

BETTER THAN LAST YEAR.

CANADIAN trade abroad continues brisk. Compared with the same period last year a distinct improvement is shown. The official figures for the month of April have just been issued, and this completes the first four months, or one third, of the calendar year 1896. Both in imports and exports increases are shown. In imported goods, free and dutiable, the expansion is over two million dollars worth, and in exports the increase is nearly six millions. The details of imports are:

TOTAL IMPORTS FOUR MONTHS PERIOD

	1895.	1896.
January	\$ 7,005,356	\$ 9,746,739
February	7,700,237	7,737,303
March	9,159,510	9,370,195
April	8,202,796	7,910,141
	\$32,763,901	\$34,964,379

In exports a creditable advance is recorded, all the more satisfactory since it covers so many products of the farmer, who is, ultimately, the customer of so many of our wholesale and retail firms. Animal products and grains have all been sold abroad in larger quantities than during the first four months of 1895, the increase in value exceeding \$500,000. This year, so far, the expansion in the lumber trade is also good, our forest products exported up to May 1st being valued at \$3,289,608 compared with \$2,649,809 for the first four months of 1895, a gain of another half million or so. Good times abroad seems to account for this increased demand for our lumber, and if it keeps up during the year the districts affected by the lumber business will feel it. In fisheries, too, an increase is recorded, being for 1896 valued at \$1,965,826, against \$1,535,657 in 1895. In analysing these details of exports we have taken only the volume of Canadian products and omitted the figures of foreign stuff shipped via Canadian ports, but of United States origin. The latter is valuable as carrying trade, and helps the railways and steamships, and Canada is always glad to do a carrying trade. But we are dealing with the stuff sold by the actual customers of our merchants, and consider it fairer in discussing details not to include foreign stuff. If we took total imports the showing is:

EXPORTED GOODS FOUR MONTHS PERIOD

	1895.	1896.
January	\$4,634,416	\$8,026,634
February	3,613,401	6,573,323
March	5,286,546	3,027,747
April	5,027,033	4,838,907
	\$18,651,396	\$24,486,611

The imports of dry goods for the four months contain some interesting facts. Increases are noted in carpets, dyed cottons, cotton clothing, cotton threads, etc., not on the spool, manufactured cottons generally, fringes and braids, silk goods, woolen dress goods, knitted woolens, and woolens goods that the figures do not classify. Decreases are recorded in undyed cottons, spool cottons, laces and nettings, furs, and silk and felt hats. On the whole, the imports of dry goods show some increase over the same period last year, the details being:

DUTIABLE GOODS—FOUR MONTHS PERIOD

	1895.	1896.
Carpets, Brussels and tapestry	\$ 436,844	\$ 438,326
Cottons, not dyed	205,642	192,649
Cottons, dyed	1,348,912	1,447,019
Cotton clothing	171,112	185,858
Cotton threads, yarns, warps, etc.	86,383	91,231
Cotton thread on the spool	126,900	90,724
Cotton manufactures, other	237,425	253,362
Bracelets, braids and fringes	334,764	344,432
Laces, collars, nettings	317,036	320,629
Other fancy goods	79,493	89,264
Fur manufactures	195,102	153,622
Hats, beaver, silk and felt	407,646	385,943
Hats, other	285,358	313,429
Silk manufactures	885,800	1,071,056
Woolen clothing	252,373	247,947
Woolen cloths, worsteds, coatings, etc.	914,025	916,926
Woolen dress goods	1,228,562	1,431,415
Woolen knitted goods	164,624	242,035
Woolen shawls	18,805	16,311
Woolen yarns	31,927	25,631
Woolen manufactures, other	198,859	226,472
	\$7,967,588	\$8,514,444

Raw materials come in rather slowly, the imports being under those of the period of 1895. As prices of such articles as wool, cotton, etc., are rather higher than last year, the figures would indicate a slight falling off in demand for factory and mill materials. The uncertainty of tariff legislation may have something to do with it, or the foreign markets may be influencing our manufacturers. The period covered by the returns is too brief to enable one to draw any general decisive conclusion. The principal imports of raw materials are:

FREE GOODS—FOUR MONTHS IMPORTS

	1895.	1896.
Broom corn	\$ 17,574	\$ 27,350
Cotton waste	54,143	85,145
Cotton, raw	1,427,518	1,162,730
Fur, skins, undressed	257,100	304,307
Grease, for soap making	128,687	114,750
Hides and skins	748,224	591,540
Crude rubber	311,632	402,463
Jute cloth and yarn	126,777	156,473
Raw silk	58,849	48,987
Shal, manilla and hemp	306,609	229,538
Tobacco leaf	401,322	441,039
Wool	433,729	373,638
	\$4,272,564	\$5,939,510

A COMPLAINT ABOUT CITY BUYING.

From the Mitchell, Ont., Advocate.

The Owen Sound Times is waging a "righteous war" against city departmental stores, or rather the country patrons of them. The facts stated by The Times are just as true of Mitchell and neighborhood as of Owen Sound. It is well known also that the thing complained of is sapping the life-blood of all the towns and villages of the Dominion. If people will only give Mitchell merchants the opportunity, the merchants will prove conclusively that not only can there be found in this town as wide a selection as all of the departmental stores will show, but as a matter of values Mitchell merchants can at least save the purchaser the expense of writing to Toronto, getting samples and then sending for the goods and paying the carriage on their Toronto departmental store purchases. And, we might add, customers can avoid the almost inevitable disappointment which comes from buying by sample.

BLACK CARD.

The black card darning cotton, mentioned in our last issue, is put up in one gross handsome wooden cabinets. Every retailer should have one or more in stock.