

and best one the country ever had, and that it should be maintained. It would be especially unwise to substitute ad valorem for specific rates of duty, or to weaken any of the safeguards against fraudulent and undervalued importations which are found in the provisions of the Administration Act of 1890. The tariff law of 1890, he said, had reduced the rates of duty on iron and steel manufactures, except cotton ties, tin plates and a few other articles. Frequent changes of the tariff, he argued, are injurious to the country, and a change now, when business is depressed and industries are paralyzed, would be especially unfortunate and disastrous. The prospect of such a change has already caused a sharp contraction of credits, which are necessary to the prosperity of the industry, and the result has been ninety-three failures within the last three months, some of which have been very heavy ones, while many other establishments are in a precarious condition, and must go to the wall unless relief is afforded. He submitted that this was not a good time "to knock the pins from under an industry of such importance and magnitude."

President Ely, of the Western Iron Ore Producers' Association, said that this was a most unfortunate time to agitate the subject of tariff legislation. The iron ore industry of the Lake Superior region is in a condition of complete paralysis. The output last year was over 9,000,000 tons. This year it will not exceed 5,000,000 tons, and iron ore is a drug in the market. Three-fourths of the mines are closed and the miners are idle. Six railroads which are wholly dependent upon the mines for traffic are virtually without business, the men who have been employed on the ore docks of the great lakes are idle or working short time, and the immense lake towage employed in ore transportation is largely without cargoes. Mr. Ely read figures showing that the total amount of capital invested in the iron mines of the Lake Superior region, and in ore docks, railroads and vessel towage employed in the transportation of ores, amounts to about \$156,000,000, not including \$20,000,000 of capital invested in railroads between Lake Erie and Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, a large proportion of whose business is the freighting of iron ore and coal. Tens of thousands of men with their families, who are dependent upon this industry for a support, have been thrown out of employment or are working short time or at reduced wages. Mr. Ely submitted many other facts, and declared that the admission of iron ore free of duty would not only cut off a large part of the demand for Lake Superior ores, but would result in a heavy reduction in the wages of everybody engaged in the industry.

W. K. Sterling, of the Illinois Steel Company, who for nine years was a manufacturer in Scotland, and who has been during the past fourteen years a manufacturer in the United States, was the next speaker. The company which he represents had 9,500 men on its pay-rolls a few months ago. Nearly 5,000 of them are now idle, and on October 1 only 1,100 will be at work. This paralysis of business has been caused by fear and uncertainty regarding tariff legislation, and it affects not only the capital invested and the labor which has been employed, but also the transportation companies and their employes who have been engaged in carrying the material to the mills and finished products to the markets, but the farmers, merchants, mechanics and others whose

prosperity so largely depends upon that of the concern which Mr. Sterling represents. Mr. Sterling submitted a great number of interesting facts showing the rapid growth of the iron and steel industries in Illinois during the last few years and the steady reduction of cost to the consumer on account of domestic competition. He said that wages are much higher than in Great Britain—from two to five times as large. He was strongly opposed to free "raw material," and he was able to say from personal knowledge that labor in the United States is about as skillful, efficient and productive as in Great Britain.

Mr. Lambert, of the Joliet Steel and Wire Company, supplemented Mr. Sterling's statements by giving many additional interesting facts in regard to wages, prices, cost of production, etc. Ten years ago English wire rods cost \$68 a ton in Chicago, and to-day domestic wire rods of equal or superior quality cost \$30 a ton. If the duty of 6-10 of a cent a pound had not been imposed, the industry could not have been established in the United States, and wire rods would now cost \$68 a ton, or whatever the foreign manufacturers in Free Trade England chose to ask for them. In 1883 barbed wire cost the American farmer 8 to 10 cents a pound; to-day it costs him 2½ cents. Wire nails then cost \$10; they now sell at \$1.90 a keg. In Europe there is a combination of manufacturers to keep up prices; in this country no such combination exists.

Col. A. M. Shook, of Nashville, Tenn., and James A. Spedden appeared in behalf of the iron ore and pig iron producers of the South, and they united in saying that these industries are paralyzed, and tens of thousands of men idle on account of the fear and uncertainty produced by proposed tariff legislation. Free iron ore would destroy these industries. They appealed for an assurance that Congress will defer action until the iron ore and pig iron producers "shall be better able to stand it."

George M. Laughlin, of Pittsburg, attributed the present condition of the iron and steel industries to fear and uncertainty in regard to tariff legislation. Mr. Laughlin also remarked that the reports to the effect that 25,000 men have lately returned to work in the iron mills of the Pittsburg district are misleading. Mills have been re-opened, it is true, but not to give steady employment. There has been no such revival in the iron and steel industries as has been represented, he was sorry to say. The concern he represents has about 40 per cent. of its 3,500 regular employes at work two or three days a week, and that was as well as other concerns could do. Every day's run was a loss.

The hearing was closed by Cyrus W. Elder, of the Cambria Iron Company, of Johnstown, Pa., who laid before the committee a mass of interesting and pertinent information and facts.

MERCHANDISE MARKS.

THE Department of Trade and Commerce has sent out a circular which is of special interest to manufacturers. It says:—

The attention of manufacturers and shippers to or through Great Britain, of goods manufactured in Canada, is called to the British Merchandise Marks Act (50-51 Vic. Chap. 25, 1887) and amendments thereto; which act is by the Customs