

## W. R. BROCK &amp; CO.

In the following short sketch it is our desire to present our readers with some interesting particulars in reference to a large wholesale establishment of high commercial standing, for the reason that Messrs. W. R. Brock & Company, the house referred to, were amongst the very first that cast prejudice to the winds and aided the development of home industry by purchasing and distributing the products of Canadian industrial enterprises. We do not propose to indulge in fulsome puffing, as the firm neither needs nor would desire it, but we have pleasure in recording a few facts that we have taken the trouble to glean. The firm was first established in 1877 as W. R. Brock & Bro., but since then two partners have retired from the business, withdrawing nearly half a million dollars as their separate interest, and the present firm as reorganized consists of Mr. W. R. Brock, the original founder of what is now one of Toronto's largest commercial enterprises; Mr. Andrew Crawford, the expert English buyer of the firm since its inception, and Mr. S. J. Jermyn, the financial manager for many years past.

When the country first divided in 1878 on the question of Protection or approximate Free Trade, and the people decided in favor of the National Policy, Mr. Brock's first impression was that the wholesale trade, which at that time was almost exclusively an importing trade, would suffer serious injury and loss, but as he was and is a thoroughly patriotic Canadian, he set himself to work to make the best out of what certainly appeared a gloomy outlook for his own and similar interests. The country having declared in favor of home industry, Mr. Brock decided to aid in its development, and as the means and the inclination were both forthcoming, the end has been achieved, and in a manner and to an extent that Canadian manufacturers will recognize and appreciate when they read the following. Prior to the development of home manufactures Mr. Brock's firm used to import from the United States alone upwards of \$120,000 worth of staple goods annually, but to-day this large import has been reduced to less than \$10,000, the difference, with a large increase, being entirely replaced with the production of Canadian mills. But these figures only show the diminished quantity of imports in certain lines of American goods which have been displaced by our own. The sum total of purchases of Canadian manufactures by this firm reach annually the immense sum of upwards of \$700,000. Just think for a moment and realize what these figures really mean! This one house, which does besides an immense importing business in such lines as are not made here, distribute amongst our various industries a sum of money that must materially aid in making many workingmen's homes the brighter and happier on account of wages earned through steady employment. The writer knows, too, that at times the firm must have almost faltered in their policy of well-doing. As might be expected, in the early days of a new industry, imperfections and shortcomings were neither few nor far between. When such difficulties arose, this firm—as a manufacturer not long since told us—did not ruthlessly condemn, but gave wise counsel and friendly encouragement, and the manufacturer instead of losing heart would go home, try again, and as a result a better article, suited to the market and commanding a better price, would be produced. In addition to this Mr. Brock individually has showed his confidence in the future of Canadian industry by taking a moneyed interest in several factories, which, it is gratifying to learn, are all successful. In the tweed department may be seen the productions of every first-class tweed mill in the country, such as the Paton Manufacturing Co., Sherbrooke, P.Q.; Rosamond Woollen Co., Almonte; Cornwall Manufacturing Co., Cornwall; Cobourg Woollen Co., Cobourg; Robinson, Howell & Co., Preston; Waterloo Woollen Manufacturing Co., Waterloo, and others. In staple cottons and knit goods the firm also buy largely of every representative Canadian manufacturer of these lines. In a certain line of fancy knitted woollen goods, such as clouds, hoods, gaiters and kindred articles, every manufacturer knows that it was prophesied

that Canada could never, or at least for many years, be able to compete with such centres as Leicester in England and Germantown in the United States, but to-day, as a result of the National Policy and the pluck and energy of some Canadians who had faith in their country's future, we are producing just such goods and laying them down side by side with those imported, those of Canadian manufacture gradually crowding out the foreign goods. In Messrs. Brock & Co.'s establishment hundreds of cases of such goods may be seen, and as long as Canadians can make them they will get the preference, and pity 'tis that more of our wholesale firms are not actuated by the same spirit. The capacious premises in which this house do their business are so well known to the trade that description is unnecessary, but we cannot conclude without reference to the managers of the several departments, as all of them, with one exception, are old associates of the firm, well known to its connection, and long intercourse has begotten such an *esprit de corps* between employers and employees and such good feeling amongst their customers that in this establishment the wheels of commerce run smoothly although incessantly. The staple department is presided over by Mr. Ross, the prints and tailors' trimmings by Mr. B. Croynn, dress goods by Mr. W. S. Green, imported woollens by Mr. T. W. Dixon, Canadian woollens by Mr. R. R. Davis. Mr. W. R. Smallpiece, an old traveller of the firm's, having a large connection, presides over the department devoted to the distribution of such goods as gents' furnishings, hosiery, gloves, fancy goods, haberdashery, muslins, laces, embroideries, etc. The following are the names of the firm's travellers, with their respective routes:—Mr. A. R. Auld, Great Western and Michigan Central R.R.; Mr. R. W. Pentecost, Grand Trunk West and Wellington, Grey & Bruce; J. E. Snider, Grand Trunk East and Welland district; Mr. S. M. Sterling, Lake Shore R.R. and Niagara district; Mr. R. H. Mitchell, Northern R.R. and C.P.R. north; Mr. H. Taplin, Ottawa district; Mr. J. H. Patterson, Grand Trunk R.R. west of Stratford; Mr. W. Brock, Montreal and Maritime Provinces; Mr. T. Bennie, Manitoba and the North-West Territories.

## A NEW TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

J. R. McALPINE, OF NEW YORK, ALL READY TO START OPERATIONS IN TORONTO.

(Toronto World, Feb. 24th.)

SINCE Jan. 3rd last a fully equipped tobacco factory has been put together in the west end of Hay's unused factory, on the Esplanade. The work has been quietly but thoroughly executed, and the factory is ready to start. A few samples will probably be made this week. The moneyed men of the concern are Mr. J. R. McAlpine, the great tobacco man of New York, and Mr. John S. Williams, also of New York. Mr. McAlpine has made several visits to the city since Jan. 1st, and Mr. Williams has taken up his residence at the Queen's.

Mr. Williams, in showing the *World* through the new factory yesterday, said it was their intention to turn out a high grade of smoking and chewing tobaccos. What is known as "blackstrap" will be omitted. Cut smoking tobaccos, in packages and bags, so popular in the United States, will be a specialty.

The reporter asked Mr. Williams what the capacity of the factory would be, and how many hands would be employed. "Our capacity," he said, "will be for all the business we can get. We will put up any amount of money if we can get business for it." Six floors have been fitted up.

This will be the only tobacco factory in Toronto. There are only two others in the Dominion, Macdonald of Montreal, and Tuckett & Billings, of Hamilton. Mr. McAlpine's New York factory covers a block, and is one of the most extensive in the United States. Before deciding to begin operations in Toronto, Mr. Williams said, they surveyed the field very carefully.