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### THE TARIFF ON TEXTILES.

The Tariff Commission cannot complain of lack of interest in its proceedings or that all sides of a question have not been presented for its consideration. This week it has been sitting in Toronto, and various branches of the dry goods trade have been "on the stand." Each of these branches was represented by a speaker who read a paper on his individual subject.

The item of silk was dealt with, for instance, by Mr. J. P. Watson. This gentleman argued that when all silks were imported at one rate of duty the wholesaler could sell to manufacturers. But now, with a general tariff of 30 per cent. and a special tariff on neckwear silks of 10 per cent., the trade of neckwear silks passed into the hands of wholesalers in London and New York. The chief difficulty is that manufacturers making neckwear and making also belts, blouses and skirts, into which silk also entered, used in the manufacture of these latter articles, not only silk which paid 30 per cent. duty, as they should, but also used silk paying 10 per cent. duty, and which should only be used for neckties. Even with the greatest care it is almost impossible to keep neckwear silk in a factory wholly for making neckwear, and where there was dishonesty it was difficult to detect it. Mr. Watson suggested that either all silks should have a flat tariff rate of 10 per cent., or should the Government see fit to raise the rate above 10 per cent., then the duty on finished articles of neckwear from England be placed at a reasonably higher rate than on the raw material silk from Germany:

No doubt a uniform rate on silk would be a great convenience, but, as Mr. Fielding pointed out, it would mean a ten per cent. duty on luxuries, while at the same time many necessities bear a duty of 25 per cent., a state of things which would certainly "make the public balk." A diversion from the argument immediately in hand came from Sir Richard Cartwright, who discovered in the Government blue-

book of imports that last year about \$500,000 worth of silk was imported under the 10 per cent. duty. Could this, he asked, have been really and honestly all turned into neckties? The reply was "no," that without doubt much of this silk imported into Canada under the low rate of duty was in reality used in the manufacture of other articles. Whereupon Mr. Fielding remarked that there was scope for a little penitentiary work here.

The attempt to prove that a higher duty on manufactured neckwear from England would not increase the cost to the consumer brought forth some expressions of doubt from the Ministers.

Mr. J. D. Allan argued that, as a fur manufacturer, he was entitled to get his silk for linings at the 10 per cent. rate, as well as the neckwear manufacturers.

The Commissioners evidently thought they had struck rich ground as to new impressions about the tariff requirements of the country, when Mr. J. W. Woods, of Gordon, MacKay & Co., took the stand. Near the outset of the enquiry he startled the Commissioners by a statement that cotton operatives in England received almost as much wages as in Canada, and that prices for piece-work were actually 10 to 20 per cent. higher in Lancashire than in America. Mr. Wood's contentions were all against any increase in the cost of textiles. He acknowledged that manufacturing was an important part in the commercial life of Canada, but considered distribution fully as much so. His specific suggestions were as follows: That white cotton embroidery be 15 per cent., instead of 25 per cent. That white cotton laces be 25 per cent., instead of 35. That women's and children's underwear be 40 per cent., instead of 35 per cent. That blouses and waists be 40 per cent. instead of 35.

Upon woollens he held that the tariff should be a moderate one, as the great bulk of these could not be manufactured in Canada. Four times as much was spent in Canada in wages to those manufacturing

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