

THE PRESENT DUTY ON BOOKS.

Several of the Montreal booksellers were interviewed the other day by The Star in connection with the book duty.

Mr. Wm. Drysdale declared that the specific duty of 6c. per pound was in the interest of both the bookseller and publisher. The only fault which he could see in the present tariff was the free list.

He favored some arrangement being made by which the bookseller would not be compelled to have the stock in hand and deal with people who take advantage of the free list. There ought to be some means of recouping the bookseller for the duty he has paid on books which he sells to libraries, colleges and universities, who take advantage of the free list.

"The present tariff," added Mr. Drysdale, "is hard on the cheap, trashy novels, but the people are just as well without them. On all the best books the present tariff is in favor of the reading public. In Germany, for instance, they have a specific and not an ad valorem duty, which opens the door to fraud."

Mr. A. R. Grafton declared himself against the present tariff of six cents a pound, which had evidently been secured by but a few publishers, who were anxious to bring out paper novels. Mr. Grafton, continuing, said: "The present tariff suits us as booksellers, but it is unjust to the reading public."

Then he proceeded to demonstrate what he meant by weighing three books, selling respectively at \$3.50, \$1 and 60c. The former book was "Lallah Rookh," a pretty little volume, but very light, on which only 4c. duty was paid; the \$1 book was a heavy one, with a common cover, and by its weight brought in 16c. duty to the Government; the 60c. volume was the ordinary story book which is found in every house.

This brought to the Government 10c. It was evident that the poor man was paying much more for his books than the rich man. Mr. Grafton thought that all free books should be done away with, for the reason that booksellers could not have two sets of books of the same kind, the one free, for incorporated colleges, universities and libraries, and the other on which they paid duty, and which was intended for the public. He thought that the free clause in the tariff paved the way to a good deal of fraud. It was a loop-hole for dishonesty.

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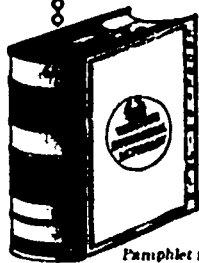
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