

CANADA'S TRADE.

RETURNS from the Customs office at Ottawa are not exactly enticing, although they are not disheartening.

June was expected to show an increased trade, as compared with June last year, but the returns are a disappointment, as the following comparison shows :

June imports.	1893.	1894.	1895.
Cottons	\$301,727	\$199,074	\$275,375
Fancy goods	84,378	84,634	59,593
Furs	54,504	29,339	24,395
Hats, caps, bonnets	39,111	38,283	28,557
Silks	139,764	113,790	113,405
Woolens	771,395	442,786	416,137
Total dutiable goods	6,303,368	4,406,923	5,671,152
Coin and bullion . .	1,022,903	24,490	46,865
Free Goods	4,674,759	4,990,080	3,052,822
Total	\$12,001,030	\$9,421,493	\$8,770,839
June exports.	1893.	1894.	1895.
Produce of Canada . .	\$11,317,215	\$11,854,088	\$9,476,453
Produce of other countries	2,055,080	1,371,785	1,090,824
Total	\$13,372,295	\$13,225,873	\$10,567,277

In the face of such figures it is hard to say that trade is as healthy as can be desired. June should have made a better showing, although it must be admitted that domestic goods are occupying the market more and more. To this latter statement we must make one exception, and that is, the importation of cottons, which is increasing.

The millinery trade, as a gentleman remarked the other day, has gone to blazes. The importation of millinery has been steadily declining for twelve months. But import figures are, perhaps, unjust in that more of the mechanical cost of millinery is being added here, only the raw materials being imported. Still, the millinery trade is by no means expanding.

The importations of woolens are only about one-half what they were in 1893, and nearly ten per cent. less than last year. This is mostly attributable to two causes. Domestic tweeds, etofies, friezes, flannels, knitted underwear, and carpets are steadily gaining ground and are rapidly monopolizing the market for medium and lower grades. The second cause is that the quality of woolens imported has been much lower than in previous years, and hence the value of an equal number of yards is not so great as formerly. From these reasons it may be inferred that the woolen trade is in almost as good a position as in 1893.

The increase in the importation of cottons was fully discussed in our last issue.

Our fiscal year ends June 30th. Let us again compare :

	Total exports.	Total imports.
Fiscal year 1892. . .	\$113,963,375	\$127,406,068
" " 1893 . . .	118,564,352	129,074,268
" " 1894	117,524,949	123,474,940
" " 1895 . . .	113,000,000	116,000,000

In this comparison it must be remembered that the figures given for 1895 are only approximate, as full returns are not yet

to hand. But there is no doubt that the volume of exports has fallen to the level of 1892, while imports have fallen very considerably. The latter is more easily explained than the former. The fall in the value of produce does not wholly explain the small export of 1894-5, but part is attributable to general slowness of trade.

While trade shows a slight decline, there is no reason for discouragement. In fact, there is room for congratulation that Canada has so safely weathered a trying year.

TAKE YOUR CASH DISCOUNTS.

NO better advice can be given the merchant going into business than an urgent appeal to buy for cash. Are you a young man, just opening out in what is considered a promising locality? Then take advantage of the cash discounts. Have you pretty generally followed the credit system but begun to wish that circumstances enabled you to buy at cash prices? Then, as often as you can, get the cash discounts, and see, when the turn-over of the transaction is figured out, if you have not secured a better profit than you looked for. By gradual effort it is quite possible to substitute cash buying for credits, and though the process requires patience and care, it invariably pays in the end.

The whole effect of the cash system is beneficial. It makes the merchant more cautious in giving credit. He becomes more systematic in making collections. Every branch of his business feels the increased care he is bound to give it in order to maintain ability to buy for cash. The experience of every merchant who has tried it goes in favor of raking in the cash discounts. Those who have weighed the whole matter declare that, in a moderate retail business, the cash buyer will clear in discounts an average of \$500 per year. That is, he makes living expenses, so that every cent beyond that is net profit.

A shrewd and experienced member of the trade was asked the other day by THE REVIEW if his observations confirmed those arguments. His instant reply was: "Yes, I know of a typical case where it applies exactly. In a thriving western town a man began business not far from a well-established prosperous store, the owners of which bought on credit, and from their prestige and long standing had done well. The new comer began by cash buying and saving his discounts. He kept this up. It became his inflexible rule. Ten years have gone by, and the man who started with the handicap of limited capital, and well-developed competition near by, has distanced all his rivals, and could purchase them out if he desired."

One of the evils of the credit system is that it grows by what it feeds upon. Like a crutch, the more one leans on it the more one seems to need it. By gradual effort it can at last be dispensed with, and this is the remedy which every man can apply if he has the mind. The merchant whose capital is in stock and book debts makes a living. With due care he can go on making a living as long as he lasts, but he is always much at the mercy of bad seasons, and, moreover, there is no old age of retirement and prosperity before him. It is, looked at strictly, a case of living from hand to mouth, and, when we consider that cash discounts don't mean spot cash, but getting goods for three, four, or even five months, according to circumstances, there seems no reason why merchants, as a body, should not lay themselves out, as a bottom principle in business, to save their cash discounts.