

THE LIBERALS AND AUSTRALIAN TRADE.

One of the shining lights of the Patrons of Industry, Mr. J. Lockie-Wilson, introduced into the recent campaign in North Ontario and exhibited in all the public meetings in that contest a can of Australian mutton, and he charged that the Government of Canada had subsidized a line of steamships to ply between British Columbia and New South Wales for the purpose of bringing Australian mutton to Canada to compete with, and to injure the Canadian farmer. The Liberal party, it seems, have adopted Mr. Wilson's idea, and in their campaign sheet No. 1 have endeavored to make capital out of it.

The Government of Canada and the Government of New South Wales united in the establishing of this new line of steamships; each contribute to the subsidy; the object in each case is the same, namely, to increase trade between Australia and Canada. It was felt that the time had come when direct facilities should be afforded for the development of such trade. For years Canada had furnished Australia with a large portion of certain food products, and Australia had furnished Canada with certain of its products; but the trade had been done either through Great Britain or through the United States, and toll had been paid in all cases to unnecessary middlemen. Hence the line was established, and the Governments of both colonies are encouraged to hope great things from it, because, so fast has trade increased that the ships of the line on several occasions have been unable to take all the freight offered, and it is quite within the probable that the company without further subsidy will double the frequency of the sailings.

Now, it will be admitted that an increased trade is a good thing; but it is said that this increase is prejudicial to the interests of the Canadian farmer. Australian wool is largely brought into Canada to be used by the Canadian woollen manufacturers. This is pointed to as a case where the Canadian farmer suffers from the operation of this line. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Our manufacturers must have the fine wools of Australia; nothing but fine wool is produced there; it has been coming to Canada for years; it is not coming

now in a greater volume than before, except as the population and manufacturers of Canada increase. The only difference is that this fine wool of Australia, not produced in Canada at all, which must be had by our manufacturers, which always has been used by them, now comes direct from Australia to Canada without paying toll either to London or to New York, instead of coming, as it formerly did, through British or Yankee channels. The coarse wools of Canada do not enter into competition at all with the fine wools of Australia, and the Canadian wool-producer is not injured one cent by the change which has been wrought by the Australian line of steamships.

It is also said that mutton and canned meats are being so largely imported by this line as to seriously injure the Canadian farmer. Let us examine the Trade and Navigation Returns, and see how far this charge is justified:—

For the year ending June 30, 1894, there was imported from Australia into Canada:—

350,919 lbs. of canned meat, of the value of.....	\$31,461
54,351 lbs. of mutton, of the value of.....	1,586
54,420 lbs. of butter, of the value of.....	9,547

A total for the year of.....\$42,594

For the next year, ending June 30, 1895, there was imported:—

202,588 lbs. of canned meat, of the value of.....	\$14,258
16,052 lbs. of mutton, of the value of.....	577
39,516 lbs. of butter, of the value of.....	6,286

Making a total for the last year of.....\$21,121
\$21,121 worth, as against \$42,594 in the preceding year, a decrease of more than half, and this statement for both years includes bacons, hams and salted beef.

For nine months of the current year there has not been a pound of mutton or a pound of butter imported; and the importation of canned meats has fallen to 128,600 lbs., or a decrease of more than 50 per cent. of what was imported in 1894.