

The Otter.

One of the most interesting as well as the valuable fur producing animals found about Canadian rivers is the otter; it is a wandering creature possessed of many curious and interesting traits of character. The otter is exceedingly social and is either found in pairs or in families of four or five. In winter the otters travel as much as they do in summer and follow the course of rivers, sometimes above the ice and sometimes under seemingly never at a loss to find an opening where brush or fallen timber has kept the snow from the surface of the water and prevented ice from forming. A snowy night is a time of great enjoyment to the otters and on such occasions there seems to be a period of general festivity and a gathering of all the otters in the neighborhood. Otters possess a remarkable knowledge of the position of rivers and will frequently travel several miles through the woods from one stream to another, always selecting that point where the streams approach nearest to each other. These excursions are attended with some danger, for the otter has little speed on land although possessed of amazing activity in water. Owing to the shortness of its legs and the length of its body, the otter drags its belly in the snow when travelling and leaves a trail as if a huge serpent had passed along. The young otters make their appearance quite early in the spring, generally there are five or six and are the most active and playful little creatures imaginable. In the early spring when the ice has disappeared the otters form slides or places of resort, generally selecting islands or points of land that project into the lake or river; at these places the animals seem to spend a portion of their time sliding down the bank into the water, rolling about on the shore and having a kind of an aquatic picnic. The fur of the otter is the finest, most beautiful, most valuable and most lasting of any fur produced in the country. The otter feeds upon fish only and will not touch the flesh of animals.—*Pilot Mound Sentinel*.

The Hat Duties.

The wholesale hat trade of Montreal and Toronto are extremely dissatisfied at the proposed change in tariff.

They feel satisfied that the present duty of 25 per cent. is quite sufficient to protect our manufacturers, and among the deputation that went to Ottawa to express their dissatisfaction at the charge was a manufacturer of wool hats and one fur hats, these two manufacturers expressed themselves as sufficiently protected with 25 per cent., and showed to both the Hon. Messrs. Foster and Bowell that there was no necessity whatever for such change. As it was, the manufacturer got the wool or fur, the bindings, sweat leathers, and linings free of duty, the only duty they pay is on tweeds and dye stuffs, which amounts to about 3c per hat, and on this 3c a duty of 20 per cent. paid, which amounts to a little over half a cent per hat. The manufacturers are protected to the extent of 42½ per cent. actually, that is 25 per cent. and 17½ per cent. for freight, cases, boxes, shipping, charges and insurances. It was quietly explained by the deputation that if a manufacturer could not make his hats with such protection in his favor, he lacked ability and knowledge of his business, and the Government to make up for what he lacks in that respect.

For this reason these small manufacturers wanted a duty of only 35 per cent. ad valorem and 50c per dozen on wool and straw hats, and 30 per cent. ad valorem and \$1.50 on fur hats, and it is believed that if the Board of Trade had not taken notice of it and expressed their disapproval, there was a possibility of it being carried out. However, on the new resolutions appearing, the new tariff read 30 per cent. on wool and straw hats and 20 per cent. and \$1.50 specific duty on fur hats. Since the resolution was issued another deputation visited Ottawa, to urge an ad valorem duty on fur hats, and therefore save trouble and annoyance at the custom house when passing entries.—*Canadian Journal of Fabrics*.

Opinions of the Tariff Changes.

The *Montreal Journal of Fabrics* has been interviewing some of the leading wholesale merchants of that city, regarding the recent tariff changes, with the following result:—

E. B. Greenshields, of S. Greenshields, Sons & Co., wholesale dry goods dealers, said these continual changes were aggravating to the trade, and the extravagant duties that were being imposed in various directions were alienating many who are otherwise in sympathy with the present Government. In no branch of the textile trades was there any need for an increased duty, and in more than one line the tariff was already unreasonably high. These changes always left the trade in a state of uncertainty, and every change worked more or less of an injustice.

A. T. Galt, of Galt Bros. & Co., thought the recent increase a mistake. Speaking as one who was interested in several textile mills, he was of opinion that the rates of duty as they existed before were quite high enough, and he had on more than one occasion expressed this opinion to members of the Government. He was opposed to the increase in any line affecting the dry goods trade.

Mr. Greene, of Greene & Sons Co., that manufacturers and wholesale hatters said the proposed specific duty did not include wool hats which their firm manufactured, so that the slight increase in the ad valorem duty on all hats, when balanced against the duty proposed on hat sweat bands, left them about where they were before. They were quite satisfied with this and would even say that the old duty of 25 per cent. was quite enough. Manufacturers who are always clamoring for a high tariff make a mistake. Taking the interest of the consumer and the manufacturer into account, a duty of 25 per cent. was quite high enough on any goods, and his firm were quite willing to be left to their fate in a fair competition with foreign trade. The invariable effect of a high duty was to stimulate the home manufacturers to over-production, and the eventually lost more through this over-production than they at first gained by the high duties. This the hat manufacturers would find when too late, as other over-stimulated interests have found. If the tariff must be raised, let it be an ad valorem one, for the majority of customs officers could not tell a fur felt from a wool felt, and much trouble would arise in levying the duty.

The effect of the change of duty on acetate acid, said a dealer in this article, will not be to stop the manufacture of vinegar from acid, as is the nominal reason, but simply to kill off the

small manufacturers and throw their business into the hands of the wealthy ones.

James A. Cantlie, another dealer, said the Government have given the increase at the wrong end. The lower grades of the tweeds, etc., had already considerably more protection than the higher classes, and by this change the difference between the two grades was still greater. For instance on a light class of 8 ounce goods costing say 4 shillings and 2 pence, the equivalent of a dollar, the net increase by this duty would bring them to about \$1.25, while on a piece of 12 ounce goods costing one shilling a yard the duty would bring it to 37½c. In other words the protection given to one class is now 25 per cent., while to the other it is 50 per cent. Thus the poor man, who can least afford it, pays twice as much duty on his clothes as the rich man.

Another dry goods dealer said, that the duties in many lines were preposterous. In some lines of hosiery the duties amounted to 80 per cent., while on certain classes of collars and cuffs the specific and ad valorem duties combined amount to 115 per cent.—a scandalous impost. On a certain class of lumbermen's shirts it costs 98 per cent. over the original price to lay the down here, owing to the duty. By the new woolen duties the poor man who wants a heavy overcoat has to pay the extra tax, while to the rich man who buys a light and expensive fabric the increase amounts to nothing.

Too Much Wheat

Perhaps this is as safe a solution of the refusal of wheat to advance in price as any other. The importing countries are few. The exporting countries are competing with each other for the favor of those countries which must import. The area of arable land that has been broken, the world over, in the past ten years, is sufficient to make an empire; several of them, in fact. The wheat supply has more than kept pace with the increased demand, which would of itself be sufficient to deaden the market for both wheat and flour.

But there is another very cogent reason why, even in years when we believed we were short of wheat, no advance, or hardly an appreciable advance, took place in the price of wheat. People do not eat as much wheat as formerly; at least, those people who in our own and foreign countries are not strangers to white bread. The bill of fare of civilized man has expanded enormously of late years. The immense quantities of canned and preserved goods that are now consumed must have supplanted something. Was it not bread, at least very largely, that was displaced by the entrance into the markets of so much canned food, and its increasing consumption? We think decidedly that it was, and that the *per capita* consumption of wheat in the United States has been steadily declining for years. We doubt if it is now four bushels *per capita*, and this fact, with the other cited, will amply account for the refusal of wheat to advance in price in spite of the most favorable outlooks.—*American Miller*.

It is rumored that the mission of A. F. Gault to England, for the purpose of disposing of the Canadian cotton mills, has been successful. Only one mill has refused to enter the combine.