

## FRAMING A TARIFF.

**B**Y THE Constitution a general election must take place in Canada within the next four or five months. There is no escaping it, and we business men, whether we like it or not, must face it.

Although the politicians are talking a good deal of humbug, as they usually do, the great question of prime importance to every business interest is the tariff. That is the real issue.

Now, THE DRY GOODS REVIEW is not a party paper, and has no interest whatever in the success of one party more than another, except as tariff policy affects Canadian commerce. We want to see the manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades of Canada in 1896 get the full benefit of the world's revival in business. The past year was better than the previous one, but unquestionably it did not come up to expectations. This year promises to be far more prosperous, and nothing but bungling on the part of our national legislators can prevent its being so.

The weak spot in the tariff policy of both parties is that it emanates from men who are either lawyers or professional politicians. There are some good business men on both sides, but they are not the controlling influence. The tariff cannot be raised or lowered without vitally affecting the trade of the country. But what provision is there in our political system (as it works out in practice) for the men who control that trade to have also a controlling voice in framing the legislation that affects commerce?

Each party assure us that they alone understand what is wanted and will provide the necessary article. But, as everyone knows very well, the result is that Cabinets of Lawyers and Politicians settle the whole thing. Deputations go to Ottawa, and if they have "a pull" duties are arranged to suit them. If they only represent the public interest and the national welfare they get no sort of serious attention.

What is needed is a feeling of absolute confidence amongst our merchants and manufacturers that tariff policy will in future be regulated by business interests and public requirements. A tariff to raise a revenue is necessary. How shall it be framed so as to produce revenue, and at the same time promote the common prosperity? That is the whole question, and we submit that either set of politicians cannot, unaided, satisfactorily solve the problem.

Before the general election both parties should be made to give a pledge, through their recognized leaders, that future tariff policy shall be regulated, in the main, by the recommendations of the business community. The Ministers need not be divested of their responsibility. But an Advisory Body composed of representatives of the retail, wholesale and manufacturing departments of trade should be constituted. If this Advisory Body gave bad advice, its errors could be publicly dealt with. But secret conferences, deputations with "a pull," and the advice of political wire-pullers should be utterly done away with.

And when the rates of duty are decided on they should re-

main in force for a term of years, thus avoiding the continual tinkering which is the bane of business.

## IT'S ALL WRONG.

The politicians are talking about the school question.

The real school question is the way in which too much knowledge is being crammed into young people's heads so as to unfit them for trades, the farm, and business. Instead of teaching them to cipher quickly and accurately, to read well, be able to write a good business hand, or to farm according to modern methods, pupils are filled with sciences and arts and 'ologies so that they are ashamed of honest toil.

It has come to this: That after spending several years at a public school a lad has to take a special course somewhere to fit him for business. The most skilled workmen don't come from our schools. The best clerks are not high school graduates. The shrewdest business men didn't loaf four years in a university.

It is a practical education, a knowledge of men, an honorable character, and an industrious disposition that produce most of our successful men. The schools are "not in it" with these factors in life. When our politicians get down to business and stop talking clap-trap THE DRY GOODS REVIEW will be with them every time; will print their names in big letters; and surround each name with a gilt border.

## SHOPLIFTING.

Thieving has been pretty common in the stores of several large cities this season. In Montreal some flagrant cases were reported. In Toronto the offence has not been so prevalent. THE REVIEW learns that the severe sentences of the Police Magistrate there have acted as a deterrent. A recent case shows how boldly and systematically the offenders go about their crime. A woman and her daughters, hailing from Markham, came into Toronto with the evident purpose of making a big haul. They had large pockets under their skirts, and were prepared to do an extensive business in free goods. Sentences ranging from six to eighteen months put a period temporarily to their energies. It is said that one of the largest stores in Toronto kept closed during the evenings of Christmas week, partly because the cost of light and the amount of goods stolen outweighed extra sales. It is good policy for merchants to take trouble in prosecuting the thieves. No doubt it is often an unpleasant duty. One would think from the outcry raised by female thieves when detected that their sex should protect them from punishment. But the public interest must come first, and the law should always be made a terror to evil-doers.

## TWO GOOD EFFECTS.

We hope President Cleveland's angry and uncalled-for threat of war against Great Britain and Canada will have two effects:

First, to make British capitalists see the wisdom of investing in Canada and other British countries where threats of war won't ruin their investments, where debts due in Britain will never be repudiated, and where the individual citizen already buys more British goods per head than the foreigner does.

Second, that business men will learn (for the seventy-seventh time) how completely politicians defy commercial interests in playing their own games.