



Vol. XIII.

TORONTO, CANADA, MAY, 1897.

No. 5.

J. BAYNE MacLEAN, President. HUGH C. MacLEAN, Sec.-Treas.

THE MacLEAN PUB. CO.
Limited

Fine Magazine Printers
and
Trade Newspaper Publishers

TORONTO: 26 Front St. W. Telephone 2142.
MONTREAL: Board of Trade Bldg. Telephone 1255.

EUROPEAN BRANCH:

Canadian Government Offices
17 Victoria St., London, S.W.
R. Hargreaves, Manager.

John Cameron, General Subscription Agent.
Major A. G. Campbell, General Subscription Agent.

THE NEW DUTY ON BOOKS.

THE new tariff regarding books bids fair to revolutionize the whole Canadian trade, and persons who are well posted in the business and who are ordinarily able, at a moment's notice, to explain almost any point in connection with the book trade, have a good deal of hesitation now in giving a final opinion on the ultimate effects of the new rates.

These are the two changes which are of vital moment: 1. The increase from 6c. per lb. to 20 per cent. ad valorem (with one-eighth less to Great Britain); 2. The prohibition against importing reprints of English and Canadian copyright books. The first change means a large increase in the price of imported books, especially those of the better class. Roughly speaking, it means that the duty is about double all round. The specific duty formerly in vogue pressed more heavily on the cheap paper-bound books; now, the ad valorem rate

sends up the Customs' charges on the more expensive, well-bound works. The booksellers, especially the experienced men in Montreal like Mr. Grafton, Mr. Foster Brown and Mr. Drysdale, at once saw the onerous nature of the change, and have done excellent work in meeting to discuss the question and in drawing the attention of the public to the increase by letters and interviews in the daily newspapers. It is doubtful if the ordinary book-buyer has yet realized the position of affairs. A few have, but in the main the general public remains, as it usually does on technical questions, grossly ignorant until the pockets of a sufficient number of individuals have been squeezed, and then what an outcry we will hear! Upon the policy which dictated the new duties we have nothing to say, because it is more or less a political issue, being part of the Government's measure, and the Ministers can hardly have decided on a course of this kind without fully considering where it would lead. If they have, they ought to expound more thoroughly the defence of the new policy.

Much evidence has already been given upon the extent of the increase. The Ottawa Journal has just paid \$1 duty on a five-dollar book which, under the old rate, would have been 6c. Mr. Wm. Drysdale has stated another case where he has paid \$1.40 on a package weighing 8 pounds and valued at \$7; the old duty would have been 48c. Mr. Foster Brown shows that the duty on the colonial paper editions of expensive

English works being higher will raise the price on all these. Mr. Chapman points out that cheap and nasty literature can come in more easily, as the better books are directly discriminated against. At the meeting of the trade in Montreal, Mr. F. E. Grafton reminded his brother booksellers that the old rate on books was once 5 per cent.; than it was raised to 15 per cent. which was deemed excessive; afterwards the specific rate of 6c. was imposed and this had, on the whole, worked well. From all we could learn just before the tariff came down, the booksellers as a body supposed that the 6c. rate would be continued. No one in the trade, so far as we know, suggested the present rate.

The clause prohibiting altogether the importation of reprints of British and Canadian copyright works is also much discussed and may have far-reaching consequences. There is a strong article in the May number of *The Westminster* on this subject. The editor complains that English works of educational and literary value must now be purchased in the expensive English editions, which are far more costly than the authorized reprint issued in the United States. He states one case. The authorized United States reprint of Edersheim's "Life of Christ," published by Longmans of New York, sold in Toronto for \$2.50. The price of the English edition, when the present supply from New York is exhausted, will be \$8.40. Another consequence of the new rule is that the Canadian market can no longer be "lumped in" by