

"to get back the commercial channel which has been closed against us. For instance, a man in the Baie des Chaleurs sends to us for five hundred cigarettes, and I find that by shipping them direct the freight would be seventy-five cents, and as this would be too high I want to have the right to send these cigarettes over to a wholesale grocer who also ships goods to my customer at Baie des Chaleurs. But the grocer tells me that by his contract or agreement with the American Tobacco Company, he is precluded from even handling goods manufactured by their competitors. Now, this is not British, and is against the true principles of trade. We desire to reopen this commercial channel, which is the wholesale grocer, the produce merchant and the tobacco-consist."

Mr. Fortier further states: "that eight years ago he had brought action against the American Tobacco Company for conspiracy, and it was decided not to be an illegal conspiracy. Still, the result of the trial was an attempt at legislation by the present Solicitor General, to meet the case in question. The bill, however, did not get beyond its first reading. Now the Minister of Inland Revenue, after studying the question in all its phases, has brought down the bill in question."

THE BRITISH TARIFF SCHEME.

We have received a copy of the report of the Tariff Commission appointed to examine into the probable effect of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals on present conditions of British trade; to suggest what modifications, if any, would be desirable, and in what way conflicting interests may be harmonized; also to recommend a scale of duties. The volume now published has to do with the iron and steel trades. The purposes of the commission, it is almost needless to remark, involved an enormous amount of research and detail work, as well as the formation of a plan for obtaining expert testimony. Memoranda were therefore prepared upon the comparative statistics of the iron and steel trades of Great Britain and foreign countries, the organization and working of the German Kartells, the recent developments in the American iron and steel industry, the operation of the German iron duties, drawbacks and rebates in foreign countries, railway rates and policy, etc., etc.

A significant reply which we note, made by several firms to one of the enquiry circulars freely sent out to those interested was, "we formerly exported, but now cannot do so." The figures and data collected by the commission and presented in this report are so voluminous that we cannot attempt to reproduce them in this place, but the result of their labors, as regards pig-iron, may be summarized as follows: At the end of the seventies, the total amount of pig-iron produced in the United Kingdom was nearly 6¾ million tons, that is, as much as the total production of the five iron-producing countries next in importance, and no less than 45 per cent. of the total production of the world. At the end of the eighties, however, the total amount of pig-iron produced in all countries had increased by 59 per cent., but that of the United Kingdom by only 17 per cent. Germany and the United States, on the other hand, had increased their production by 93 and 175 per cent. respectively. Early in the nineties, the United Kingdom lost the pre-eminence it had enjoyed for more than 100 years, and the United States took the first place. Since then, the United Kingdom has been overtaken by Germany, and has now fallen to the third place, while the total production of the United States is only a little less than that of the United Kingdom and Germany taken together. In the United Kingdom, the production of pig-iron has just kept pace with the increase of population. In Germany and the United States, the increase in production has been continuous and much more rapid than the increase of population. Thus, by whatever test we apply, we find that the pig-iron industry of the United Kingdom is practically stationary.

In the case of steel, the results of the enquiry show even more strikingly the decadence of Great Britain as a manufacturing country. In the period 1876-80, the quantity

of steel annually produced in the United Kingdom was one-third of the total quantity produced by all countries; it is now less than one-seventh. The United States on the other hand has increased its share of the total production of steel from about one-quarter to two-fifths; and Germany from one-sixth to more than one-fifth. If we take consumption of steel per head of the population, the increase in the case of the United Kingdom is from 64 lbs. to 253 lbs., but, in the case of the United States, the increase is from 37 lbs. to 404 lbs., and in Germany, from 25 lbs. to 282 lbs. While the steel requirements of the world are rapidly increasing, the steel industry of the United Kingdom is almost stationary, and the steel industry, both of the United States and Germany, is rapidly progressing.

The commission, after discovering the general truth of the propositions thus summarized, enquired into the alleged causes of this relative decline of the iron and steel industries in Britain, and came to the conclusion that it was not due to the inadequacy or inconvenience attached to the supplies of ore, nor even to the charges for transportation, admittedly more burdensome in the United Kingdom than in foreign countries. The preponderance of opinion in the minds of witnesses was that the danger consisted in the combination of the transport policy of foreign countries with their tariffs and export organization, and with the system of free imports of Great Britain.

The commission's finding in regard to the process now known as dumping is to the effect that not only is it of the most widespread character, but, contrary to the view held by many, it is profitable to the countries practising it; that, unless checked, it is likely to remain one of the permanent incidents of trade, that it has already caused serious loss of employment and wages, diminished profits, and brought about a feeling of insecurity in many branches of industry; and that there are no advantages to the consumers, which can, in the long run, compensate for the injury so caused.

Finally, the commission recommend, as no doubt, thinking of its origin, most people thought it would recommend, the establishment of a British tariff in such a manner as to check the practice of dumping, to maintain the export trade with foreign countries, and to develop the colonial markets. These objects, it is suggested, can be obtained by means of a tariff divided into three classes: (a) A general tariff, consisting of a low scale of duties for foreign countries which admit British wares on fair terms. (b) A preferential tariff, lower than the general tariff, for those of our colonies which give adequate preference to British manufactures, and framed with a view to securing freer trade within the British Empire. (c) A maximum tariff, consisting of comparatively higher duties, but subject to reduction by negotiation to the level of the general tariff.

FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

The Montreal Packing Company, Limited, of Montreal, has been incorporated under Dominion laws. It will carry on the business of packing and canning meats, fruits and vegetables, and of establishing a rendering and sausage factory.

The Toronto Retail Grocers' Association held a very successful excursion to Niagara Falls and Buffalo last week, being the eighteenth in the series.

The United Fruit Company, of Boston, which largely controls the banana trade of this continent, is said to be proposing the innovation of selling that fruit by weight instead of by the bunch. There are things to be said on both sides, but it is believed that the change would result in a better division and grading of qualities; against it may be raised the objection that increased handling would be necessitated.

The indications this season point to very heavy crops of apples in England, so the prospects for early Canadian apples in that market are not very promising when the risk of landing in unsound condition is taken into consideration. It has, however, repeatedly happened, says a market