

CARPET AND OIL CLOTH DUTIES.



HOWEVER the manufacturers may view the duty on carpets, the retailers—some few of them at least—are mad. Some of them are trying to boycott the goods of the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Co., because its president was known to be at Ottawa after the Budget Speech. This promises to develop into a neat sized fight, progress of which will be noted later according to progress.

So far as THE DRY GOODS REVIEW is concerned, we have contended that the duties were too high, and should be reduced. But to reduce the duty on carpets alone, without reducing the duty on the yarns from which the carpets are made, would be unfair. Both must be reduced together. If the Government at Ottawa finds that the manufacturers of woolen yarn must be protected, then they must rub the back of the carpet manufacturers with the same golden hand.

Let us unfold this argument more specifically. The duty on all woolen yarns costing less than 20 cents is, under the new tariff, 5 cents per pound and 20 per cent. All carpet yarn, we may safely assume, costs less than 20 cents. Let us examine the protection on the yarns.

Cost of yarn.	Duty.	Rate.
6 cents per lb.	6 1-6 cents.	103.3 p.c.
7 " " "	6 2-5 " "	91.4 " "
8 " " "	6 3-5 " "	82.5 " "
9 " " "	6 4-5 " "	75.5 " "

That is, the average duty on woolen yarns for use in carpets is 75 per cent. The duty on machinery for carpet manufacture is 27 1/2 per cent. And so we might run through the list of raw material or necessities needed by the carpet manufacturer. The exception to this tax is that jute flax or hemp yarns, plain, dyed or colored can be brought in free.

On the other hand the protection on carpets is 3 cents per yard and 25 per cent. on unions, and 5 cents and 25 per cent. on all-wools. This means a protection of 30 to 35 per cent. on the manufactured article.

Now compare the protection on the manufactured article and on the materials used in the manufacture, and it will be found that the real protection of the manufacturer is not great. This is the only safe and proper way to estimate what the consumer pays to help the manufacturer.

Take off the duty on woolen yarns and carpet machinery, and then it would be only fair to reduce the protection afforded carpets. But both reforms must come together. One cannot be brought about without the other. Both classes of duties have been reduced this year. The duty on yarns has been reduced from 10 cents per pound and 20 per cent. to 5 cents per pound and 20 per cent. The duty on unions has been reduced from 5 cents per yard and 20 per cent. to 3 cents per yard and 25 per cent., and on wools from 10 cents per yard and 20 per cent. to 5 cents and 25 per cent. In both these cases the reductions are small.

The reduction on oilcloths is more thorough and is pregnant with results. The new duty is 4 cents per square yard. The old duty was 5 cents per square yard and 20 per cent.

Under this old duty the importation of low-priced English goods has been prohibited. This has been the case since 1885.

Before 1879 the duty was 17 1/2 per cent. Between 1879 and 1885 it was 30 per cent. Neither of these rates kept out much of the English low-priced stair and floor oilcloths, and as the duty now is practically equivalent to that which obtained between 1879 and 1885, the importing will no doubt be taken up. In fact, some shipments are already on the way.

Canadian manufacturers in the meantime have got established and should be able to meet this outside competition much better than at the former periods. Their profits will be reduced, but they will no doubt continue to do a large business.

THE ST. CATHARINES CARPET MILLS.

ST. CATHARINES is splendidly situated to attract manufacturers. Over the Niagara Central there is an outlet to the Canadian Pacific and the Michigan Central. The Grand Trunk runs through the city, and the Welland Canal gives an opening to all the lake boats, so that goods can be shipped to Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, Quebec, St. John, and Halifax. This is a great advantage as lake freight is only about one-third as costly as rail freight, and is speedier.

The Empire Carpet Co. was the first mill to be established in St. Catharines. James H. Etherington was in Paris, Ont., for eight years, and about two years ago moved to this city. His is still the largest factory in the place, with thirty looms and a well-equipped dyeing and scouring house. Full particulars as to the class of goods manufactured and the names of representatives will be found elsewhere in the list of mills. Mr. Etherington comes of a family which have been 200 years in the carpet manufacturing, and as he says himself, was born with a shuttle in his mouth. At first in England, then in Philadelphia, and finally in Canada—this is the history of the family. Mr. Etherington has gained a reputation for clean, worthy carpets, and deserves the success which he has gained. He has paid great attention to the dyeing and scouring of his goods, and has won, as a result, the confidence of a large number of customers. Twice a year Mr. Etherington goes to Philadelphia to choose designs, and in this way always places a splendid range of samples before the trade.

Some three months ago Mr. Gates, a carpet manufacturer, of Woodstock, was induced by a small bonus to move to St. Catharines with his 28 looms. At first he formed a partnership with S. Syer, formerly with the Empire Carpet Co., but they soon fell out, and Mr. Syer sold out to a Mr. Gardner, who with Mr. Gates is now owner of the St. Catharines Carpet Co. Their mill is rapidly being put in shape, and soon they will have all their looms running. Mr. Gates is at present in Montreal selling goods.

After S. Syer fell out with Mr. Gates he at once began to found St. Catharines' third carpet factory, and bought two small plants and moved them to that city. The first was formerly owned by Thos. Hudson, of Meaford, and the second by Rudy Burner, 101 Queen street, Toronto. With these looms he has started to work in a three-story brick building in St. Catharines, known as the "Big 22," and formerly occupied by R. Stanley, dry goods merchant. A competent man has charge of the weaving department, and Mr. Syer has abundant hopes of working up a good trade.