

ATTEMPTED BOYCOTT OF CANADIAN JOINERY.

AN effort has been made by the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners of Great Britain to boycott Canadian and United States joinery. This society recently issued a circular to its members requesting them not to fix or use foreign joinery, and drawing special attention to the importation of doors, windows, etc., from America, which they claimed were manufactured under unfair conditions and by ill-paid labor. Several weeks were granted before the injunction was to be put in operation, but on a certain date the members were, in substance, instructed to band together to prohibit the importation of such joinery.

For many years large quantities of manufactured joinery have been exported from Canada and the United States to Great Britain, and this is, we believe, the first organized effort that has been made to restrict importation. The consequences, however, are not likely to be serious, as the trade has now become too well established to be permanently injured by the selfish and ill-advised action of a trade organization.

Before taking such a step, it would have been well had the society endeavored to ascertain the actual facts and conditions. We will consider only the conditions as they exist in Canada, and in this connection will endeavor to prove that Canadian doors, to which particular reference is made, are manufactured under proper conditions, and not by inferior workmen employed at low wages.

By an act passed by the Ontario Legislature on May 5th, 1894, and which is now in force, provision is made for the appointment of councils of conciliation and arbitration for settling industrial disputes arising out of the price to be paid for labor, disagreement with respect to wages, number of working hours, insufficient or unwholesome food supplied by employers, and ill-ventilated or dangerous workshops or places of accommodation. Whenever a complaint arises these councils visit the locality and obtain all particulars of the case. The Ontario Factories Act provides, among other things, that no girl or boy under fourteen years of age shall be employed in any factory, that every factory shall be kept in first-class condition as regards cleanliness, and that proper ventilation be provided. These provisions are generally complied with, and very few complaints are received by the inspectors.

Regarding the wages in our wood-working factories, we have ascertained the average wage paid by several sash and door manufacturers in Canada. One of the largest exporters to the British market writes that the range of men's wages in the factory is from \$1.00 to \$2.25 per day of ten hours, according to character of work and skill of workman; another that from \$1.50 to \$1.75 is the average; and another that \$1.50 would be about the correct figure. In addition to the adults employed, there are some apprentices learning the trade whose wages would average from 50 cents to \$1.00 per day. This would give an average of nearly \$1.60 per day for adults and 75 cents for apprentices. Four other firms who manufacture largely for the local trade, but who have also exported doors to Newfoundland, the West Indies and South America, give the average scale of wages as follows: No. 1—\$1.50 to \$1.80 per day; No. 2—\$1.60, \$1.75, \$1.80 and \$2.00 per day; No. 3—\$1.25 to \$2.00; No. 4—9 first-class joiners, \$12 a week; 37 very good, \$11; 63 good,

\$10; 61 pretty good, \$9; 49 common, \$8.00 to \$8.50; 26 3rd year, \$7.50; 31 2nd year, \$6.00 to \$7.00; 19 1st year and apprentices, \$3.00 to \$5.00. The above figures give an average of \$1.60 per day. It must also be remembered that most of the factories are operated the year round, and consequently the average is lower than would be the case if operated only during the building season. For living accommodation the cost in the localities in which the factories are located is not above three dollars per week.

We think the above figures should convince the most skeptical that Canadian doors are manufactured by properly-paid labor and under fair conditions. The average scale of wages compares favorably with that paid in other lines of industry, and we believe that nowhere in the world are laborers given greater remuneration for their services than in Canada, and nowhere does greater harmony exist between capital and labor. The rights of our workmen are respected, and protected by law. The absence of serious strikes is an evidence of the fact that the conditions are such as we have described.

The secret of our success in competing in the British market against home-made joinery is not to be found in the price of labor, but rather in the skilful manipulation of our raw materials by means of improved machinery. England is the great manufacturing nation of the world, but unfortunately she is compelled to import her raw material. Hence Canada, with her forest wealth, becomes a competitor in manufactured joinery, and the country producing the goods at the smallest cost naturally captures the market.

A visitor to some of our woodworking factories will at once be impressed with the marvelous work accomplished by machinery, by means of which the productive capacity is greatly increased and the quality of the work improved as well. This increased capacity enables the Canadian manufacturer to produce the goods at the smallest possible cost. These are the advantages that have enabled our manufacturers to successfully compete with those of Great Britain.

It is unfortunate that a greater distinction is not made in foreign countries between Canada and the United States. Even in our mother country there is much ignorance regarding Canada. In this may be found the cause of the present protest against Canadian doors, as we understand there was much dissatisfaction with a large consignment of doors that were imported into England from the United States, and which were found to be of very inferior quality. It is possible, also, that Canadian manufacturers are suffering somewhat from the reputation for the sweating system that is reported to exist in some portions of the United States, where female labor is said to be employed in door-making. There is also much antipathy in England to goods made in United States prisons for export, as well as on account of the bitter opposition of American employers to trades unions. In Canada, however, no such conditions exist, and our manufacturers would do well to adopt some means by which foreigners would cease to confound Canada with the United States. This might be done by stamping on all our goods the words "Made in Canada," after the manner of German manufacturers.

Mr. Routhier, architect, of Ottawa, is giving a series of instructive lectures on Architecture at the Canadian Institute, in that city.