THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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JOHN WELD, MANAGER

AGENTS FOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME JOURNAL, WINNIPEG, MAN.

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It is impartial and independent of all cliques or parties, handsomely illustrated with original engravings, and furnishes the most practical, reliable and profitable information for farmers, dairymen, gardeners, stockmen and home-makers, of any publication in Canada.
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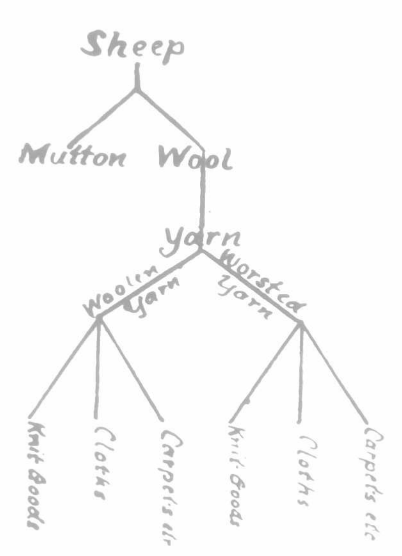
woollen industry, even though in this instance the farmer did stand to participate in a minor share of the benefit. "Don't make the same mistake twice."

The causes of our decreasing exports of certain lines of farm products have been partly set forth by Mr. Flavelle. Some more of them—for example, the retroactive effect of our long-established system of tariff protection—have been explained editorially by this paper. The outstanding fact is that production has not been keeping pace with demand. The cause of this is not—save, perhaps, in a few instances—lack of tariff protection on farm products. Such protection would not remedy the trouble, but would at times impose a real hardship on consumers, as the American tariff is now doing on consumers across the line. When we have not enough eggs or fruit or vegetables to supply home demand, it is fortunate that we are able so import. Of course, a narrow margin of duty is all right as a sort of buffer against dumping by other countries, which might otherwise disorganize our business by taking advantage of price fluctuations. That is all the protection our farmers want.

The main trouble with sheep-raising is not the low price of wool, but failure of Canadian farmers to appreciate fully the profits and advantages of sheep husbandry under present conditions, coupled with failure to meet the specially lucrative seasonal demands of the lamb trade. Meat, and not wool, is the main source of revenue from the breeds of sheep kept in Canada, and would still be if the price of wool were doubled. An Ontario bulletin, issued in 1907, summarizing replies from correspondents, states that, instead of 34 per cent. of farmers keeping an average of 13 breeding ewes, as was found to be the case, there should be flocks of 10 to 20 ewes on fully 75 per cent. of the farms of the Province. Lack of appreciation of the real value of sheep on the farm was assigned as one great cause of the decrease of sheep husbandry. The growth of the dairy industry, which some have foolishly embarked in almost to the exclusion of all other branches but hogs and poultry, and not many of them, is another cause. Dogs have also had their effect, more by far than they need have had. To be sure, a higher price for wool would stimulate extension of the sheep industry, but the chief economic advantage to the Dominion of artificially enhancing the price of wool is that it would encourage what is already a profitable branch of husbandry, but neglected for want of appreciation. There is a measure of force in this argument, but hardly sufficient to justify a tax of fifteen or twenty million dollars a year.

There is, further, the fact that prejudice in favor of imported goods now operates to the handicap of Canadian woollen manufacture. It is only fair that this should be countered by a small percentage of import duty; but then, it is already so countered by a duty of 30 to 35 per cent. on knitted goods, tweeds, worsteds, and the like. Similar duties are collected on wearing apparel, but in the case of some goods, to be finished in Canada, such as serges, dress goods, buntings, etc., duties as low as 15, 17½ and 15 per cent., respectively, are levied under the British preferential tariff, while our manufacturers have the further privilege of importing shoddy at 7½ and 12½ per cent.

Mr. Biggar seems to take it for granted that the establishment of a woollen industry in Canada would be advantageous. It would not be unless within a reasonable time it became able to continue business without tariff aid, earning sufficient profit to recoup us for the initial loss incident to its establishment. Not the number of industries a country has, but the profit they earn, and the liberality of the wages they pay, make the community truly prosperous. We already have liberal protection on woollen goods in Canada—too much, if anything. To increase the duty substantially, even for the sake of giving some small protection to the Canadian wool-grower, is not a reasonable proposition. The tariff on woollen goods is high enough, but, without increasing this tariff, it is only fair to collect the present nominal duty of 3 cents a pound on Canadian wool, and to collect a proportionate duty on tops, noils and yarns. The elaborate tariff proposition Mr. Biggar has been advocating, looking to the establishment of a Canadian worsted industry, is not judiciously considered. As we observed before, the whistle would cost more than it is worth. It would be very much more advantageous, if possible, to obtain free or freer admission of our wools into the United States through reciprocity negotiation with the United States.



This diagram, reproduced from E. B. Biggar's pamphlet, "The Canadian Farmer, the General Consumer, and the Wool Tariff," shows the genesis of woollen and worsted fabrics and knitted goods. The main difference in the process of manufacturing woollen and worsted yarns is that the carding machine used in making woollen yarns tends to cross the individual wool fibres at every angle, which explains why woollen cloths are so easily felted or fulled. The combing machine, which prepares the wool for worsted spinning, separates the long fibres from the short and lays them parallel, and those fibres, being longer than in the carded wool process, makes possible the spinning of a much finer and relatively stronger yarn. Hence the greater versatility of the fabrics obtainable by worsted spinning, which is adapted to the coarsest, as well as the finest yarns. "Tops" are the first product of the worsted combing machine, being the longest and best of the fibres drawn from long wools, and used in spinning worsted yarns. Noils are shorter fibres of the same wool dropped from the comb to become material for spinning woollen yarns, etc.

What Would a Worsted Industry Cost?

Anent his communication, published last week, and commented upon in the foregoing editorial, we have asked Mr. Biggar two questions: First, whether he had ever considered what a stupendous sum it had cost the United States (in sacrifice of revenue and heavy premium in price of woollen goods to the consumer, made possible by tariff) to establish its present somewhat imposing woollen industry? Secondly, what scale of duties he would consider necessary to establish a worsted industry in Canada? To the first question, he replies that he is accumulating data on the subject, and will be pleased to deal with it later, remarking that he considers the present United States woollen tariff by no means the best that could be devised, high as it is. On this point, however, we may be permitted to cite a fact brought out in Mr. Biggar's own pamphlet on "The Canadian Farmer, the General Consumer, and the Wool Tariff." On page 25, this pamphlet states: "Though there was only one period of free wool in the United States since 1865, there was a short period, beginning in 1883, when the duty on wool was reduced ten per cent., and even this was a disaster to the wool-growers, as the number of sheep fell from 50,500,000 in 1884, to 41,500,000 head in 1888." The decrease in sheep husbandry following such a small tariff reduction would seem to indicate that the whole United States woollen industry, from the keeping of the sheep to the manufacture of clothing, was an expensive, pap-fed business. It is the artificial encouragement of such extraneous industries that has run up the cost of living across the line, despite probably the most magnificent diversified endowment of natural resources possessed by any country under the sun. The Americans have pretty nearly done their best to commit commercial suicide, and have only escaped more serious consequences because of their great resources and vast belt of internal free trade.

Our second question, Mr. Biggar must have overlooked, as he makes no mention of it in his letter to hand. In the absence of such answer, we fall back upon his statement, made at the Dominion Sheep-breeders' meeting, where he advocated a protection of 25 per cent. on wool, with "a corresponding net protection to the manufacturer on the labor expended by him." How much this "corresponding net protection" would be, goodness knows—probably enough to run the duty on manufactured clothing up to 50, 75 or maybe 100 per cent. And yet Mr. Biggar submits that this will probably not increase the cost of woollen clothing! This scarcely coincides with the assertion of Mr. Lloyd-Jones at the meeting above mentioned, who exhibited a suit of clothes purchased in England for $15, the like of which, he claimed, could not be bought in Canada under $25. If our present protection on woollen goods adds 66⅔ per cent., or even 30 per cent., to the cost of a suit of clothes, what would happen under a tariff twice or three times as high?

To make some attempt to arrive at probable totals, we recall the statement made in Toronto last February by the special committee appointed by the Dominion Sheep-breeders' Association to look into the wool question. At an abortive conference with some few of the manufacturers, this committee had concluded that, in order to satisfy the manufacturers with a readjustment of the tariff, the duty on the finished goods would have to be raised to such a point that, for a prospective benefit of four and a half million dollars a year to the wool-growers, about fourteen millions per annum would come out of the pockets of Canadian consumers, of which class, of course, the wool-growers form a part. Needless to say, the committee could not meet their demands.

Canadian farmers and Canadian consumers generally would be very foolish to consent to another dollar of protection to the woollen industry. But it is only fair that our present nominal duty of three cents a pound on raw wool should be collected, likewise an equivalent duty on imported tops, which, being imported, displace more than the same weight of wool and several worsted spinning plants to manufacture which have, according to Mr. Biggar, been established in Canada within the last three or four years. They spin their yarn from imported tops. Tops are the first