

THE FOOD DUTIES.

THE retention of the duty on food stuffs cost the consumers of Canada during the last fiscal year over \$11,000,000 in customs taxation. The absolute removal of this toll on the cost of living is one tangible benefit to be derived from the adoption of the Liberal tariff policy which no amount of Tory argument can minimize or deny.

Food stuffs to the value of over \$50,000,000 were imported into Canada last year and the Government added over \$11,000,000 more to the total cost of these food stuffs to consumers by imposing a customs tax on every dollar's worth. These food stuffs were imported because they could not be obtained here, either at all, or in sufficient quantities to meet a real need. The government added one-fifth to the cost of these articles, before permitting them to pass from the importer to the consumer. That is a basic argument for free food stuffs which every consumer can grasp.

There are other arguments even stronger, such, for instance, as the undoubted opportunity that tariff protection gives all the year round to the middlemen and to the food monopolies to the canners' combines, to the cold storage men, to the packers, to the big commission houses—to enhance prices under seasonal or sectional limitations of supply. Other economic considerations have to be taken into account in this connection and the bearing is therefore not so readily seen. Here, however, are facts and figures which speak for themselves with simple and compelling directness.

Dutiable food stuffs imported into Canada during the fiscal year 1912-1913, with the amount of duty collected in each case:

	Value of Imports.	Duty Collected.
Sugars.....	\$17,392,146	\$4,162,672
Fruits and Nuts.....	8,782,395	1,821,422
Vegetables (canned and fresh).....	3,242,284	896,262
Meats and Poultry.....	5,338,673	1,040,547
Eggs.....	2,783,665	327,123
Fish.....	1,608,663	361,115
Butter.....	2,081,987	252,311
Prepared Cereal Foods in Packages....	3,650,101	42,069
Bread-stuffs, etc.....	1,260,357	261,403
Grain, Flour and Meal, etc.....	3,638,121	482,163
Lard.....	1,354,442	242,897
Cocoa and Preparations of Cocoa....	1,057,306	179,818
Mustard.....	216,434	44,707
Coffee (when prepared or roasted, etc.)	268,100	35,365
Pickles.....	456,546	1,166,651
Spices.....	378,568	50,643
Totals.....	\$53,679,793	\$11,367,172

WHAT NEXT?

Canada's trade is declining.—During the past three months, September, October and November, the Customs revenue has dropped by \$2,661,034. In his last annual report Mr. Harrison Watson, Canadian Trade Commissioner at London, says conditions “indicate a marked decrease of Canadian exports to England during the past year.”

Canada's borrowings have increased.—Already during this year Hon. W. T. White, Minister of Finance, has had to borrow \$45,000,000 on the London market, and further loans will be necessary before the close of the year.

Canada's credit abroad has suffered.—The London “Morning Post”, a Conservative journal, friendly to the Canadian Government, criticizes Hon. Mr. White's financial methods as no Canadian Finance Minister has been criticized before, and says his financial system is such that “It must be impossible for the investor to have any clear idea of the financial position of the debtor.”

Canada's interest rate on English debts has increased.—The last loan floated in London by Hon. W. S. Fielding, in 1910, at 3½%, sold at 99½, practically at par. The latest loan floated by Hon. Mr. White, during this December, at 4%, had to be sold at 97. The rate on Canada's loans has gone up one per cent since the Conservatives came to power.

Canada's public debt is again growing.—On September 30th last, Canada's public debt stood at \$299,587,275; on November 30th, it stood at \$303,115,195, an increase of \$3,527,920 in two months.

Canada's customs revenue has declined.—The Customs Revenue (the main source of income) for the first 8 months of this year was \$75,001,109; for the same period last year it was \$76,035,075. The decrease this year already is \$1,033,966. Since September the decrease has continued at over \$1,000,000 a month, and officials are anticipating a total drop of possibly \$10,000,000 before the end of the fiscal year.

Canada's expenditures are increasing.—In face of these lowering conditions Canada's total expenditures for the three months ending November 30 last were \$44,015,620, as against \$35,311,077 during the same period last year. During the eight months of this fiscal year total expenditures have grown by nearly \$25,000,000.

THE COST OF LIVING.

When the Borden Government took office in October 1911, the average wholesale price of 255 articles of general consumption in Canada was 128.9 per cent of the average price level prevailing during the decade of 1890-1899.

A year later the index number, representing the cost of living, had risen to 133.1.

For October last it had risen to 136.8. In the first two years of the Borden regime the cost of living has been increased by 6.1 per cent.

The trend is still upwards.

Toryism proposes no relief for the consumers.

Liberalism offers the wiping out of over eleven million dollars per year in food taxes.