

WHAT CANADA OUGHT NOW TO DO.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FROM A BUSINESS MAN AS TO PUSHING TRADE AND GETTING SETTLERS ABROAD.

"THE present is a great opportunity for Canada," said Mr. J. D. Allan, of A. A. Allan & Co., to THE REVIEW last week. Mr. Allan returned a day or two ago from Europe, which he visits every year. As a thorough-going Canadian, one who keeps a keen eye on what is going on abroad and is quick to observe openings for the national advantage, Mr. Allan has no superior among those who travel across the ocean regularly from these shores on commercial missions. It is his duty to visit several foreign countries on the Continent, and he speaks the languages of the countries he visits.

"Remember," he continued, "anything I say here is not from any narrow, prejudiced standpoint, but entirely as a native Canadian, proud of this country, all my interests bound up with it, and anxious to draw attention frankly to what may be of benefit to the Dominion. We may as well realize, at the start, that as a nation we are not known abroad. As a people, no doubt, we feel confident of this country's future, but we shall have to interest and convince others of it. Now, beginning with Great Britain, our Canadian office policy has been a mistake. Consider this entirely from the business point of view, and judge it exactly as we would a commercial undertaking here. Our officials in London should be thoroughly competent to represent us by being native Canadians, with a personal knowledge of the struggles as well as advantages of life in Canada and its conditions to-day. They should, for this purpose, be allowed to come to this country frequently, and it might be necessary to have one man posted on one part of Canada and another on some other part, and so on. It might cost more money, and extravagance is not to be commended, but just as in business we go in for expenditures risking the results to be obtained from the investment, so in getting at the bone and sinew of the British people—and that is the sort we want—it might be necessary to spend even an extra hundred thousand a year. But if expended in the right way, and we got the worth of the money, who would complain?"

"The present Commissioner, Sir Donald Smith, notwithstanding his advanced years which are doubtless a drawback, is the right type of man. The lectures on Canada, which he has arranged at the Imperial Institute, are steps in the right direction, and have done good. But we must get at the mass of the people. It seems to me that our Government might have depots, in charge of the proper kind of men, at centres where the population is congested, where samples of our products and practical information could be given direct to the people. We have to eliminate from their minds the misconceptions regarding our climate, which are too general amongst them. A careful note, too, should be made of complaints about Canada in the English press, and these should be promptly answered and explained.

"Then, take the case of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In one respect, it does not help us with investors, because while the existence of a transcontinental line is appreciated in England, their moneyed men cannot understand why, after all the money we have spent, we do not own the road. That policy does not commend us to them as investors.

"But besides advancing our interests in the Mother Country, we should advance them on the Continent as well. I visited all the countries with an emigrating population on the Continent, and it impressed me strongly with the conviction that we should utilize both our outlets for trade abroad and for obtaining settlers. Take two instances in point. From next May to October there will be a great industrial and commercial fair at Leipzig. This will bring many visitors from all over Germany. It is under the patronage

of the Emperor, and the expense of it is borne by Saxony and Thuringia, two great German kingdoms, with a population of exactly the kind from which we would profitably draw settlers. Another of these great summer fairs will be held this season at Amsterdam, Holland. At both these it would pay Canada to be represented by persons, of course, speaking German and exhibiting Canadian products and goods. Let practical men attend to this duty, and the cost, like any money judiciously spent in business, will be returned to us.

"Mr. Laurier's recent Montreal speech made a fine impression in England, coming from the leader of a party which has been misrepresented as not being loyal to the Empire. He will undoubtedly get a great reception in England. The Canadian who visits Britain constantly cannot fail to be impressed with the greatness of that country. Next to being a Canadian, and naturally I think this the finest country in the world, one is proud to be a citizen of the British Empire. No man who goes often to the Mother Country can reach any other conclusion than that in their high political principles, their standard of national morality, their public journals and their institutions, the British people stand at the very pinnacle of our present civilization."

Mr. Allan spoke warmly and vigorously, and expressed himself once again as sure that Canada had a great opportunity before her in enlisting trade and settlers abroad, and that the country's friends abroad were anxiously watching to see if she would take advantage of the chance in the right way.

AD VALOREM DUTIES.

WE are quite well aware that the question of specific duties, as compared with ad valorem duties, is now a party matter, in one sense, since the Government must decide it in framing their new tariff. Consequently THE REVIEW—in pursuance of its desire to steer clear of politics and devote itself to business—does not want to go into the merits of either system, except to record the opinions of authorities.

In our last issue we gave pretty fully the views of Canadian importers who opposed specific duties. To present the other side, we now give a summary of the statements made against ad valorem duties before the Washington Tariff Committee by Mr. Kenneth Barnhart, of Messrs. Waistall, Field & Co. The witness gave the results of four years' practical experience with ad valorem duties, and their manner of administration by New York Customs officials, proving that honest merchants could not carry on trade in competition with dishonest ones under the present regime. He described the practice resorted to by some manufacturers of Europe consigning goods from their factories to agencies in New York at adjusted prices, which made it possible to purchase similar goods at the latter city at the same prices, and often at lower, than they could be purchased at in the factories in Europe, duty included. There were various ways of evading the law and the decisions of the General Board of Appraisers; and as fast as laws were passed and decisions rendered the dishonest importers employed lawyers to teach them how they could avoid both the law and the penitentiary. Mr. Barnhart said that honest importers did not care so much what the duty was, but they wanted it specific, so much a yard, or so much a pound, and not percentage of an alleged, and often fictitious, valuation, which might be fixed at will by the importer.

The advocates of ad valorem duties in this country are honest importers. They intend to do right themselves and hope to be protected by the public officials from wrong-going in others. We trust their expectations will not be disappointed. But remember that an appraiser can only do his best, and sometimes his best is not equal to that of a rascal.