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## The Journal of Commerce

### FINANCE AND INSURANCE REVIEW.

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 6, 1878.

### COMMERCIAL STATISTICS.

In our last issue, when pointing out the chief causes of the depression from which Canada, like the adjoining States, and we may say all other countries, is suffering, we referred to the misleading character of the comparative statements of imports and exports in particular years when aggregate amounts are given without reference to the particular items of increase and decrease. We propose on this occasion to refer to some of the principal articles of import at different periods, leaving it to our readers to draw their own conclusions from the facts which we shall present to them with such explanations as may seem called for. One of the principal articles of import is sugar, and the following is the result of five years' importations, ending in 1877:

	1873.	1874.	1875.
Great Britain..	\$1,341,222	\$1,333,712	\$1,748,128
United States..	1,715,837	1,902,063	1,408,979
Other Coun-tries.....	2,038,851	1,902,255	1,724,993
	\$5,095,910	\$5,198,020	\$4,882,100
	1876.	1877.	
Great Britain..	\$1,451,411	\$2,590,365	
United States..	2,258,529	2,048,828	
Other Coun-tries.....	1,296,923	615,972	
	\$5,006,863	\$5,255,165	

It will be perceived that, since 1873, there has been a very considerable decrease in the importation from other countries, such as Brazil and the West Indies, caused, of course, by the closing of the Montreal refinery. In 1877, there was a considerable increase in the imports from the United Kingdom, and a decrease in them from the United States. It would seem, therefore, as if the Scotch refiners had almost secured the principal foothold in our market, and it naturally occurs to us to enquire what advantages refiners in Glasgow possess over those in Montreal. It is no doubt true that sugars are imported for refining purposes that have had the benefit of the French bounties, but our refiners could of course enjoy the same advantages.

The articles to which public attention is at present chiefly directed are those in the 17½ per cent. list, and which are usually designated "Unenumerated articles." It will be found on examination that, taking one year with another, and without reference to the aggregate decrease in the importations, fully two-thirds of the imports under the unenumerated articles are comprised under six heads, viz., woollens, cottons, iron and hardware, silks, satins and velvets, small wares, and fancy goods. We shall give the particulars of the importations of these several classes of goods during the years 1873, 1875, 1876 and 1877. We have taken the year 1873 because it was a year of very large importations, and because it has been generally taken as one of contrast with 1877. Before referring to the items in detail, we shall give the aggregate imports of unenumerated articles in the years named, and those of the six classes referred to above. We only take the imports from the United Kingdom and United States, those from other countries being insignificant in amount.

Aggregate Imports.	Total G Articles.	Great Britain.	United States.
\$	\$	\$	\$
1873..50,201,932	34,795,835	31,483,968	3,311,867
1875..51,955,480	35,601,528	30,275,954	5,325,574
1876..36,351,620	24,075,257	18,509,339	5,565,918
1877..38,414,914	24,606,647	17,711,696	6,954,951

We shall now take the articles separately, commencing with woollens:

	Great Britain.	United States.
1873.....	\$11,729,159	\$148,758
1875.....	12,929,157	310,242
1876.....	8,147,361	343,925
1877.....	8,247,966	503,473

It may be observed that of the imports from the United States, the value of tweeds in 1877 was only \$13,715, while from Great Britain it was \$725,679, so that the Canadian woollen manufacturers have much more to fear from the compe-

tion of English than American goods of this class. In flannels, the imports from the States were \$108,875, against \$298,579 from Great Britain. The other items from the United States are chiefly those not classed and ready made clothing. The next item we shall take is cottons:

	Great Britain.	United States.	Total.
1873.....	\$10,505,967	\$ 572,291	\$11,078,258
1875.....	8,457,247	1,350,308	9,807,555
1876.....	4,998,930	2,149,467	7,148,397
1877.....	4,235,713	3,096,176	7,331,889

The extraordinary increase in the imports of cottons from the United States is very striking. It is particularly interesting to us to examine the statements in detail. It was only in the year 1875 that the classification of the various descriptions of goods was commenced in the trade returns, and we shall refer to the imports of those years, commencing with the bleached and unbleached cottons, in which Canada is chiefly interested. The imports were:

	Great Britain.	United States.	Total.
1875.....	\$2,068,877	\$422,725	\$2,491,602
1876.....	592,454	546,418	1,138,872
1877.....	446,055	808,033	1,314,088

It is clear that although the United States has competed successfully with Great Britain in this article, yet the proportion of this description of goods to the aggregate of cottons has been much less in 1876-77 than in former years. This can only be accounted for by the increased consumption of our own manufactures. The article in which the greatest proportionate increase appears is printed cottons, which in 1875 were \$170,186 from the United States and \$2,551,908 from Great Britain, while in 1877 they were \$1,030,824 from the United States and \$1,605,695 from Great Britain. This article does not come into competition with any Canadian manufacture, and it is more than one-third of the total imports of cotton from the United States. In the goods not classified, the proportionate increase from the United States is considerable, but it is not in our power to judge whether they come into competition with domestic manufactures.

Iron and hardware come next on our list.

	Great Britain.	United States.	Total.
1873.....	\$2,413,923	\$2,191,746	\$4,605,669
1875.....	2,265,591	2,947,090	5,212,681
1876.....	1,196,539	2,392,092	3,588,631
1877.....	933,892	2,340,692	3,274,584

A very large portion of the goods imported under this head are unclassified, and we can only ascertain from the returns that the United States has gained very considerably in the competition with