

THE TARIFF IN DETAIL.

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THE NEW CANADIAN TARIFF SHOWING THE CHANGES FROM THE OLD RATES.

THE new tariff went into force on April 23rd, and the time which has elapsed since then has hardly been sufficient for all the industries and trades to realize exactly where they stand under the new rates. The chief features of the new law are two in number: 1. A preferential rate of one-eighth of the duty paid is allowed on all goods of British origin, and this will be increased to one-fourth after June, 1898; 2. In the main, and speaking generally, the late tariff is pretty substantially retained. Of course, there are many exceptions, such as a reduction of the iron duties; lower duties on sugar; free binder twine after January 1st, 1898; a reduction of 1c. per gallon on coal oil; the substitution of ad valorem for specific duties in a large number of cases; the prohibition of all English copyright books printed in the States; Indian corn is put on the free list; the duties on wines and spirits and tobacco are increased, etc.

What occasions most uncertainty is the minimum tariff: This applies to Great Britain only, although, apparently, the British treaties with Belgium made in 1862 and with Germany in 1865, would compel Canada to accord these countries the same treatment as given to Britain. But the Government are going to fight this interpretation of the old treaties, so, meantime, British goods alone get the preferential tariff. This suits public opinion very well, and as so many of the protected industries are left untouched the country is generally fairly well pleased with the tariff.

Dealing with that part of the tariff which relates to dry goods the chief features are: The cotton duties are increased both on white and colored cottons; the woolen duties are changed from a specific basis to an all-round 35 per cent. ad valorem rate; the duties on silks have gone up; the duties on certain lines of dress goods and on linens have also been increased; the duty on hank thread is increased; the shirt, collar and cuff men are hit hard, etc. Except that the classification of goods seems to be simpler and the payment of duties on their value instead of so much per article is in response to the wishes of importers, it is not the best tariff on dry goods that could have been made. For example, the shirt, collar and cuff manufacturers are singled out for a drastic change, which Mr Tooke and other experienced manufacturers declare to be most injurious. The fact that other industries, just as much open to reduction, are left alone is a condemnation of the new tariff in this respect. For example, the cotton men are given increased protection, though some reduction was expected, and a large one demanded. By increasing the duties on cottons, linens, silks, etc., the raw materials of certain manufacturers are interfered with, while the protection accorded them on the made article is actually diminished. This seems contradictory and unfair.

Then there is the case of the woolen mills. The specific duties have tended to keep out cheap stuff. The removal of these will help imports of cheap British shoddy and similar goods. The large mills, which make finer goods, may find the 35 per cent. duty adequate protection. But so far they are reticent about stating their views. Mr. Wm. Thoburn, Almonte, says that the tariff preference to British goods might affect woolen manufacturers more than the removal of the specific duties. It is stated that mills which use much Canadian wool for durable fabrics will suffer

injury. If this prove true, the new rate will injure wool growers as well as mill men. This would be a mistake. Then, the knitted goods men are not sure whether German competition will not be allowed by the extension of the preference. This would bear very hard on our fine Canadian makes. Altogether, the woolen industries cannot be sure where they stand until it is ascertained exactly what competition is to be put on them and what the ultimate conditions are to be.

Another grievance is that of the thread industry. The old rate on hank thread was $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; now it is 15 per cent., while the duty on spool thread remains as before, 25 per cent. This means that a concern like Messrs. Wm. Clapperton & Co. are handicapped in their spooling industry. When the preferential rate of one-fourth reduction on British spooled thread goes into operation in July, 1898, the spooling of thread here, it is claimed, must stop.

One hears complaints, too, from whitewear goods men, etc., who find duties on raw materials increased, and protection on the made article either left at the old figure or reduced. This was evidently never meant, and was, in fact, the very thing the Government promised would not be done. That it has taken place argues a certain amount of haste in the framing of the schedules, and we assume that where glaring inequalities are pointed out, these will be removed.

The most vital feature in the whole measure is probably the minimum tariff. It is beginning to be felt that when the full preference to Great Britain—one-fourth of present rates—comes into force in 1898, the result will mean a pretty sharp lowering of the import duties for a country hitherto protectionist. The Montreal Gazette has been figuring out what the duty will be on many lines now coming largely from England, and makes the rates on these as follows:

THE DUTIES ON BRITISH GOODS NEXT YEAR.

Cotton batting, yarn, etc.....	18 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Cotton fabrics, white.....	18 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Cotton fabrics, colored.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Linen napkins, table cloths, etc.....	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
Jeans, sateens, etc.....	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
Collars and cuffs.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Shirts and waists.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Linen or jute bags.....	15 per cent.
Socks and stockings.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Knitted goods.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Yarns, woolen.....	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
Woolen cloths and clothing.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Gloves and mitts.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.
Hats and caps and bonnets.....	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
Braces and suspenders.....	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

It is also contended that the diversion of trade from the States to England in such lines as cottons, silks, iron and many others is certain under a system which gives the preference in duties to British products. THE REVIEW's opinion is that every merchant should consider the new tariff entirely as it affects the general prosperity of the country. Let us not worry ourselves to keep in line with one party or the other. This is purely a business matter. The result cannot be foreseen immediately. It will take some months, anyway, before one can tell how the industries of the country will stand the new conditions. Meantime, merchants have to go on doing business, and as no immediate break in prices is probable, the retailers' position is not very difficult.