

Friday, April 24th.

Examination of Wm. Muir, Montreal, Wholesale Dealer in Clothing.

Is the great bulk of the article which you make up into clothing imported?—Yes.

What is the duty you have been paying heretofore?—Fifteen per cent. It is now raised to sixteen and two-thirds.

What proportion of your goods do you import?—You will observe no doubt in taking the evidence of witnesses in my trade that they vary somewhat in their statements. This is on account of the peculiarity of their business, and of the localities in which they carry on business. My evidence will therefore differ somewhat probably in many particulars from that of some of the others. I estimate that we purchase about three-fourths of our material in foreign markets, and I am under the impression that we are perhaps the largest consumers of Canadian cloths in the business.

The goods that are imported into this country pay about how much duty?—Sixteen and two-thirds by the new tariff.

Do you export any of your goods?—None. I would mention that we could have exported some portions of our manufactures to the United States had we had a drawback. I think that notwithstanding their high tariff, if the drawback were ten per cent., which would probably be the proportion of the duty we pay, it would make a difference nearly enough, I have no doubt, to export some portions of our manufactures.

What is the duty upon your goods going into the United States?—It is, so far as I am aware, 35 per cent. *ad valorem*, and 50 cents a pound.

Equalling probably 45 per cent.?—Nearly a hundred on the value. In fact it is positively prohibitory.

What proportion of the clothing consumed in this country is manufactured here, and what proportion imported?—I have been trying to make a calculation of the respective proportions, and I find that, besides the goods amounting to \$885,183 specified on page 323 of the Trade and Navigation returns as having been imported into the Dominion, \$68,000 worth were taken into British Columbia under the four per cent. last year. The whole item of importations of this class of goods into the Dominion last year is therefore \$953,619. Some might suppose that this item applied exclusively to the clothing trade. It does not,—the item is “clothing and wearing apparel.” Under that designation the Customs’ Department places shirts and other body clothing, so that it would include not only the ready-made clothing trade but also the shirt and collar in addition.

What proportion of the clothing sold in the country is manufactured in it?—The best estimate I can give, from enquiries I have made, is that not less than \$3,000,000 worth of it is made in the country. This amount is got at by taking the number in the clothing trade to be eleven and the number in the shirt and collar trade to be three or four. This is exclusively in the wholesale trade. You will perceive that this forms a comparatively small proportion of the amount of clothing consumed by the people. If you look to the imports you will find an immense amount of woollen and cotton are brought into the country. What is done with that? Of course blankets are not made into clothes, nor are some other imported woollen articles. You will find, however, that a very large proportion of these importations (which amount to five millions, I think) is made into clothing for the people of the country. Then the great bulk of the cotton imported is also manufactured into clothing, so that the amount of clothing worn by the people which the wholesale merchants supply them is comparatively small.

Would the increased duty on your manufactured goods increase the price to the consumer?—In some branches it certainly would—black cloths for instance—my own manufactures would not be increased in price however. If you put on ten per cent. more duty we would not, and could not, increase our profits. We formerly had 20 per cent. on the woollen and 25 per cent. on the clothing; but I can state most positively that the increased tariff never entered our minds in connection with the prices at which we determined to sell our goods.

That was governed by the competition?—Yes.