

EMPLOYEES ON STRIKE.

STRIKES, instead of becoming less during the prosperity which we are enjoying, seem to be on the increase. There has been quite an epidemic lately, and the prevalence at this date of such a barbarous means of carrying on business between employer and employed does not speak particularly well for our advanced moral and commercial civilization.

The cotton and woollen mills seem to be emulating each other in this respect. Only last month THE DRY GOODS REVIEW had to record a strike in the mills of The Montreal Cotton Co. at Valleyfield, where the operators had gone out to obtain an increase of wages. Fortunately we were also able to state that an arrangement satisfactory to both parties had been arrived at, and that every department was again in operation. On top of this comes a strike in the woollen mills of The Cornwall Manufacturing Co. The trouble this time is principally among the weavers; and at the moment of writing no compromise had been made, nor was there apparently much hope of a settlement. The employees were not prepared to make any definite propositions, and, consequently, the authorities did not feel called upon to make any changes.

The demand was simply for more money; and the way that the management viewed the question was, in short, whether they or the employees were going to be masters. This is not at all such a rhetorical question as it appears on the face of it. For, on the other side of the line there are indications that the employer has become so hedged in by workingmen's unions and labor laws, and one thing and another; watched at every turn by the walking superintendent of these organizations, that he has really begun to wonder whether, after all, he is running his own establishment, or is only a figurehead.

Each case must be considered by itself, and on its own merits; and no general law can be laid down to cover all cases; but it is safe to say that the right is not all on one side or the other. There is a bill before our own House of Parliament at the present time making it an indictable offence to employ a workman or laborer more than eight hours a day. It is doubtful whether Parliament has the power, or, at all events, whether it will use it, to effect such an enactment. There is always an objection to hard and fast-binding categorical schemes and constitutions. Things must gradually develop, and they refuse to be iron moulded to suit the requirements of any individual, or set of individuals. There are circumstances under which it is not only allowable, but advisable that the length of the day's work should not be

limited to the said number of hours; and it would be a curious law that would make it a crime to hire help for a longer period, if the good of both parties would thus not be injured. These questions are working toward solution, but not so fast as some people would like to see them doing.

BRITISH COLUMBIA BUSINESS MEN.

The deputation of business men, as such, to the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia was a proper proceeding. In fact, if business men would join together oftener for intervention in politics it would, as a general rule, be of good effect.

Merchants as a class are, we believe, weary of party politics. They see that, in the main, public affairs are manipulated for the benefit of the professional politicians. No man cares to leave his party, because individual action often subjects him to unpleasant criticism. But when he forms one of a class, all acting together, he can shake himself free of party feeling to a considerable extent. Therefore, all movements of business men tending to increase the influence of the commercial body in politics should be encouraged.

The two most important elements in this country are the merchants and the farmers—commerce and agriculture. They form a vast majority of the population. Do they wield most of the power? Not by any means. The lawyers and professional politicians—some of them unable to earn a dollar in any useful occupation—rule the roost.

When business men, as a class, have thoroughly grasped this fact, they will, we hope and believe, be readier to act together as a sort of curb or brake upon the wheel of party.

THE NEW TARIFF.

By the announcement of the Minister of Finance in Parliament March 23, the preference of 25 per cent. of the duty in favor of British goods is extended to 33½ per cent. after July 1, 1900. This practically brings into force a new tariff, and, as far as the textiles and dry goods trade is concerned, we give the principal items with the two duties to be levied after July 1—the rate on foreign goods, and the rate on British goods:

| | Rate on Foreign Goods. | Rate on British Goods. | | Rate on Foreign Goods. | Rate on British Goods. |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | p. c. | p. c. | | p. c. | p. c. |
| White and grey cotton | 25 | 16½ | Worsted and other dress fabrics | 25 | 16½ |
| Colored cottons | 35 | 23½ | Socks and stockings | 35 | 23½ |
| Linen | 30 | 20 | Knitted goods | 35 | 23½ |
| Laces, curtains, embroideries, etc. | 35 | 23½ | Shawls | 30 | 20 |
| Corsets | 35 | 23½ | Yarns, woollen and worsted .. | 30 | 20 |
| White cotton embroideries .. | 25 | 16½ | Woollen clothing, tweeds, etc. | 35 | 23½ |
| Collars and cuffs | 35 | 23½ | Blankets | 35 | 23½ |
| Shirts, blouses, and shirt- waists | 35 | 23½ | Mats | 35 | 23½ |
| Black crapes | 20 | 13½ | Carpets | 35 | 23½ |
| Silk velvets, and plush fabrics | 30 | 20 | Hemp or straw carpeting | 25 | 16½ |
| Silk manufactures | 35 | 23½ | Oilcloth | 30 | 20 |
| Cotton thread in hanks | 15 | 10 | Window shades | 35 | 23½ |
| Cotton thread on spools | 25 | 16½ | Umbrellas and parasols | 35 | 23½ |
| Sewing silk and twist | 25 | 16½ | Gloves and mitts | 35 | 23½ |
| Horse clothing of jute | 30 | 20 | Hats, caps, and bonnets | 30 | 20 |
| Flax and hemp manufactures | 25 | 16½ | Braces or suspenders | 35 | 23½ |
| Cotton duck | 22½ | 15 | Fur manufactures | 30 | 20 |
| | | | Fur skins | 15 | 10 |