

PORT OF MONTREAL.

THE Imports at this Port for the quarter ended March 31st, 1869, have been heavy, although somewhat less than the corresponding quarter of last year. The following is the comparison:

First quarter, 1868	\$4,189,452
" " 1869	4,048,217
Decrease	\$141,235

Subjoined are the Imports of some of the leading articles, with amount remaining in bond, March 31st, 1869:—

	1868.	1869.	Rem'ing in bond.
Brandy, galls	1010	...	75398
" "	1238	...	90764
Gin, galls	6961	67	44986
" "	2190	...	19905
Rum, galls	3349	115	8739
" "	1655	638	4258
Whiskey, galls	978	69	7635
" "	737	...	7437
Spirits, &c, galls	15569	132	16910
" "	3662	93	7114
Wine of all kinds, galls	4495	2172	158371
" "	5487	5682	146919
Molasses for refining purposes, lbs	...	630704	209952
" "	...	10177	4078
Molasses (other), 'bs	69249	451620	146042
" "	9941	6751	23170
Sugar, lbs	1874301	1960107	870012
" "	82821	85629	361467
Cane Juice, &c, lbs	315075	...	175024
" "	6455	...	5087
Coffee, green, lbs	54089	34164	22257
" "	6179	5275	22615
Dried Fruits, lbs	394550	528665	1139053
" "	16735	11885	57565
Spices, unground, lbs	15683	21703	143806
" "	1829	2017	11871
Tea, green and japan, lbs	527816	100659	9
" "	195978	369339	...
Tea, black, lbs	96352	122622	1455381
" "	29914	36198	524559
Tobacco, manufred, lbs	73195	36961	207111
" "	9764	4209	34192
" unmanufred, lbs	...	945843	337874
" "	...	89176	38005
Rice, lbs	...	100800	140000
" "	...	3297	4524
Carpets & Hearth Rugs, \$	50659	29344	5385
Cottons, \$	1085878	1046206	192816
Linens, \$	143558	141437	39117
Woolens, \$	906795	617698	154462
Silks, Satins, &c, \$	159209	137485	23215
Fancy Goods, \$	90730	71378	11674
Hats, Caps and Bonnets, \$	134600	140664	3407
Hardware, \$	122896	100156	14947
Hosiery, \$	33819	62133	11875
Free Goods, \$	380711	414923	39445

The most noticeable changes in the foregoing list are an increase in Tea, principally Greens and Japans, of 506 683 lbs., value \$180,645, and a decrease in Woolens of \$189,097. Cottons have also decreased, but only to the extent of about \$40,000, while Linens have been imported to about the same value as in 1868. The decrease in Woolens may be attributed to the fact that importers find less ready sale for foreign stuff, owing to the growing competition of home manufactures of Tweeds, Blankets, Flannels, &c

The following are the exports from London and Liverpool to Montreal, for the fortnight ending March 25th, 1869:—

FROM LONDON.

14 cs sago, 1,748 g B. spirits, 120 doz pks playing cards, 3,780 g wine, 22 cs glue, 5,500 g plain spirits, 143 000 lbs tea, 74,500 lbs coffee, 351 c figs, 1,000 cs sugar, 220 c sugar candy, 6,000 lbs preserved ginger, 630 c sago, 5.5 0 galls rum, 2 cs senna, 60 cs Jordan sweet almonds, 440 lbs capers, 40 g rum shrub, 44 g liqueurs, 1,000 c geyeva, 91 cs sardines, 2,740 lbs chilies, 896 lbs c. rray seed, 1,012 lbs cassia lignea, 90 lbs cassia vera, 3,281 lbs ginger, 676 lbs nutmegs, 300 lbs mace, 550 lbs tapioca, 480 lbs arrowroot, 3,000 lbs pepper, 2,110 lbs cloves, 12 cs rice, 1,240 cs raisins, 1,210 cs currants, 43,000 lbs coffee, 30 cs gum kowie, 2,012 cs rice, 1,577 c cassia lignea, 11,207 lbs nutmegs, 82 c caraway seeds, 125 c pimento, 3,994 g wine, 7,200 lbs chicory, 2 cs gum tragacanth, 144 cs tapioca, 6 cs mace, 1,532 lbs c oves, 2,110 lbs pepper, 121,770 lbs tea, 6, 00 g rum, 47 c sago, 35 g perfumed spirits, 12,000 lbs castor oil, 100 c sardines, 102 cs ginger, 20,000 lbs coffee, 2,100 cs barley, b. beer 90, 50 cs gum arabic, 1,576 monkey, 51 mink, 8 otter, 200 seal, 11,587 musquash, 1,494 racoon, and 293 wolf skins, 2,000 c refined sugar.

FROM LIVERPOOL.

208 pkgs 9,068 lbs tea, 190 cs liquorice paste, 18 cases perfumery and mercury (transit), 20 qr-casks r wine, 8 100 pkgs 8402 cs raisins, 567 pkgs 8184 cs currants, 50 cs 91 g British plain spirits, 12 cs 161 c figs.

The Chamber of Commerce of Verviers, Belgium, in its last annual report, demands the entire suppression of customs' duties. The Chamber of Antwerp, some time back took the lead in proposing this great reform. Belgium has suppressed octrois, which are internal customs, and has thereby set an example which Continental nations would do well to imitate. It should be the first to suppress customs on the frontier, she will, in French parlance, "cover herself with glory."

THE SALT INTEREST.

WE publish in other columns a sketch of the history and operations of the Goderich salt works which have recently come into more than ordinary general notice, because of the discussion of the question of protection in connection with them. It will be remembered that during the last session of the Legislative Assembly, the subject was brought before the members by Mr. Hays, the energetic member for North Huron, and as a consequence a memorial to the Dominion Parliament, asking for protection for these works, was signed by seventy-two out of the eighty-two members of that body. When it is remembered that in addition to these the dual representatives, who were not asked to sign the memorial, expressed themselves in the strongest degree favourable to it, it may be said to have secured the unanimous support of the representatives of the people in the Ontario Legislature.

We are quite sure that in nothing have these gentlemen more correctly reflected the opinions and wishes of their constituents, than in the assistance they have thus afforded to the request for encouragement to a most important source of Canadian wealth. The Free-trade theorists who have opposed the demand for protection, have evidently never stopped to consider the question. Their theory has for its base these generalities—that the true course of trade is to "buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest,"—and that the best interests of the people are promoted by removing all restrictions, and permitting the fullest competition. But what these gentlemen apparently fail to see is, that by the particular kind of "free trade" which they urge neither of these advantages are secured. To give up these restrictions on both sides must be removed, and the most complete free trade on both sides established. We have not this state of things. We can, it is true, buy where we like because of the system of free imports which we apply to the large proportion of our imports—but we can't sell in the dearest market, because of the practically prohibitive duties adopted by our neighbours. We submit that the right to sell in the dearest market to send our products and manufactures to any part of the world without restrictions, is as much a part of the free trade theory as is the other; and that our free traders have no right to impose upon us the first condition unless they are prepared to ensure us the second as well. A purely importing people never were and never can be a great people. The more nearly the balance of trade is preserved in any country the better; and as our productions sent abroad exceed our necessities imported from without, so does the real prosperity and wealth of the country increase.

Bringing down those general principles to the particular interest under discussion, we find the following results. The salt interest at Goderich expends among the people, that is the present wells worked up to their full capacity will do so, some \$200,000 a year in the mere process of manufacture. The consumption of salt in Ontario is said to be from six to eight hundred barrels a day, which at an average rate of say \$1.50 per barrel, which would be a lower average by far than the people of Upper Canada paid for their salt before the discovery of the Goderich brine, gives us an annual expenditure for that article of consumption alone of \$438,000. Now, will any one pretend to say, that the country as a whole will not be largely benefited by having that money kept within its boundaries, rather than sent to build up the industry and increase the national importance of our neighbours? It is a common estimate to say that every settler, with his family, who comes into the country, is worth \$1,000. But settlers are impossible, if the industries of the country are to be starved out by an insane policy of free imports, while our neighbours foster and protect every industry by a system of high protective duties. Thus, with such a free trade as our free trade friends would give us, we have, it is true, the privilege of buying where we like; but as for selling in the dearest market, we not only cannot do that, but we are fast bringing about a state of things under which we will soon have nothing to sell if we could.

Then as to the inducing a healthy and free competition by means of free imports of salt, we do nothing of the kind. The truth is that the cry of free trade in this case is raised on behalf of as huge a monopoly as could possibly exist. The loss to the Onondaga Salt Company in their determination to undersell, for a time, the Goderich salt makers, is comparatively nothing compared with the advantages they expect to accrue from it. Unfortunately the Goderich Salt Companies are not wealthy corporations. They have with w nd-rul energy and public spirit brought their enterprise to its present position. But it is useless to conceal the fact that they are incapable either of making such improvements in their works as might possibly reduce the cost of manufacturing salt, or of holding out against the powerful combination pitted against them. And the evil is that in the faith of the competition of that combination, and the actual losses they can afford to make in pressing, the Goderich salt works are not likely to attract large capital. A moderate protective tariff would enable them to hold out, to sell salt at a profit to themselves and yet cheaper than it was sold at before the wells were sunk. And it is in this way that we shall ensure the continuance of a fair rivalry and an honest competition, which will ensure for the people freedom from the mercy of these American Salt Companies, when they shall have succeeded under free trade, in closing up the Goderich works.—*Hamilton Spectator.*

THE BEST KNITTING MACHINE OUT.—Clyde, Ohio, has what is called a "Knitting Machine." A crowd of ladies walk into a drinking saloon, take possession of all the seats and quietly settle down at knitting. This stops the customary business of the place.

THE INSOLVENT ACT.

THE Toronto Board of Trade is more alive to the responsibilities of its position than it used to be. It had an interesting discussion, on Monday, on the Insolvency Act. The discussion elicited from various speakers opinions of great contrariety. Merchants doing a large business like Mr. John Gordon and Mr. Frank Smith who must have very frequent proofs of the corrupting character of the present law, strongly favored its unconditional repeal, and submitted a petition to Parliament having this object in view. Others of the speakers, also engaged largely in the wholesale trade, strove quite as strongly against the proposal for unconditional repeal. The President of the Board took the latter view; and the result was the appointment of a committee to investigate the subject and report to an adjourned meeting within a week.

It is quite natural that a wide difference of opinion should have been manifested at Monday's meeting. We did not suspect that the feeling against the existing law was so strong as to call for its abolition. It is not to be wondered at that some of our best merchants should advocate this radical cure. It is quite true, as stated in Mr. Frank Smith's petition, that the Act has not realized the beneficial results expected from it, but that, on the contrary, it "has proved" "prejudicial to the interests of trade and commerce," and its working has given widespread dissatisfaction. It is equally true that the cost of liquidation is enormous, sometimes eating up the whole estates; and that the mode of appointing assignees does not give satisfaction. These positions cannot be successfully disputed. But we think the petition goes too far when it asserts that the object of the Legislature had in view when the Act was passed, "was to relieve a large class of indigent debtors, who were for many years unable to obtain discharges from their creditors." It is, no doubt, quite true that when the Act was passed there was a large number of persons in the country, and that their relief had considerable influence with the Legislature. But the Act was intended to have more general application; it was designed not simply to cover an exceptional state of things; it was framed with a view to general application in future years. Nor, would it be wise or judicious to jump hastily to the conclusion that "it is impossible to amend the Act in any way, so as to continue and uphold the credit system which now exists."

When a law, loudly demanded but of short time before, proves to be bad, a recoil in favor of its repeal is very apt to take place. Men whose interests are largely at stake will not, in most cases, take time to discriminate between the good features of the law and the bad; it works injustice, *ergo* it should be swept away altogether. We do not think that the case of unconditional repeal has been established. What seems to us to be made out is, that the law requires amendment, and in many and important particulars. There is surely nothing worse taking place under the Insolvency Act than the preferential assignments which were so common before 1864, and by which a brother, or a cousin, or some favored creditor, was put in possession of an insolvent's entire estate, and all the other creditors left to whistle to the wind. Quite as bad things are taking place every day under the operation of the present law. But that is no reason why the bad which we have here should be exchanged for the bad we used to have. We should rather strive to improve the law, so that the real purposes of an Insolvency Act might be as fully accomplished as possible.

And, truly, there is great reason for improvement. We are every day witnessing legalized fraud; we, day after day, see men ostensibly giving up their whole estate to their creditors, but who, when the white-washing process is over, come out better off than they were before. The debtor is favored—particularly the dishonest debtor; the protection of the law is thrown over him, whilst, in many cases, he laughs in his sleeves at the misfortunes of the man who was fool enough to trust in his honesty and fair dealing. It is this glaring evil which needs to be sternly met; and it seems to us, that the Montreal Board of Trade has approached the subject in a very practical and business-like way. The draft of its proposals, which was submitted to the meeting in this city on Monday last, has many excellent features. It deserves the serious consideration of the committee, whose report may be looked for in a few days. We do not mean to say that it meets the requirements of our merchants in every respect; but we are satisfied that its suggestions are calculated to check sham insolvency, to liquidate more cheaply the estates of creditors, to disappoint the legal fraternity who are so anxious to see the law repealed, and to secure the surrender of an insolvent's entire property for the benefit of his creditors. This, and not the repeal of the law, is what is wanted—this is what our Board of Trade will, in the main, direct its energies to secure.—*Toronto Leader.*

NOTICE TO MARINERS.—The attention of owners, agents, consignees, and masters of vessels going to United States ports from Canadian ports, is called to the provision of Sept. 18th, Act of Congress dated and approved August 18th, 1866:—

"All owners, agents, consignees, masters, and commanders of vessels, shall deliver to the collector of the district, in which the vessel shall first arrive on her return to the United States, copies of any receipts for any papers given to them by any consular officer, and it shall be the duty of every collector of customs to forward to the Secretary of the Treasury:—

"1.—All such copies of receipts as shall have been so furnished to him.

"2.—A statement of all certified invoices which shall have come to his office."