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THE UNCERTAIN WOOL OUTLOOK.

Perhaps the backward state of the season, which interferes with clipping operations, is in large measure responsible for the dull condition prevailing in the woolen market just now. Whatever may be the cause, it is a fact that very little new wool is being received by dealers and that little is practically all unwashed, no washed being looked for in the near future. For that which is coming in the demand may be described as fair, at the average price of 9 or 10c. per pound. Washed is quoted nominally at 15c. or a little over, while pulled wools, which are in slow request, are 18 to 20c. for supers and about 21c. for extras. The prospects for any appreciable rise in values are not promising. True, latest reports from London show that in several lines there is a hardening tendency, and this will help the Canadian wools indirectly, but, on the other hand the news from the United States is of an opposite nature. Stocks in hand in that country early this month were very light, but, against that, the demand was small and appeared to be diminishing. Lately, manufacturers in several sections have received so few orders that they had to close their mills. A peculiar feature over there

is that the scoured cost of coarse and medium wools is to-day actually higher than that of merino. But this condition, exactly the opposite to that which exists in Europe, is one which is not likely to last for very long. Even with regard to the coarser grades, the higher values looked for as a consequence of short supplies have not materialized, and, now that the new clip is arriving, are not likely to do so. This, together with the very unsettled state of the woolen manufacturing industry in this country, gives no promise for better prices for the Canadian wool grower.

Apropos the Canadian woolen mills, Mr. E. W. Thomson, of Ottawa, had recently a very interesting article in the Boston Transcript, which reads as though he had endeavored to arrive at an unbiassed judgment on the matter. After testifying from personal experience to the excellent quality of many of the goods turned out by the Canadian mills and referring to the old-time prosperity of the trade, he gives it as his opinion that the trouble would seem to lie in the fact that while, through the general adoption of the protective system in Canada, the cost of living and of mill supplies has increased, the duties on woolen manufactures have not increased in sufficient proportion to offset this or allow the wool manufacturers and operatives to bear the burden. Mr. Thomson touches on a sore spot when he denounces the prejudice held by many Canadians against some of the fabrics made in their own country, which causes them often to choose imported goods upon nothing but their name. But he blames the domestic manufacturers, too, for not being more up-to-date in their business and advertising methods, a lack which is partially responsible for this preference.

One apparently good suggestion Mr. Thomson makes as an alternative to the demand for increased duties to counteract the consumption of imported shoddy goods. He would have the Government establish a system of inspection for all woolen goods, domestic and imported, requiring the manufacturer's certificate of composition, to be fixed and remain on the goods until the last yard has been sold. By this means frauds on the purchasers of woolen goods would be discouraged; there would be no more interference with trade than in the case of governmental inspection of cheese, or butter, or apples, and Canadian manufacturers would be much better protected than they are now. This suggestion does not necessarily put out of court the claim for a revision of the tariff duties as well.

INTERIOR BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Since the proposition to build another great trans-continental railway under the name of the Grand Trunk Pacific was mooted in earnest, there has been an extraordinary demand for information concerning the Skeena river district and various sections of British Columbia which may be classed as undeveloped areas of the great interior. To such an extent has this gone on that the Bureau of Information of the Provincial Government has thought fit to re-issue in an enlarged form a bulletin which was originally published two or three years ago, giving information, so far as could be obtained up to date, of those great tracts of virgin land. Among the sections to which particular attention has been drawn for some time past are Bulkley Valley and Ootsa Lake, in that Province. The first-named of these two places came recently into notice as the proposed site for an important colony, but to show that the Government at the present stage does not greatly favor