

OUR INCREASING BURDEN OF TAXATION.

THE manner in which Customs taxation is increasing under the present protectionist government is graphically illustrated by the comparative trade figures for the twelve months ended with July of 1916, 1915, and 1914 just issued by the Trade and Commerce Department. Taking first the total importations of dutiable and non-dutiable merchandise entered for consumption, the following table is illuminative:—

Year.	Total imports.	Total duty collected	Percentage.
1914	\$563,178,684	\$ 97,094,410	17.24
1915	419,370,836	78,784,427	18.78
1916	622,986,550	121,906,788	19.56

The percentages enumerated above represent the average ad valorem rate of duty collected on all goods imported into Canada during the years mentioned. In other words while the tax on every \$100 worth of goods imported for consumption into Canada for the years ended with July, 1914 was \$17.24, it increased to \$18.78 in 1915, and to \$19.56 in 1916.

This year's percentage is the highest record since 1891, when the average ad valorem duty was 20.974. When the Conservative government went out of power in 1896 it stood at 19.109. Thereafter it commenced to fall, never exceeding 16 and a fraction from 1900 until 1912, when the present government took office. In 1912 the percentage was 16.694. In 1913 it had increased to 17.087, while the rise has been steady ever since as is indicated by the above table.

On dutiable goods the comparison is probably even more startling. In 1912 the percentage of duty collected was 25 and a fraction. In 1914 it had exceeded 26; in 1915 it had exceeded 31, and in 1916 it bids fair to reach 34 percent.

A FEW POINTS TO THINK OVER.

Increased Railway Rates.

The Railway Commission is an institution which has been of great benefit to the public. It is, however, a human institution, and because of that is liable to error. We have no desire to criticize unfairly, but it seems to us that the recent action of the Commission in granting and approving substantial increases in railway rates in Canada, East of Port Arthur, is evidence of hasty and bad judgment.

The ink was scarcely dry on the Commission's judgment when the annual financial statement of the C.P.R. was published and showed the net earnings to be the greatest by far in the history of the Company. The older railways, were undoubtedly, hard hit by the falling off in industrial activity in the early stages of the War, but they are now, and have been for a long time, enjoying good revenue.

The Board appears to have made the mistake of applying a permanent remedy to cure a temporary condition. The undoubted effect of their decision will be to increase the cost of living which is already almost unbearable.

Sir Thomas White advocates private thrift in order that the public Treasury may benefit, but what about public thrift. So far as we can see Sir Thomas has given no attention whatever to the riotous extravagance of the Militia Department. Evidence of that extravagance can be seen on every hand. Official high-powered, luxurious imported motor cars, of which there are scores if not hundreds, are not confined by any means to official use, but are to be seen at the doors of "movies", and engaged in the transportation of the families of the "Brass caps" on their shopping and pleasure expeditions.

A fleet of these cars stands at the doors of the Militia Department all the time, so that not a moment may be lost in taking the higher officials to and from their meals, in many cases two blocks distant. Some of the officials live in an apartment building immediately in the rear of the Department, but of course it would be seriously detrimental to their dignity if they had to walk, and still more so if they used the alley way between the two buildings.

One of the notable features of this War is the creation of a new and large list of very wealthy men in Canada who have had riches thrust upon them through improvident war contracts given by a committee for which the Minister of Militia and the Government are morally, if not constitutionally responsible.

When the inside history of the War comes to be written there will be no more sordid chapter in it than that reciting the story of the looting of the British Treasury in shell and other munition contracts in his country. Evidence like the Montreal Ammunition Company being able to pay, and actually paying, 750% dividends to its shareholders inside of one year, entirely as a result of Canadian made contracts for munitions for the British Government, puts any question as to the ratio of profit being fair, entirely outside the realm of discussion. The plain simple fact is that the British Government has been robbed, and most shamefully robbed, in the house of its friends. A Cromwell with his Iron-sides is needed to wipe away with an iron hand, committees or governments which countenance or approve such actions.

The description in a third-rate English newspaper of Sir Sam Hughes as the "Kitchener of Canada" is painful enough to draw tears from the lachrymose glands of a flour barrel.

Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper at Vancouver.—

"Then Sir Charles turned to the question of political party patronage and commented on Mr. Brewster's (Liberal leader) statement that he would not have any hand in patronage.

"I believe Mr. Brewster stands above any statesman of Canada in having the courage of his convictions and in declaring frankly that he is opposed to patronage. It is not only unique—it is grand."

North Perth and South-West Toronto have given the Conservatives hay fever.