed very earnestly the proposition of eastern fruit growers to put a duty on bananas which were now free.

Mr. Rublee gave statistics to show the almost utter impossibility of this country importing its fruit either from Ontario or British Columbia. The fruit, or the greater bulk of it, of necessity, had to be brought from the States. The duties, therefore, did not aid Canadian fruit growers, but imposed an unnecessary burden on the people of this country.

K. J. Johnson emphasized the assertion that it was impossible to profitably bring in Canadian fruit.

J. A. Mitchell represented the Northern Elevator company and other elevator companies. Mr. Mitchell submitted a carefully prepared statement asking that the tariff on gasoline be materially reduced. The elevator companies had found gasoline plants much cheaper and much safer than steam plants. But the gasoline duties were so high that gasoline could not now be purchased. With gasoline at reasonable rates the elevators of this country could operate at an expense of a cent a bushel compared with a cent and a half or two cents with steam. Duty on gasoline was now 6½ cents a gallon. Elevator men wanted it reduced to 3 cents.

Arthur Congden, dealer in felt shoes, with felt soles, desired a reduction of duty on such shoes, which reduction would not affect any manufactory in Canada. They had become a necessity in this country and Mr. Congden thought the duty could be abolished without injuring any established industry of the country.

S. M. Barro desired the abolition of the duty on cream separators. These separators could only be built by skilled workmen, and they could not be built in Canada profitably where the demand was limited. They had to be imported from the States. He urged cream separators to be placed on the free list. He thought it unfair to tax people for the benefit of two or three men in the east who desired to experiment in building separators. To abolish the duty would be of very great benefit to the farmers and dairymen of this western country. Mr. Barro also thought the duties on dairy products should be maintained.

R. H. Williams, president of the Regina Board of trade was then introduced. Mr. Williams gave statistics in support of his contention, that duties on such articles as wagons, cottons, agricultural implements, coal oil, etc., should be materially reduced. Such reduction would greatly aid the settlers of the Northwest.

Wm. Postlethwaite, of Brandon, endorsed the request for a reduction of duty on gasoline.

At the afternoon session on Monday J. H. Ashdown was first introduced. He discussed the question of trade and navigation returns, pointing out that the blue books of the Dominion do not give a true representation of the facts as to exports from Manitoba. He complained of the exercise of arbitrary power by the customs authorities in fixing values for customs purposes. He gave an instance of sewer pipe, telling of a regulation which was in force for three years, up to May 11, 1895, under which a discount of 65 per cent. was allowed, when by the actual market value it should have been 82½ per cent off, the result being that when the duty was nominally 35 per cent, it was made to be actually 70 per cent. The value fixed was too high in the first place, and no account was taken of fluctuations in value. He suggested the appointment of a board of appraisers to correct or sustain the decisions of local appraisers. The powers held by the customs authorities to demand post entries, such a demand should never be made after the goods had gone into consumption. Another complaint was that nobody has the power, though the governor-general does in some cases order the delivery of goods seized. He told of a shipment of cutlery from Lockwood Bros., in which an error was made, the shipment not containing the whole order and 21 lbs. of goods being sent which were not in the invoice. Though he offered full evidence he had to deposit the full value of the goods, and the amount, \$100, being in the hands of the officers for distribution among them was not returned. In another case goods seized because of a mistake, not being such that the officials could appropriate them, were offered back on his own explanation without any evidence being offered. The customs officials, he submitted, should not gain, as they do now largely, from seizure. He held also that where arbitrary values are set for duty purposes information should always be accessible to the importer. He asked that where prices for home trade are abnormally high, the export value should be taken as a fair value of the goods. It was not his experience that Canada is made a slaughter market by United States manufacturers. Prices there are so reduced that they cannot afford to sell for export for less than the home trade. He further pointed out that for manufacturing purposes wire numbered 6, 9, 12 and 14 is admitted at a lower rate of duty; he asked that 12½ and 13 be added these being the size used here in manufacturing barbed wire. He submitted that if the manufactured goods are admitted free, the raw material should be admitted free also. He asked that the affidavit to be taken by the importer be amended.

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