

THE VIEW OF BUSINESS MEN.

AS far as inquiry can show, the view of business men is that Sir W. Laurier and the other Canadian Commissioners at Washington should make no serious concessions to secure a treaty. Apparently, there is nothing Canada wants that the United States will give us, so the best thing the Government can do is to take the sense of the electors on what our tariff policy towards the States should be, and at once put it in force.

We have heard, during the past few weeks, any number of opinions expressed by commercial men on this subject, and they all say that, as the United States do not care a rap about this country, and uniformly keep a hostile tariff toward Canada, our tariff toward them should be based exactly on the lines they follow.

The present conditions are absurdly unequal.

The figures for 1898 have just been added up. Canada bought \$78,000,000 worth from the United States, admitting \$40,000,000 of it free of duty. The United States only bought \$40,000,000 worth from Canada, and on most of it heavy duties were levied.

In 1898, Great Britain purchased \$93,000,000 worth from Canada, while we only bought \$32,000,000 worth from her in return.

These conditions, business men inform THE REVIEW, clearly enough indicate the Government's duty. Our policy, they say, should be more favorable to Great Britain even than it is, and the country will authorize, if consulted, higher duties on United States products and lower duties on English goods. The commercial interests in the States have done their best for reciprocal trade, but the scheming politicians at Washington have proved too much for them. So be it!

Now, on the other hand, if our Government make a number of concessions to the States—abandoning the Behring sea fisheries, opening the canals free to war vessels, wiping out the duty on soft coal, etc.—and receive in return no adequate compensations, we believe there will burst forth in Canada such a storm of indignation as the country has not seen since the Washington Treaty of 1871. The Government will not be able to force such a treaty through both houses of Parliament.

The Ministers, therefore, if our information regarding commercial opinion be well founded, will act a wise part in signing no treaty at all, but, appealing to the Canadian people for support, will receive it without stint or hesitation.

BUSINESS AND POLITICS.

If any one wishes to see a perfect illustration of what THE REVIEW has been saying about business and politics, let him consult the Halifax papers. The Opposition papers in Halifax declare that the present Government are neglecting the interests of that port and favoring St. John, N.B. The Government papers deny it, and retort that the late Government persistently neglected Halifax. In St. John, the Government press laud Mr. Blair for his influence in building up St. John, and the Opposition press think he does not do enough. And so on, and so forth.

The chances are that the Government are trying to deal fairly with both cities, and, that if politics could be left out of the question, some valuable suggestions could be made from both sides in the interest of the two cities. In the prosperity of them both, as the

winter ports of Canada, the rest of the country has a deep interest, and we can see no earthly good in this continual dragging up of political issues on a subject that ought to be purely commercial.

As long as our merchants allow themselves to be appealed to in the interest of one party or the other for the benefit of a few office-holding politicians, this kind of thing will continue.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

THE wholesale dry goods associations in Montreal and Toronto are highly respectable bodies. Influential men compose them. When they speak, as organized bodies, they should be listened to. But are they?

They are much exercised over a Customs case, and the Toronto association has passed earnest resolutions of appeal to the Government, while the Montreal body has not been idle either. But we do not find that the earth trembles, or the Ministers lose a wink of sleep. The politicians have gone through all this before. They know that politics and business are twin children. They look over the membership of the dry goods associations, and they feel tolerably certain that the Grit members thereof will continue to vote Grit, and the Tory members to vote Tory. They are not afraid of any upheaval, or earthquake, or cyclone over any matter of business, because, from past experience, they are justified in thinking that the dry goods merchants will walk up to the polls with the meekness of little lambs, and mark their ballots exactly in accordance with previous (known) convictions.

As to the case in question, we make no comments. It is sub judice. Of the rights and wrongs of it we know nothing. We assume that the case will be settled with justice to all concerned. But the drygoodsmen are uneasy, and the resolution of the Toronto members, particularly, betrays an anguish of mind and a yearning after the unattainable that are truly impressive. But the Ottawa Ministers know these worthy gentlemen well, and are aware that though they talk business they do not mean business.

What happened in the controversy over insolvency? The Government simply snapped their fingers at the business men. It was politely done, of course, but it was done. And, if there is anything more dead and buried than the Insolvency Bill, we would like to be informed of it. The members of the Government are not fools, but shrewd, capable politicians who know a thing or two.

If the dry goods associations, or any other business organizations, want a bill or reform carried, let them do this: Draw up a paper with their request clearly stated; let all the members—10, 20, 30 or 50 in number, as the case may be—sign it; send two of their number to Ottawa with authority to say: "We want this done, and, if it isn't done, the 20, 30 or 50 men on this list are pledged to vote and work against the Government at next election." Then you would see the Ministers tumble over one another to carry the bill.

But, feeling that the appeals, and anger and protests of business men are largely stage-thunder, the Government, with an audacity which we admire, and a knowledge of human nature which is absolutely correct, will go on mending the fences for another election, will continue to draw the official salaries, and appoint their relatives to nice places in the public service. That is what they are there for.