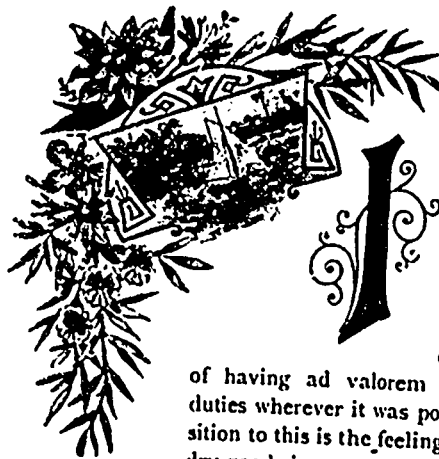


NEW YORK AND MONTREAL IMPORTERS DIFFER.



IT IS interesting to note the difference of opinion between the Montreal and the New York importers, in regard to specific and ad valorem duties.

At the recent sitting of the Tariff Commission, in Montreal, the dry goods deputation expressed itself in favor of having ad valorem duties replace specific duties wherever it was possible. In direct opposition to this is the feeling among the New York dry goods importers.

The grounds on which our importers advocate the abolition of specific duties is that it bears most heavily on the cheaper goods, and thus on the poorer class of people. Take, for example, the case of cloth overcoats. The inferior grades weigh more than cloth of a better quality; consequently, the specific duty on the inferior goods is more than that on the best grades. In the case of stockings, where the specific duty is so much per pair, the inferior grades, though paying the same amount per pair, pay a larger percentage on their cost. And throughout the whole trade of a dry goods house specific duties bear most heavily on the inferior grades. This means, they aver, that the poor man bears a larger part of the duty, proportionately, than his richer neighbor. This is one of the main arguments used by the Montreal merchants in supporting their opinion.

For the last two years the New York importers have been working under a carefully prepared system of ad valorem duties. The report of the Board of Appraisers for the year closing September 30 has just been given out. The report shows that the number of reappraisements has increased by over 5,000. "The almost fourfold increase of reappraisements under the present tariff law," says the report, "is in some measure attributable to the better diligence and efficiency of appraising officers, but is chiefly due to the enlargement of the scope of ad valorem rates of duty."

The rest of the case may be given in the words of The Economist, which has been an ardent advocate of the movement. "The loss of time and annoyance caused to merchants by these 7,000 reappraisements it is impossible to estimate, nor can any one calculate the loss in actual dollars and cents arising from delay in passing upon the cases and the consequent inability of the importer to dispose of his goods. And yet, in spite of all this, no actual security is given to the domestic manufacturer against unfair competition resulting from undervaluation—if 7,000 cases, why not 7,500? Who can tell how many entries have been passed with an erroneous appraisal?"

"Ad valorem duties have had a thorough trial during the past two years and have been found fatally wanting. They offer a premium to double dealing not only on the part of the importer, but by the domestic manufacturer."

Both systems have many faults. It is impossible to arrange a schedule with either to meet all cases. The best that can be done is to choose the lesser evil, and arrange to have the system made as elastic as possible without increasing the chances of fraud.

HONEST OR DISHONEST.

During the last month an incident came under our observation, which is here given, as it illustrates to what some men will stoop to get hold of the customers of others. A representative of one of

the woollen mills got samples of the goods of the other mills. He then went to the customers of these mills and offered to supply them with exactly the same article five per cent. cheaper.

THE FLANNELETTE DISCUSSION CONTINUES.

From The St. John, N. B., Gazette.

THERE is no effort on the part of the Bank of Montreal at the present time to close up the Parks mill. All this happened some years ago when the bank thought it had Mr. Parks securely in its clutches. It was at this time that such a determined effort was made by the bank to put an end to the St. John industry. The connection between the effort of the bank and the cotton syndicate at that time was clearly established, and sworn to by numerous affidavits produced before Judge Palmer. But all this is in the past. At the present time it is the combine, which is the outcome of the cotton syndicate, that is trying to crush out the St. John mills. That they have failed is not their fault, but rather the result of prices which they cannot control. The present status of the flannelette war is, that both concerns have withdrawn from the market goods on which the cut was made, and it is safe to say that these goods will not again be offered at the prices asked for them a short time ago. But while the combine has failed in this effort, there is no reason to believe that the squeezing process will not be again applied on some other line of goods when the opportunity offers. However, the big corporation has been taught, at least, one lesson during the flannelette war, and that is, they have not a strong hold upon the wholesale dealers and jobbers of Canada. They have learned that the trade is opposed to the upsetting of prices, simply because the combine wished to crush a rival, and perhaps the lesson will have its effect in the future dealings of the corporation. A great injury has been done the entire cotton trade of Canada, by the manner in which the combine sought to crush Mr. Parks. Nearly every merchant, wholesale and retail, who handles flannelettes has been a loser to a greater or lesser extent, and this loss is laid directly at the doors of the cotton combine. Hereafter, in dealing with this corporation, it is possible that merchants may demand a guarantee that prices shall not be subject to fluctuations other than those produced by natural causes. If the cotton combine wishes to do business for fun, their customers may have a different opinion, and certainly that they shall not be made to share in the expenses of creating a monopoly in the cotton business of Canada, the greatest beneficiaries of which will be the directors of the cotton combine. It is not in the interests of trade that this corporation should have the monopoly.

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF US.

An extract of interest to Canadian importers is given here. It is taken from The Drapers' Record, of London, Eng. It may help us to "see ourselves as others see us." The extract is as follows:

"It is impossible to deny that as regards the number of insolvencies occurring within its bounds, Canada compares very unfavorably with other colonies. During the present year Australia and New Zealand have been practically free from any failures of direct interest to the London trade; and with the exception of one suspension at Port Elizabeth, the Cape and South African trade has a similar gratifying record.

"But as far as the Dominion is concerned, one is confronted with a very different state of affairs. Matters have become so unsettled, in view of the suspensions which have taken place, that manufacturers and leading wholesale firms in the city (i.e. London) have become very anxious as to the future, and it is feared that the worst is not yet over. That such uncertainty should exist is, it goes without saying, greatly to be regretted, for mutual confidence is necessary if any business is to be transacted."