

THE THREAD BUSINESS.

"THE British thread manufacturers' combination," says The London Drapery World, "is meeting with some obstinate opposition in the foreign markets, and the developments will no doubt be anxiously watched by the shareholders of Coats, Clarks, Chadwicks and Brooks. Belgian thread manufacturers are competing in Canada, the Argentina and other American markets, and a game of diamond cut diamond has commenced, the end of which it is not difficult to see. The Central Agency in Canada, which represents the amalgamated British thread manufacturers, has been met very boldly by a Belgian company which quoted similar thread at one and a quarter dollar under the English price per gross. The Central Agency replied by reducing its price seventy-five cents. The Belgian company, by the employment of bonuses and discount, answered with a still further reduction, and the Central Agency has not been as yet able to cut under. To add to the excitement of the thread competition a firm of Canadian manufacturers have challenged the Belgian and British invaders alike by placing on the market an article of home make and equal in every respect to the Belgian production at Belgian prices. In the old coaching days the proprietor of the mail coaches on the northern roads, when a 'combination' started against him, took his passengers free to London, and fed them on the way, rather than be driven off the road. He won. Whichever of the competitors is best able to pursue a similar bold policy in threads, may win in the present contest. But the shareholders will hardly develop enterprise enough for that. In any case we may expect more combinations, but they will not be between the Belgian and Canadian firms, unless the former, to evade the effect of the new tariff, transfer both plant and capital to Canadian soil."

OUR TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE STATES.

The recent speech of Erastus Wiman at the Detroit Chamber of Commerce banquet set the members of the Detroit Manufacturers' Club thinking, and the result is, the club has decided to do what it can toward the betterment of the commercial relations between the United States and Canada. The club referred the matter to the Committee on Trade Extension, which referred it to E. E. Armstrong and James Inglis. Those two gentlemen have drafted a resolution, to be submitted to the club at its meeting on June 22nd, endorsing the resolution introduced by Congressman Hitt, and urging the senators and representatives in Congress to hasten its passage. The Hitt resolution calls for the appointment of a committee of three commissioners by the president to meet a like commission from Canada to consider the best method of extending commercial relations between the two countries, said commission to report to the President, who will lay the report before Congress, the initiative to be taken by Canada. Mr. Inglis has been in correspondence with statesmen and manufacturers in the east, and has received one letter which says: "What purpose has been served by a tariff as severe against Canada as against other nations where conditions justify protection? Conditions are equal between the two countries. A commercial union between them would be a cure for hard times. Let us at least set experts to work to discover if it is not so. No harm can come of that. Don't let us forever drift apart, when by enquiry we may discover a possibility of mutual development for mutual advantage."

A CLERK'S ABILITY.

That a clerk should have good taste in being able to give information as to what materials and shades will combine with each other, there can be no doubt. Such taste is invaluable. In selling dress goods it is very requisite, as many shoppers are often in doubt as to whether certain materials are suitable for the purpose for which they are wanted. Much reliance is put in a clerk's knowledge of

the number of yards of material sold for the making of certain garments. For instance, in selling goods for a skirt, if in order to make a large sale a clerk should sell the customer more material than was needed she would very naturally be avoided in the future, while a knowledge of the requisite amount always meets with the approval of the customer, and fills her with respect for the clerk's ability.—St. Louis Reporter.

BRIEF NEWS NOTES.

P. J. Walsh, dry goods merchant, of Kingston, is dead.
J. N. McDonald has opened a general store at Westville, N.S.
N. Faulker & Co. are a new men's furnishings and hat firm in Montreal.
Langman & Co. have sold out their clothing business at Chilliwack, B.C.
Morris Wolff has begun a business in Montreal, dealing in ladies' wear.
C. A. Wagoner has purchased J. N. Davidson's general store at Aikenside, Man.
James Lambie, the well-known and respected merchant, of Windsor, Ont., is dead.
By a fire at Moncton, the store of G. V. Forbes was burned. Mr. Forbes' was insured.
D. L. & H. Bachman have been registered proprietors of the Royal Hat & Cap Mfg. Co., Montreal.
F. C. Niven is continuing the business of general store at Whitewater, B.C., Mr. Bell having retired from the firm of Niven & Bell.

GETTING EVEN WITH THE CUSTOMS.

A good story of how a merchant got even with the Government hails from Belgium. The Treasury officials seized a shipment of 1,000 pairs of gloves on the ground that the goods were undervalued, paying the merchant for them at the prices at which they were entered, and causing him to lose a big contract. Shortly afterwards he imported another case of the same kind of gloves, declaring them at exactly the same value as the former entry. Again the Treasury officials seized the goods and paid the merchant their declared value.

When they offered the gloves for sale, however, they found to their chagrin that they were all made for the left hand, in consequence of which no purchaser could be found. Within a few hours a shabby little old man appeared at the appraisers' store, said he had heard some gloves were there which could not be sold, and asked how much he could have them for. The appraiser, who had been kicking himself for having seized the worthless stuff, said the goods could be had for the cost of storage and cartage. In three hours the gloves were lying in the warehouse of the importing merchant, who, a month later, brought in 1,000 right-hand ones, which were passed through the Custom house without demur.

A HINT TO MANUFACTURERS.

Mr. E. E. Sheppard, of Toronto, has been appointed trade commissioner to Mexico, Central and South America by the Ottawa Government and will shortly proceed south. He has addressed, through the Department, a circular to manufacturers requesting information that may assist the sale of their goods abroad. Mr. Sheppard is a most capable man for a mission of this kind and should be given every possible aid in the way of practical information, so that Canadian products may get a larger slice of export business.

THE GEM SHIELDS PROTECTED.

The Kleinert Rubber Co. have won an important suit in England sustaining their right to the Gem dress shields against all imitators. They took action against a French concern which was using a similar label, though with a different name than Gem. The judge sustained the Kleinert Co.