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BAR IRON.

The quarterly meetings of the different branches of the Association of Iron Workers was held in Montreal last week, but the public was not taken into the confidence of the members, and no official announcement has been made of what was done. We have scanned the commercial reports in the papers of both Montreal and Toronto, and cannot discover that any change has been made in list prices of either wrought scrap or finished iron. As regards this latter article we are told that the price remains on the \$1.95 basis, that is, \$1.95 for 100 pounds, or at the rate of \$39 per net ton. This price applies to certain points, including Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton. Further search discloses the fact that wrought scrap is quoted at \$15 to \$16 per ton in Montreal, and \$8 to \$9 per ton in Toronto, a difference of \$7 per ton.

In 1892 the imports of wrought scrap iron into Canada amounted to about 36,543 net tons, valued at \$433,695, or nearly \$12 per ton. The duty upon this article is \$2 per ton, which, added to the value, makes the cost in Canada about

\$14 per ton. The freight and charges would probably increase this amount to \$15 or \$16, the quoted price at Montreal.

It is evident, then, that the price of wrought scrap originating in or about Montreal is controlled entirely by the value of the article abroad. On the other hand no such influence prevails in Toronto or Hamilton. There are many more industrial establishments in Ontario where wrought scrap originates than in Montreal and vicinity, but not being directly accessible to ships from abroad, foreign scrap does not influence the market, therefore the seller is forced to accept whatever may be offered for his iron. Of course the demand for scrap iron is much greater than the domestic production, but the domestic article is certain to fetch about as much in Montreal as the imported. But this is not the case in Ontario, where there is but one purchaser, who makes his own price of course, as is seen in the quotation of only \$8 or \$9 per ton in Toronto. Whoever in Ontario has wrought scrap for sale must of necessity sell to the only concern who buys, and must trade on the basis named. Whatever the domestic supply falls short of the demands of this one concern, the deficit must be made up in imported iron; and although this latter quantity costs more per ton than the domestic article, the domestic producer is in no way benefitted thereby.

It should be remembered that scrap iron is not the product of any industry whatever—it is only the salvage obtained from boiler and machine shops, railways, etc. Thus in such establishments, where large quantities of plate and bar iron are consumed, there is an ever increasing accumulation of scrap. The cheapest of this bar iron costs Canadian consumers about \$39 per ton—much of it very much more; and as nearly all the best iron used in the country is of foreign make, the consumer pays not less than \$13 per ton, on all of his iron that goes into his scrap pile. If Montreal is his market he recovers what he paid as duty—\$13 per ton, and a little more, but nothing like what his iron cost him. If Toronto or Hamilton is his market, at the quoted prices he is \$4 or \$5 short of what he paid as duty, to say nothing of the cost of the iron.

The best quality of bar iron is made of puddled iron, but no puddled iron is made in Canada—it is all imported. But large quantities of bar iron are made here of wrought scrap. The production of puddled iron is a legitimate industry, but it is more expensive to manufacture puddled iron than to make bar iron of scrap; and that is why no puddled bar iron is made. Puddled iron is made of pig iron, but there is absolutely no demand in Canada for pig iron for puddling purposes, nor will there ever be as long as wrought scrap is allowed to be imported paying only \$2 per ton duty.

Much talk has been indulged in and speculations made looking to the establishment of blast furnaces in Ontario; and a company is now being formed for the purpose of making iron at Hamilton. The Government, too, express a desire that such enterprises shall be established. But if the Hamilton furnace is erected and operated, where would it find sale for its products? We know that no furnace turns out a uniform grade of iron. There is always a variety of iron produced, and while some of it may be well adapted to foundry purposes, more or less of it can only be used for puddling. Who will take it for that purpose? If the mill iron cannot be sold the furnace cannot prove a success, and it would have to cease operations. There are puddling furnaces in Hamilton, but