TORONTO'S JEWELRY TRADE FOR 1881.

Probably amongst the whole range of business carried on in the City of Toronto, none has developed itself more, or been on the whole more fairly satisfactory than the Wholesale Jewelry trade.

This business, dealing as it does entirely in articles of luxury, may safely be taken as an almost infallible barometer of trade, it feels the pressure of hard times first, and is the last to recover its effects, and it may be pretty safely asserted that when this trade is prosperous, the country must be in a flourishing condition.

The increase in sales during 1881 has been more than fifty per cent. in advance of the previous year, while the losses from bad debts have been unusually small. As a rule retail dealers have met their obligations promptly, and renewals have been the exception rather than the rule.

The Jewelry business of Toronto has now attained large proportions, and it is no exaggeration to say, that this city is at present the centre of the Canadian trade.

The reasons for this large and rapid growth are not far to seek, and may be briefly summerized as follows; the natural situation of the city, lying as it does in the centre of the largest and wealthiest Province in the Dominion; its unrivalled means of communication with foreign markets and home consumers, consisting of seven lines of railroad spreading fan like over the entire Province, and water communication through the St. Lawrence and entire chain of lakes; and last but not least, the enterprise and integrity of her wholesale merchants, whose efforts have placed her in the van in this branch of trade.

Although the volume of business has been greatly increased during the past year, the margin of profit still remains very small, owing no doubt to the amount of competition amongst the wholesale houses themselves, and the great amount of smuggling carried on in this description of goods.

The wholesale trade are pretty well agreed that while the rise in duty would not affect them adversely if it could be collected, that under the present condition of things it is simply an incentive to smuggle, and puts the honest importer at a very considerable disadvantage as compared with his less scrupulous competitor.

Experience has proven conclusively, that it is next to an impossibility for any Government to successfully collect a high rate of duty on goods as expensive and small in bulk, as Jewelry and Watches, and the trade generally consider that the Government should lower the rate considerably and give the honest importer a chance by placing him on the same footing as the smuggler.

The aggregate sales of the Wholesale and Manufacturing Jewelers of Toronto for the past year amounted to $759,000, of this amount $194,000 was manufactured in the city, the balance, $565,000 being imported goods of English, Swiss and American manufacture.

The amount of Watches, Clocks and Jewelry passed through the Port of Toronto during the past year was $340,015, being an increase in amount of $131,863 over the importation of the year previous. On these goods the importers paid duty to the amount of $88,648, or an average of twenty-five per cent., a rate altogether too high for this description of imports.

Although there are fourteen jobbing jewelry houses in Toronto, some of them are of very small proportions, the bulk of the business being done by the ten following houses: Zimmerman, McNaught & Co., John Segsworth & Co., Lee & Chillas, P. W. Ellis & Co., S. Stern, Carrier & Marshall, H. A. Nelson & Co., Smith & Fudger, S. Frenkel, and E. & A. Gunther.

In addition to these the following firms sell watch materials at wholesale, P. W. Ellis & Co., A. Kleiser, and T. S. Culp.

The manufacture of Jewelry, although a comparatively new industry in Toronto, has increased very rapidly during the past year, there being now not less than sixteen firms engaged in its various branches.

Some of these firms are very small, employing only from two to three hands, while the larger factories employ from ten to fifty workmen.

The total number of hands now engaged in this city in the manufacture of jewelry is 178, and their products aggregated in amount $194,178, or an average $1,180 per man employed.

In several lines the home manufactured goods have driven the imported article almost entirely out of the market, being not only cheaper, but better in quality and of a style more suited to the wants of this country. Amongst the goods manufactured here, which compete on favourable terms with the imported article, may be mentioned, gold chains of all kinds, wedding, keeper, gem and signet rings, lockets, cuff buttons, and watch cases in gold and silver.

The principal manufacturers are P. W. Ellis & Co., Zimmerman, McNaught & Co., Welsh & Trowern, Arms & Quigley, Hill & Houghton, W. C. Morrison, and White & Son—these seven firms employing 139 of the total of 178 engaged in the business.

The indications are that the manufacture of jewelry will be largely increased during the coming year, as several of the larger firms are making preparations to enlarge their premises and increase their output of manufactured goods.

In addition to this, Toronto is to have a first-class establishment for the manufacture of electro plated ware of all kinds, the first of its kind in Canada. The company which has been incorporated under the name of the "Toronto Silver-Plate Co.," is now putting up a handsome brick factory, and expects when fully running to employ from fifty to seventy-five hands. This will be an important addition to the manufactures of this city, and will add in no small degree to its importance as a wholesale market.

The following table shows the value of goods imported into the Port of Toronto during the past three years, and the duty collected during the past year:—

	Amount 1879.	Amount 1880.	Amount 1881.	Duty Collected 1881.
Clocks and parts thereof	$17,925	$27,897	$34,239	$11988.65
Electro-Plated Ware	41,418	44,022	83,191	24957.88
Jewelry	62,610	84,962	125,885	25077.00
Watches, Movements and Cases	41,962	44,805	88,768	19959.40
Manufactures of Gold & Silver	17,862	6,966	8,482	1666.65
	$181,272	$208,152	$340,015	$88,648.78