

of a tonnage bounty to every vessel engaged in the fisheries, and to all licensed boats. Several articles are to be placed on the free list, such as tin in blocks, pigs bars and sheets, Britannia metals, quinine quicksilver, and brass in sheets. The duty on iron is to be reduced from \$2 to \$1 per ton. There are quite a number of other articles on the list, but as the aggregate customs reduction is estimated at \$1,000,000, and tea alone is nearly \$900,000, and coffee about \$60,000, the other articles cannot be of much importance. Of course the tea and coffee imported direct from the United States will still pay the ten per cent. extra, which would be about \$30,000.

There is an old saying that figures can be made to prove anything, and Sir Leonard Tilley did not fail to endeavor to make out that the effect of his tariff was to reduce the imports from the United States, and to increase those from Great Britain. We doubt much whether the year selected, 1877, is a fair one, and we think it much more desirable to institute a comparison between the years ending respectively 30th June, 1880 and 1881, when the tariff was the same and circumstances not widely different.

In 1880 the dutiable goods imported from the United States were \$19,586,567, and in 1881 \$25,632,313, being an increase of \$6,065,746, or about 31 per cent. In 1880 the dutiable imports from Great Britain were \$28,038,118, and in 1881 \$35,860,461, being an increase of \$7,822,343, or about 28 per cent. The increase in the free goods was much the same, viz., from Great Britain \$1,300,241, and from the United States \$1,291,418.

The most startling circumstance connected with the returns, and most assuredly no one could form an idea of it, from Sir Leonard Tilley's speech, is the effect of the tariff on a class of goods which it was specially intended to protect, viz., cotton manufactures. Nothing can be more deceptive than the figures employed to prove that these duties are calculated to encourage imports from Great Britain. Of course it is well-known that there are certain descriptions of cottons, principally the more expensive goods, in which the United States cannot compete with Great Britain, while the Canadian manufacturers do not produce them at all. These goods are largely imported from Great Britain at a revenue duty of 20 per cent., and by blocking all cotton goods together it is made to appear that Great Britain competes with the United States at a great advantage. This is simply a delusion, and one that we have already called attention to, citing

facts from last year's trade returns. We shall now give figures from the returns for the year 1881. We shall take the first three items under the head of Cotton Manufactures, viz., "Grey or unbleached and bleached cottons, sheetings, drills, ducks, etc., not stained, painted or printed." "Ginghams and plaids, dyed or colored." "Denims, drillings, bed tickings, canton flannels, ducks, and drills, dyed or colored, checked and striped shirtings, cottonades, etc." Now the foregoing goods are manufactured in Canada, and are likewise imported from Great Britain and the United States under heavy protective duties. We claim that they are fair items for comparison. The imports of these goods from Great Britain last year were \$952,412, which paid duties amounting to \$304,331.54, or rather above 32 per cent. The imports of the same articles from the United States were \$1,008,974, which paid duties amounting to \$279,502.66, or 27½ per cent., being rather more than 4 per cent. paid on British in excess of United States imports of the goods in question. This arises from the operation of the specific duty per yard, there having been 10,579,565 square yards in the British goods, and 8,352,905 in those from the United States. The price per yard is over 3 cents higher on the American than the British goods. It must be borne in mind that the number of yards stated is the gross quantity, and that the prices vary on the different qualities, but the difference in price is about 3 cents per yard on each quality of goods.

We think that Sir Leonard Tilley is inclined to attach too little importance to the influence which the great increase of exports has had on the condition of the people. The aggregate increase in 1881 over 1880 was about ten millions of dollars, of which about eight millions was in products of the forest, and three and a half millions in animals and their produce. Agricultural products were about a million less, and there were trifling reductions under other heads. Under the head of manufactures there is a falling off in the items of "ships sold to other countries."

We noticed with pleasure the encouraging view which Sir Leonard Tilley took of the future, in which we think he is justified, although it is far from improbable that it will be found necessary to make some changes in the tariff before long. No reference was made to any change in the sugar duties as a consequence of the introduction of untaxed beet sugar. It is preposterous to imagine that the present duties, which are over 44

per cent. on the lowest grade, 49 per cent. on the next, and over 56 per cent. on the highest, can be maintained if beet sugar is to be untaxed. Some of the topics referred to in the speech will be considered separately in connection with the estimates of revenue and expenditure for the coming year.

THE GAS SUPPLY.

The discussion as to the expediency of establishing a new gas company has been recently revived on the alleged ground of excessive charges. It would be well that the citizens of Montreal should fully realize the consequences that would ensue if such a policy should be carried out, even with the greatest success. It would be no trifling annoyance to have new pipes laid in all our streets, but that evil would be of only secondary magnitude. We shall assume all minor difficulties surmounted, the new company chartered, the capital subscribed, and the business established. There would most assuredly follow active competition between the rival companies, cheap gas for a time, and finally amalgamation, and rates as high, if not higher, than before. The true remedy for the grievance complained of, is that the corporation which undertakes to supply the citizens with water should also perform the same duty with regard to gas. There are not a few among the city's representatives in the City Council who are desirous that the city should become the proprietor of the street railways, which would be very much more objectionable than its owning gas works. It has of late been a by no means uncommon practice in Great Britain and the United States for the supply of gas to be furnished by the citizens themselves in their corporate capacity, and it probably would be the most advantageous course that could be followed under existing circumstances. Of course there would be difficulties in matters of detail, and in obtaining possession of the property of the City Gas Company, but these could probably be surmounted, and at all events, it will be well to make the trial before resorting to any other expedient. If the party favorable to the purchase of the street railways should succeed in their attempt, there will be a good many difficulties to be removed before the new organization will be in satisfactory working order, and it is at least doubtful whether it could be made a success. In the case of the gas works, the only point to settle would be the price of the property.