

FLANNELETTES—A RETROSPECT.

THE price-war is over, for the present. Both the Parks mill and the Canadian Company have withdrawn their 32-inch makes from the market. Jobbers complain that orders placed are not being filled, and retailers, in turn, are lacking supplies to meet the demand created by the flurry in prices.

Now that the whole thing is over, who has benefitted? We cannot find that anyone has. When the absurd break to 5 cents took place, the jobbers cut prices all round and the big department stores in cities promptly followed suit, so that not one branch of the trade—the mills, the jobbers, or the retailers—got any profit out of the transaction. The cut worked evil to all concerned. Just as surely as the man who plunges wildly into a debauch wakes up next morning with a racking headache, so the trade of the country are feeling the wholly evil effects of this latest commercial jam-boree. Men who believe in doing business on a sound basis must be heartily sick of this affair. It bears every appearance of an attempt to force Wm. Parks & Son out of the manufacture of flannelettes, and it has failed, as such a selfish, reckless and short sighted policy deserved to fail. It has done harm to the stability of domestic manufacture and will not, rest assured, escape the lynx eyes of the Ministers now about to visit sections of the country on a tariff enquiry.

A retail reader of THE REVIEW wishes to know if this paper is specially concerned to keep up prices. We will tell him. This paper desires to see a legitimate profit. That is the only true business principle—not an extortionate profit (no one gets that nowadays), but a reasonable, living profit. This paper pins its faith to that rule, and applies it equally to one, as to another, branch of trade. It will not do to preach the doctrine to a retailer and not to a manufacturer. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, says the proverb, and in this case the trouble has been caused by a wilful neglect of a wholesome principle of business.

THE TARIFF.

IT is not the province of THE DRY GOODS REVIEW to take sides on the tariff issue—that is, between free trade and protection. We leave that to the party papers. The readers of this journal from Nova Scotia to British Columbia get their politics from other sources.

There are several points in the proposed new tariff, however, which interest the trade as a business community and may legitimately be discussed. The first is that the date of the changes should be fixed about July 1st so as to avoid disarranging the spring trade, both wholesale and retail. That we have already brought to the attention of the Government, as have one or two boards of trade also. Sir Charles Tupper, at the Conservative convention in Toronto, October 27, referred to the interviews with business men in THE DRY GOODS REVIEW, and assented, generally, to their point of view. The Government is naturally more reticent than an Opposition requires to be, but we hope to hear from the Ministers, shortly, an announcement that they too recognize the propriety and justice of a fixed date in June or July for the changes.

Another point is the nature of the revision. It cannot be a radical one. The country needs a revenue, and the tariff provides \$20,000,000 of it yearly. No one wants to dislocate trade. Even

Mr. Caldecott, of Toronto, an uncompromising, perhaps the most advanced, advocate of the free trade theory, recognizes the prudence of a moderate measure. There are also the domestic industries which deserve, and will doubtless receive, the greatest consideration. This journal has readers in all the towns of the country where mills are situated, and knows from personal opinions privately conveyed, that no policy which would shut down the mills would be acceptable. We believe the Government sees this, and will act with sense and discretion. Our industries are a vital part of the Canadian commercial system, and any policy that ignored them or ruined them would be little short of criminal. We do not anticipate any such, and need not grow excited about what may never happen. It's a good rule for a man not to jump a fence till he comes to it.

The third point is quite as important as the others. The tariff when decided upon, must be fairly and sensibly administered. Any tariff tyrannically administered becomes oppressive. The importers must not be treated as so many robbers. In an anxiety to get revenue, there should be no attempt to fleece the importer by every possible exaction, just as if he were a sheep about to be sheared. Once adopted by Parliament, the tariff should not be administered in any party spirit. Before adoption, it should not be framed under the influence of ward politicians who want to get a "whack" at this industry or that.

The whole revision, from start to finish, must be honestly and wisely conducted. We merchants are not all hide-bound party men. Party ties are not as strong as they were ten or fifteen years ago. We want honest, economical government and are going to have it, or know the reason why. There has been too much humbug in politics, federal and provincial, the last thirty years.

The new Government has a chance before it, in the tariff issue, to do good work, to ignore the wire-pullers and take a broad view of a national business question.

WE BLUSH.

One of the buyers just returned from the English market says he heard THE CANADIAN DRY GOODS REVIEW referred to several times while there. It was always spoken of favorably as a good up-to-date business-like paper.

RICHES WELL EMPLOYED.

IF a man makes a fortune he should use it well. By doing so he strengthens the position of capital, which is apt to be looked on with a jealous eye by the crowd. One of the menacing features of the struggle in the United States is the fierce onslaught by the mob on the propertied class. The rich man, therefore, who removes this feeling of suspicion and dislike by showing that he can generously devote part of his surplus to the common good performs a real service to the state. He helps to assuage envy, to encourage benevolence and to give riches a better name in the community. Mr. A. F. Gault's unobtrusive yet princely gifts to the educational institution of his church at Montreal come under this classification. There ought to be no reason for the bitter carping at well-off men which is so prevalent nowadays. If all capitalists had the same reputation for integrity and kindness which Mr. Gault has acquired during a long and arduous career, there would be far less hostility to wealth among the democracy than there is.