

law in Canada. In this we agree. There is reason to hope that the present Parliament will remedy the defect. On the whole, the article is more kindly in tone toward this country than other contributions which we have observed in English trade papers during the last year or two. There has been a tendency to sneer at the trade here, not with our contemporary especially, which cannot be pleasing to Canadian merchants. To insinuate, as has been done by some, that we are less honest and scrupulous than the trade in the United States, for example, is very unfair. If losses in Canada during the last few years have annoyed English houses, they must remember that the trade on the continent of America has been bad for some years, and during hard times these unpleasant features are inevitable.

FAILURES AND PROSPECTS.

FROM all reports paper was fairly well met on the 4th inst., and wholesalers think the outlook compares favorably with previous Februaries. In consequence of the McMaster firm's suspension, a number of business embarrassments are reported, and some estates have gone into assignees' hands. But on the whole the results are better than was expected, and a good spring opening is expected at the end of the month. No doubt there have been some extensions here and there which are not reported publicly. That is a matter of private arrangement between merchant and wholesaler, and where a man is worth carrying over, not much difficulty is experienced in his getting a chance.

By the courtesy of Bradstreets we have been furnished with the record of the number and causes of the failures in 1896 as compared with previous years. It shows that in Canada, including Newfoundland 67.2 per cent. of embarrassments were caused by lack of capital in 1896, 71.3 per cent. in 1895, whereas in 1894 the proportion was 68.5 per cent.; in 1893 it was 69.4 per cent., and in 1892 only 65.1 per cent. Next among causes of failures, as is true in the United States, were incompetence and commercial crisis. The Canadian and provincial failures due to lack of capital in 1896 numbered 1,481, and those due to commercial crisis, only 157, the first being an increase and the latter a decrease. There is a favorable side to reports of failures due to commercial crisis in Canada, because they amounted to 7.1 per cent. last year, compared with 8.5 per cent. in 1895, and because they are contrasted with 8.1 per cent. of the total number of failures in this class in 1894. Dominion and provincial failures due primarily to incompetence in business numbered 203 last year out of a grand total of only 2,204, or about 9 per cent. of the whole.

The number of failures during the last four years was . 1896, 2,204; 1895, 1,916; 1894, 1,864; 1893, 1,778.

There is food for thought in these figures.

THE TARIFF HEARINGS.

WE are devoting a good deal of space in this issue to evidence at various points before the Tariff Commission. A representative of THE DRY GOODS REVIEW on each occasion took notes of his own and furnishes an independent report. The three standpoints are pretty fairly brought out . the consumer's, the importer's, the manufacturer's.

THE REVIEW has no ambition to take a hand in the fray. We

cannot resist, however, one word to our good friends, the importers, who, like Mr. Chouinard, of Quebec, are moved by profound compassion for the consumer. The consumer is a thankless person as a rule. He will not be very grateful unless you remove duties altogether, sacrifice your profit and give him his goods for nothing. Your efforts are wasted, as far as getting a mortgage on his affections are concerned, unless you do that. The importer or merchant need not lose sleep over the consumer. He is numerous, more numerous than we merchants are, and will look after himself. He has a habit of doing that.

The importer's true mission before the Tariff Commission is to present his own grievances. He has several real ones, and deserves attention, but when he wanders off into the awful miseries of the poor consumer he gets beyond his depth.

We direct the attention of the cotton manufacturers to the denunciation of them made by merchants angry at the cut in flannelette prices. THE REVIEW said at the time this insane action was resolved upon by the Colored Cotton Co. that it would be used against protection. Our prediction has come true, and it behooves those who are interested in maintaining the policy of protection to chain up in a safe spot, somewhere near the North Pole, those primarily responsible for the policy which directed the flannelette cut. We do not believe that the directors of the company in question were the offenders. They are persons of sense, and know enough not to put a loaded weapon in the hands of an angry enemy.

However, read the evidence, and judge of the supremely difficult task the Ministers have before them. They cannot please everyone, that is certain. In one place a deputation of farmers wanted the duties left on farm produce from the States, but taken off the things used by farmers. This is pure greed. The man who wants protection for himself and free trade for the other fellow is a—well, the word is too strong to put in print.

OPPOSED TO DEPARTMENT STORES.

THERE is nothing specially original about the way in which dry goods retailers in the vicinity of Chicago propose to fight the big stores of that big city. They have held indignation meetings and they have passed resolutions. Anyone can do that. They have started a little paper to be the organ of the movement. Anyone can do that also.

It was proposed that persons directly connected with the dry goods stores should all pledge themselves to buy in their own district and not flock to the department stores. The same pledge will be sought from the people of the neighborhood as far as possible. This is more practical and may result in something. Part of the resolutions adopted read as follows :

Resolved, First, that for the purpose of protecting the retailers' interests we recommend that all retail merchants in Chicago, and all those persons who are interested directly or indirectly in sustaining retail stores to organize protective associations throughout the city for the purpose of educating the great masses of consumers up to the fact that by supporting the so-called department stores they are centralizing various retail interests under the control of one firm and thus creating the most dangerous and ruinous trusts imaginable.

Second, That we invite the public to sustain us in our efforts to continue employers in business instead of causing so many persons to be and to remain employees, being threatened with or forced into bankruptcy by the aforesaid department stores, for it is the cause of the public, as it is our own.

Now, we must all sympathise with the efforts of the local merchant to secure his local trade. He has a right to that, and he should have it. But we must once more point out the absolute necessity of meeting this competition on its own ground to a certain extent. The department store buys and sells for cash, go thou and do likewise. It advertises extensively. It displays the goods well. It dresses the windows. These are all features which we can and must imitate.