

the tariff which makes in favor of England; that is to say, the tariff now being 35 per cent. on cloth and also 35 per cent. on clothing, which on the 1st of July next will be brought down to 26½ per cent. by the reduction of 25 per cent. on English goods; they asked to be exempted from the discount for ready-made clothing, citing precedents from other trades to show that they were in a worse position than iron workers, etc.

Mr. Fielding stated that the Government recognized that the clothing trade was not as favorably treated as some other branches of manufacture, such as boots and shoes which were protected 7½ per cent., shirts, collars and cuffs, 10 per cent., and various other lines, and almost every other line of manufactured goods which has a higher duty on the manufactured article than on the raw material, and he promised to give their plea favorable consideration. The deputation, it seems, asked that the duty on clothing should be raised to 40 per cent. if the Government could not see their way to the other proposal; but this they could not expect to be done if the Government remember its tariff platform. It is much more likely that the protection asked will be given in the way first proposed, if given at all, than by raising the duty to 40 per cent. But the clothing men seem to have made out a very fair case for consideration.

SOME FEATURES OF THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

The bright spring weather of the past few days has reminded the retailer that the summer season of 1898 is almost at hand, and has stirred the wholesale merchant, who is always a season in advance, with thoughts of autumn business. The representatives of the different wholesale firms are departing for the textile centres of the United Kingdom to make purchases for the coming season, and at the same time secure selections for a sorting business. Domestic manufacturers' agents are also seen in the warehouses. Some weeks ago we made a review of the patterns of cotton dress goods for Fall. On Monday of this week the samples were first displayed, and initial orders are said to have been very satisfactory, giving good grounds to look for a large turn-over in dry goods when the autumn comes.

The Canadian cotton manufacturers are at present more than holding their own in the home market as against competitors in the United States. From the Republic our importations of woven goods are declining, but of printed goods such as lawns, picques, dimities and satin finished cloths there are still large imports made. The trade of American manufacturers of cotton blankets in Canada is said to have disappeared. The Merritton mill of the Canadian Colored Cotton Mills Company is now making 200,000 pairs a year of these goods, which is a very pleasing record for a trade established only two years ago.

Values in the textile trades remain very steady. There have been few changes in manufactured goods since the decline of 10 to 15 per cent. in the price of gray cottons some days ago. What the future will bring, we cannot say. From the demand side of the market there is every appearance of strength. The interesting element in supply is, of course, that of raw material. In cotton, the markets of the Southern States are ruling rather easy. The market is, to a large extent, dependent upon the conditions of the growing crop. Latest advices report that dry weather has prevailed in most districts of the South for some days, and that the temperature has, as a rule, been favorable. As a result, farm operations have made good progress in many localities. Reports on the Russian cotton crop indicate that area was considerably extended in Turkestan, Khiva and Buchara in 1896, and that while

the yield per acre was not so great as in the previous season, the aggregate production increased.

The second series of colonial wool sales for the year opens in London this week, and its course will be watched with considerable interest.

Irish linen markets are disturbed by rumors of trade "combinations," but the tone of the market is not strong, and prices have had an easy tendency.

THE ALLEGED SHOVEL COMBINATION.

In spite of the vigorous efforts made within recent years, in both Canada and the United States, to stamp out trade combinations and trusts, these institutions are growing in strength and importance. A combination of producers to limit or regulate business within the country in which the principals reside may come within the jurisdiction of the Government of that country; but when the operations of monopolists are extended to a foreign country the matter becomes extremely complicated. If the combination is the result of an agreement between associations in different countries additional complications are introduced. We have previously pointed out that there are indications of an understanding or arrangement by which the shovel manufacturers of the United States do not compete with those of Canada. Mr. Richardson, member for Lisgar, in the Dominion House of Commons, this week made the charge that a combination of this kind existed, and called upon the Government to put in force the tariff resolution adopted last year, which provides for the removal of the duty upon any article the price of which is found to be enhanced by the existence of a combination. In support of his charge, Mr. Richardson said he had in his possession four letters written by prominent United States manufacturers in reply to enquiries from mercantile firms in Canada. One of these letters was from a Pennsylvania house, and contained this statement: "According to an arrangement with Canadian shovel manufacturers, we are not in a position to quote you prices at present." Mr. Fielding, the Finance Minister, promised to give the usual consideration to the matter, and replied that if the gentleman was able to convince the Government that a combination existed among the Canadian shovel manufacturers, it would be their duty to call the attention of the courts to the matter so that a judicial enquiry might be instituted. The question naturally arises, what amount of evidence is it necessary to submit to the House before judicial enquiry is instituted? If conclusive proof be required, the judicial enquiry would be a useless proceeding.

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

SOME ENCOURAGEMENTS AND SOME WARNINGS.

The North American Bent Chair Company, of Owen Sound, is another Canadian concern that has shown pluck that is likely to get its reward. It opened a branch in Sydney, on the advice of the Canadian Commissioner, has sent out a capable manager and a big stock of goods. The branch has now been about two months in operation, and the outlook is that it will in the first year do three times the amount of business that it had fixed upon as the limit. The house has a contract from one firm for about the amount it expected to do altogether. Prices are good, I am told, and the business will be done at a reasonable profit. The market has to be studied. Some of the goods sent out sell at sight, others the market won't take to. When they get into the swing I look for a big trade in furniture from Canada, as a result of the venture.

For three years the company in question had done a picyune trade with this country in the old way, through old houses, and their efforts to extend trade were nearly in vain.