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SUPPRESSED INFORMATION RE TARIFF CHANGES.

A FEW days ago the *Empire* published an interview which its Ottawa correspondent had had with Mr. George Johnson, the Dominion statistician, regarding the election of Mr. Cleveland and the probable effects thereof upon the Canadian tariff. Mr. Johnson is reported as saying.

Cleveland will seek to readjust the tariff after a very conservative fashion. In doing this he will give Canada no favors that he does not grant to other countries. What he will do, will be to follow in the wake of Canada—reduce the United States tariff to something like the average duty imposed by Canada, and enlarge the free list in two directions, first, by increasing the free list of raw materials, and, second, by increasing the free list of manufactured and partly manufactured articles. The Government of Canada has followed this plan, and has done so especially in respect to free manufactured and partially manufactured articles. Unless one makes a study of the movements of the Government in respect to the free list, he has no idea how energetic is their action in

the direction of placing manufactured and partially manufactured articles on the free list. Scarcely a week passes without an Order in Council putting articles of this class upon the free list. Canada has, first, a free list which is constantly increasing in comparison with the dutiable list, and, second, a free list of manufactured articles, rapidly becoming larger in proportion to the total free list. It is studying this class of imports that one realizes that the policy of the Government is to add to the free list such articles as form the raw material of manufacturing, and thus develop the National Policy to the utmost without pressing upon the great body of the consumers.

It is scarcely credible that Mr. Johnson should have made the statements ascribed to him, and if he did, it is scarcely credible that the Government should have marked out and approved following the course indicated.

If Mr. Johnson or the Government can definitely state just what "raw materials" are and are not, and what "manufactured and partly manufactured articles" are and are not, he and they will place the whole civilized world under lasting obligations to them, and solve what has practically been considered an unsolvable question, by a satisfactory explanation.

But the importance of this question, great as it is, is not greater to Canadian manufacturers than the assurance that the Government are energetic in their action in the matter of placing certain articles on the free list—that scarcely a week passes without Orders in Council being issued for this very purpose. Will Mr. Johnson have the kindness to throw some light on this subject? It used to be that, under the auspices of the Government, bulletins were issued by him probably once a month, in which all Orders-in-Council were made public, but these bulletins have been suppressed, and the public and all interested are denied knowledge of what is being done in this direction. Apologists for the Finance Minister explained during the session of Parliament that no changes in the tariff would likely be considered through a desire to avoid meddling with it one way or another, and to avoid discussion regarding it. Of course this explanation did not explain why changes in the tariff should not be made if it was right and proper to make them. It is well known that Mr. Foster received many delegations of manufacturers who explained to him why certain changes were desirable and necessary, but these manufacturers know that these weekly Orders-in-Council which Mr. Johnson speaks of have not been made in response to their applications, and that the prayers they offered up at Ottawa might quite as well have been poured into the ears of a Chinese idol so far as gracious answers to them are concerned. Very few of these petitions were for increase of duty, and many of them were for decrease, and if they had all been granted, as they should have been, the ultimate effect upon the revenue of the country would not have exceeded a few thousand dollars either way.

What, then, is the nature of those weekly tariff changes Mr. Johnson tells about? Will Mr. Johnson tell? Our columns are open to him, and our manufacturers are anxious to learn. Mr. Johnson is an old and faithful public servant who does not seek newspaper notoriety, therefore whatever he says carries weight. We hope he will tell us why the bulletins are suppressed, and what is the nature of the changes in the tariff which are being made with weekly frequency. This journal would be pleased to publish a list of them.