

ENGLISH CO-OPERATIVE STORE METHODS.

The British public have recently been treated to an expose of the methods pursued by the great co-operative stores, to which they have transferred a large portion of their trade, formerly enjoyed by the independent store-keepers, under the impression that they were getting better value for their money by so doing. A trial has been in progress in the London Police Court of the officers of the Junior Army and Navy stores, limited, on the charge of substituting American and Canadian hams for English and Irish, made at the instance of the British Bacon-Curers' Association. Mr. De Rutzen is the presiding magistrate, and Mr. Weekes the counsel for the prosecution. The following evidence given by an ex-employee of the stores at the last hearing, and taken from the London *Grocers' Gazette*, is decidedly spicy. In reading it, bear in mind that a penny (1d) is equal to about 2 cents, and a shilling (1s.) to about 25 cents.

Mr. Weekes: Were any of the American hams branded?

Witness: Do you mean those we sold as Irish or those we sold as American? (Laughter.) Some of the American hams were marked "B.C.," and some of the same class of hams were not branded at all, but were known as "U.B.'s." Both were sold as Irish, but some of the darker colored ones were sold as Wiltshire. (Laughter.)

In further examination, witness said those which were not branded were called "U.B.," which meant unbranded, and when they were sold as Wiltshire they realized 1s. per lb. That was the general custom in the department. American hams which were sold as Irish, were sold at 10d. and 10½d. per lb.

Mr. Weekes: Were these hams sold in that way by any person who happened to be there? Do you know that of your own knowledge?

Witness: Yes, I do.

Mr. Weekes: Did the Americans undergo any preparation before being sold as Wiltshires?

Witness: Yes. We picked out the most suitable looking for Wiltshires, warmed them over the gas, rubbed a little peameal on them, and then rubbed them with an oily rag on the back. (Laughter.)

Mr. Weekes: Was that often done?

Witness: Yes, whenever any customer required a Wiltshire ham. (Laughter.)

Mr. Weekes: By whose direction was that done?

Witness: By Mr. Venner's. Continuing, he said, they took all their orders from Mr. Venner. He remembered on one occasion that a gentleman who knew Mr. Crumplen pretty well, came into the stores and looked at some American hams, and Mr. Crumplen came forward and spoke to him. The gentleman said: "What hams are these?" and Crumplen replied that they were West of England hams. The member turned round and said: "I am a West of England man, these are the hams I want." Crumplen selected two, after trying them with the iron, and sold them as West of England hams at 1s. per lb. The hams that were sold were American hams. He (witness) made out the invoice for the customer. The stores were in the habit of getting a large number of orders by post. The majority of those orders were for Irish, Wiltshire, or York hams. The order would often run: "Please send one best smoked Irish ham." In these cases he had asked Mr. Venner for instructions, and he would say: "Oh, send one of those 'U.B.'s' along there," meaning those that were placed on the rail at the store. Another time he (Venner) would ask if the customer had had a ham before, and would tell witness to ask the others up the counter if they knew the order, and then, if they did not, he was to refer to the last order, and if 10½d. a lb. was paid to send the customer a "U.B." ham, and if 10d. a "B.C." ham. If a pale York ham was asked for they sent a genuine one. If a

member wanted a smoked York, they were supplied with a large long cut American, which seemed most suitable for the purpose, and which had been treated with peameal, etc., and these were charged for at 1s. per lb. The ordinary price of the class of American ham they sold would be about 8d.

Mr. Weekes: What do you call the process of oiling the hams?

Witness: Oh, faking. (Laughter.) Venner would say, "Oh, Stutchbury, I have a nice little job for you. Get up some of those little 'U.B.'s,' put a little meal on them, rub in a drop of oil, and stick a 1s. ticket on them. See that they do not go out for less." They would be ticketed, "Finest Wiltshire, 1s. a lb." or "Finest Irish, over 10 lbs. 10½d., under 10 lbs., 11d." Continuing, he said Admiral Lord Kerr, of H.M.S. "Majestic," always used to order Irish hams for his own private consumption, and he was supplied with the American "B.C." Lord Stratheden, Lady Joicey, the Hon. Mrs. Barry, and others of the nobility, used to order Irish and Wiltshire hams, and were supplied with "B.C.'s" or "U.B.'s." Sometimes they were asked for a particular brand, and they generally had a few of Denny's, Matterson's, Shaw's, or Coey's in stock. They had about 10 or 15 of each kind of ham in now and again.

Mr. Weekes: If a member ordered a specially branded ham, did he get it?

Witness: If we had one in stock. If not we substituted something else. (Laughter.)

Mr. Weekes: If Irish or Wiltshire were asked for without any branded name, what was the custom?

Witness: Oh, give them American. (Laughter.) If a member insisted on a particular brand, and we were out of stock, we sent out and got one. Resuming, he said Mr. Venner told him about 12 or 18 months ago of a prosecution that had been taking place in regard to hams, and said they had been waking some of them up in Ireland, and he had told witness to be careful as to who they were serving with the hams, and who they were sending them to. They were paid a weekly wage of 28s. and a commission of 1d. on every American ham that they sold as Irish or as Wiltshire. They did not get any commission on any of Denny's, Matterson's, or Coey's hams that they sold, nor on any American sold as such, except on one occasion when they had a ½d. commission on each one for two weeks only, because they were over-stocked. They never sold the "B.C." brand as American hams. They were sold as Irish or smoked York. The stores had sugar-cured Canadians in their list at 9d., but he never remembered seeing any there. If sugar cured hams were asked for, the members were supplied with short-cut Americans, the proper sale price of which would be 7d. or 7½d. He had also seen hams described as Anglo-American on the list.

Mr. De Rutzen: Do you know what an Anglo-American ham is?

Witness: No, I do not. Continuing, witness said they used to scrape the name and brand off Fowler's hams, and send a lot of them to France: but he did not know what they were sold as. France however, would not take in American hams. The duty on American hams going to France was greater than on British hams. The stores did a large trade with canteens and her Majesty's ships in American "U.B." and "B.C." hams. Sometimes Irish hams were asked for, but the same custom was pursued with the canteens and ships as with other customers.

DECLINE IN SHIPPING.

Wooden shipbuilding in the Maritime Provinces is practically a thing of the past. Since 1878 the shipping of the Maritime Provinces has steadily declined from a little over 1,000,000 tons to 401,000 tons—the decline last year being some 46,000

tons. In this connection, however, it should be explained that, acting under instructions from Ottawa, many vessels that had been retained on the registry as missing or unreported, have been struck off the list by the registrars, many of which probably should have been struck off long ago. On the one hand, it must not be forgotten that a considerable amount of shipping owned or partly owned in the Maritime Provinces is registered in Great Britain, and, of course, does not appear on our registry. This fact must be borne in mind in taking account of the investments of the Maritime Provinces in shipping.

That wooden shipbuilding will revive to any considerable extent in the Maritime Provinces is exceedingly problematical. The only vessels that can now be constructed and profitably run are coasting schooners, fishing vessels and brigantines suited to a few special lines in the carrying trade; and it is becoming a question how soon even these will be largely driven out by coasting steamers of moderate tonnage.—*Halifax Chronicle*.

THE LAW AND THE SEALSKIN SACQUE.

There are bridges and ferries between the United States and Canada. There is an ocean ferry from New York to Europe.

Women stroll over the bridges and ride upon the Canadian ferries, and go back and forth by steamships. The weather being sharp, these women wear their sealskin jackets.

Here comes in the law. If these women pass the border they must leave their cloaks behind on their return, unless they have taken the precaution to have them certified as garments not made of sealskins taken by pelagic sealing.

What idiocy is all this! What intolerable interference with individual liberty! What oppression!

Yet it is the law of the land—a law made solely to secure an absolute monopoly to a single company of very rich speculators. Every traveling woman in the country must be harassed in order that these monopolists shall enjoy the privilege of exclusively selling sealskins.

There was a time in American history when American women sealed up their teacaddies and drank water for the sake of liberty and personal right. Why don't they now abandon sealskin for a like patriotic purpose? There are other furs, and there is always wool.

The women can end this thing if they will, but they cannot wipe out the deep disgrace of the abominable enactment.—*N. Y. World*.

N. Y. STATE CANALS.

Canal management in New York State has had a varied history, some of it not having been of the most edifying kind. Attention has been directed to the subject anew by the announcement that the work of deepening the canals, for which an appropriation of \$9,000,000 was made, cannot be completed for that sum. As a matter of fact, as stated by the Governor in his annual message, less than two-thirds of the intended improvement has been provided for. Governor Black suggests simply that if a further sum is to be expended for the completion of the work it should be only by a vote of the people. There remains, however, the question why the work has not been completed for the amount originally provided, and this interests a number of people. According to present indications something will be learned about the matter before long, for a committee of enquiry has been appointed by the New York Chamber of Commerce to report to that body the facts regarding the large expenditure already made, and the reason for the large deficiency. The report will be looked for with interest.—*Bradstreets*.