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CARPET MANUFACTURING IN CANADA.

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In an interview on the carpet industry of Canada, J. P. Murray, of the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company, gives his views as follows:—

In some countries a carpet is a luxury, but in Canada the climatic conditions are such that for several months of the year a warm floor covering is necessary, and carpets are found not only in the palatial residences of the wealthy, but also in the homes of mechanics, farmers, and even laborers, for in the domestic economy of both rich and poor carpets play almost as important a part as wood and coal. Canadians, in fact, buy more carpets per capita than the people of any other country in the world. It might be supposed, therefore, that carpet manufacturing would have long ago become one of the most successful industries of the Dominion, especially as it is a recognized fact that the strong-fibred wools of Canada are peculiarly well adapted to the manufacture of carpets, and have, indeed, been pronounced superior to those of Russia, Scotland, Australia, or any other country from which wools are imported for that purpose. However, notwithstanding the fact that large investments have been made in land, buildings, plant and machinery, the carpet industry in Canada is very far from being in a flourishing condition, and the reason is that practically no encouragement on the part of any Canadian Government has during the past fifteen years been given either to it or to those who have struggled to bring it into existence. The products of developed and well-fostered factories of the older manufacturing countries have for years been accorded the most liberal tariff treatment, and, while importations

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from abroad have rapidly increased as the years have gone by, Canadian carpet plants have year by year been forced to the wall, and, although a few of the strongest of them have been able to evade absolute disaster, it is only because of the most careful attention to detail (attention far more close than is practised by any of the alien makers who sell to our people), and also because, in the hope that tariff justice would eventually be granted, fresh capital has repeatedly been provided in order to save original and subsequent investments.

It is unnecessary to review the facts so well known and so often pointed out that in Canada, with a commercial giant at our side, and that giant something of an ogre, carpet industries must be protected if they are to grow and become factors in the development and wealth of the country. The object hereof is to recite briefly a few of the national advantages that may be expected from a flourishing Canadian carpet industry when permitted by tariff protection to derive a livelihood from its own natural soil, and also to refer to some facts relating to the industry, which, in view of the proposed general revision of the Canadian tariff, should be kept in mind.

Employs the Highest Order of Skill.

In no other industry is skilled assistance of a high order more necessary or more largely employed, for not only must the managers and foremen of departments be specialists in their respective spheres, but every workman throughout the factory must be intelligent and possessed of skill of no mean order. The ingenious artist, the expert chemist and the practical scientist have each here a wide scope for the employment of their respective talents. Carpet designing is, and is recognized by all schools of art to be, of the highest order. The designer must possess not only a wide knowledge and correct appreciation of color and effect, but, while original in his conceptions, he must be true in all cases to class, country, and times. Of so high an artistic order is carpet designing, in fact, that the artist's reputation and market is not necessarily bound by any one country, but may be international, or even world-wide.

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To expert chemistry is due not only the scientific exactness with which the coloring materials are prepared, in order that niceties of shade and color may result, but also that the dyes when applied may be permanent while permitting of no injury to the yarn.

That the many delicate and costly machines necessary in an up-to-date carpet factory may be productive of the best results and maintained in a state of proper efficiency, technical skill of the highest order must be largely and constantly employed, and in this respect alone the carpet industry offers most diversified opportunities to the graduates of our schools of practical science. Nor does the matter end with the providing of employment of a strictly scientific nature. There is so much to be known in each of the many branches of the industry that none but men of good mental ability can have a place in any department of it. There is the expert wool buyer, who must be versed in the comparative values (monetary and technical) of the wools of all countries, and of the grades, yields, virtues, defects and peculiarities of each; the wool cleaner, carder and spinner, on whose skill dependence must be placed for evenly spun, strong yarn, economically made, and produced on time; the scourer and dyer, who must be expert and careful in order that the animal oil necessarily used in the carding may be removed without making tender the yarn, and who, especially in Canada, where the bright, clear sunshine is trying to color tints, must be master in all that pertains to his department. Then there is the weaver, who is responsible for evenness of surface, proper matching, good selvage, general uniformity, and many other essentials to the fabrication of a good carpet, and who at the same time must not only be alert to all matters that are new in fabrication, but able to mould them to the circumstances of his own work. Even the finisher must be possessed of intelligence and skill, for in the final work to be done on a roll of carpet dropped threads, knots, rough shearing and other items may easily cause considerable loss. Finally, there is the salesman. The national value of expert travelling salesmen of the class necessarily employed in this industry is, perhaps, not thoroughly appreciated for

the reason that the duties of a salesman are not as a rule fully understood. It is generally presumed that his sole duty is to sell goods, as is the case with the foreign traveller, who sells all he can at least expense and in the shortest time. While selling is, of course, a very important part of the Canadian traveller's mission, he has other duties as well which are just as important, and of these may be mentioned the establishing, maintaining and guarding generally of credit and confidence, as well as advising judiciously and recommending extensions or curtailments as the needs of the times and circumstances demand. The majority of Canadian manufacturers' salesmen are men well qualified for this class of work, and their value to the community is of a nature to be seriously missed if withdrawn or curtailed, for, living in and travelling continuously through the country as they do, they become possessed of a knowledge of the country's needs and conditions which makes a decision from them worthy of the highest consideration. In this respect alone the travellers of Canadian industries, as will be seen, are a most valuable aid to the general commerce of the country. Nor is this the only way that Canadian commercial travellers benefit the trade of the country. Through them the railways, express and telegraph companies, the hotels and restaurants, the post-office, and even the cartage and livery concerns of the country, derive large and constant revenues; the manufacturers of trunks, sample cases and order books receive lucrative trade; the large salaries drawn by the travellers themselves are circulated freely throughout the country, and in many ways the business welfare of many people is by them and through them directly and indirectly benefited.

It is such men as those that the carpet industry employs and keeps in the country. They are, one and all, of the very highest type of skilled assistance, and not only contribute largely to the resourcefulness and general well-being of a nation, but, as earners of large wages, they, in turn, directly and indirectly, promote the prosperity of all other branches of trade and commerce. The workman who draws his pay for making carpets in Canada is a contributor to the support of the whole community in which he lives.

Helps the Railways.

Proportionately, the revenues derived from freight by our railway companies is considerably greater in the case of the Canadian-made carpet than in respect of that from abroad, for the reason that the raw materials coming to the factory, as well as the finished product going out, have to pay tribute. Imported carpets pay tribute but one way, and in comparison only about one-third of the railway freight handlers are needed.

Difficulties of Canadian Makers.

Prejudice against Home Products.—Canadian merchants are not supposed to be advocates of the products of any particular mill, but to search out for their customers the best values wherever they may be found. There is in Canada, however, as there seems to be to a greater or less extent in every country, an erroneous impression that goods which are imported are necessarily better, and, while faults in the home-made article are frequently magnified, defects in productions from abroad are largely excused. In this regard it may be interesting to note that in many cases goods that are giving good satisfaction and are much in demand are made in Canadian factories, though sold to consumers as imported.

Factory Help.—Owing to the uncertainty regarding tariff protection, the inducements to enter Canadian carpet factories in anticipation of procuring permanent positions are small, and, in consequence, factory help in this country is both scarce and high-priced, and in large measure it is owing to this, as also to the fact that the products of low-priced alien labor have been sold here under dumping prices, that many carpet factories have been forced to close their doors. There being no textile schools in Canada, help, when wanted, has either to be imported or educated in the factory. Factory education, on the one hand, necessitates engaging foremen at higher wages than the positions themselves warrant, while, on the other hand, it involves the wasting of much valuable material. The beginner, in fact, while producing least, is the most expensive employee in the establishment, for the waste he causes through lack of knowledge amounts to more in a few weeks than that caused

by an experienced man in years. Notwithstanding this, however, Canadian carpet makers have always preferred to educate Canadians rather than to import workmen, and Canada has thereby derived a benefit.

Greater Costs of Buildings and Plant.—As the manufacture of textile machinery is not a Canadian industry, it is necessary that all machinery be imported, and this must continue to be so until the demand in Canada will warrant a home production. The more home factories there are the greater will be the demand for such machinery. Duty, freight, packing and insurance resulting in a machinery cost of from forty-five to fifty per cent. greater than these cost to the foreign makers, have to be paid by the Canadian who would engage in the trade. Reliable statistics show that in Great Britain, from which country the strongest competition comes, the cost of building is at least forty per cent. less than in Canada.

In this erection and fitting up of carpet plants, engineers who make this their special business have to be employed, and, as they have to be brought from abroad under heavy expense, costs in this direction are fully three times as much as have to be borne by the makers in Germany, Great Britain or the United States. Being distant from the makers of machinery, the Canadian makers are obliged to carry a stock of supplies fully double what is really necessary in the countries where the machinery is made, and this means the tying up of capital as well as extra expenditures in freight.

Owing to the Canadian climate, heating for many months of the year entails a heavy expenditure for fuel with which the foreign maker is not obliged to reckon, to say nothing of the fact that the cost of coal in Canada is considerably greater than it is in Great Britain.

Owing to extra investments necessary in a carpet plant the value discounts for depreciation are at least fifty per cent. in excess of what they are in Great Britain and the other older manufacturing countries.

Wages in Canada for the ordinary factory help amount to about double of what they are in Great Britain and in Germany. To retain competent men in a carpet factory in

Canada they must receive wages as high as those paid in the United States.

Bank charges are less in the older countries than in Canada, so also to a much greater extent is interest on loans, cash discounts on sales, etc. In respect of these alone Canada is found to be laboring under a disadvantage of from two and a half to four per cent.

Interest costs in Canada are considerably greater than in any of the countries competing in our market for the reasons, first, that the rates themselves are higher; and second, that the amounts necessarily invested for the establishment of buildings and plants are at least fifty per cent. greater in Canada than are the costs of similar plants abroad.

Production.—In the great manufacturing countries, where the industry is old and the home market is large, no factory is obliged to produce carpets of more than one class, and even then but a very few numbers in that class. In Canada, however, it is necessary not only to manufacture many lines, but many varieties in each line, and it consequently follows that stocks of very many kinds of raw materials have not only to be kept on hand, but constantly in process of manufacture, and this in turn means more building, more handling, more machinery, and naturally the investment of more capital.

And last, but by no means least, of the handicaps which hamper the growth of the carpet industry in Canada, is the dumping evil, the effects of which are so ruinous to every branch of the manufacturing interest in a young country. It is unnecessary to speak of the number and varieties of the ways in which the intention of legislation in this regard has and is being frustrated in order that shoddy products, "seconds", and surplus stocks of goods of *passé* styles are loaded upon the Canadian market to the detriment of the honest industry of the country. In carpet making, the would-be dumpers of Europe are excluded from the United States through effective tariff protection, and while only Canada and Australia remain possible fields in this respect, Canada, having the largest market, is naturally given the greatest attention.

As will be seen then, the carpet industry, while a great and many-sided benefit to the community, essentially a naturally so-called "legitimate" industry of the country, a direct and powerful assistant to Canada's other great branch of national enterprise—farming—and from every point of view entitled to a foremost position in Canadian enterprise, has encountered and is encountering difficulties and drawbacks at every turn. Many, through the development of the industry itself, must automatically disappear, for by far the greatest and most deadly of its foes has, since its inception, been the unfair and relentless war which foreign makers have been allowed to wage, unchecked by legislative interference.

Although our rapid growth along manufacturing lines is commonly attributed to a general prosperity created largely by agricultural successes and other like matters, it is not so generally understood to what extent the manufactories of this country are themselves influencing and promoting that general prosperity. A factory is, in this respect, the most valuable asset that this or any country can possess. The investor in foreign bonds and debentures, while spending his "interest" is otherwise no employer of labor. The investor in mortgages is a little better as his capital has increased the value of property beside giving a small employment to labor. The farmer is still better, as he not only invests his money in Canadian lands, but he employs a greater number of Canadian workmen. The manufacturer, however, contributes to the livelihood of workers in a multitude of trades and professions, increases the value of property, is the mainstay and chief reason for the existence of our railway systems, gives a permanent market for the products of the farm, insures good prices for produce, develops the intelligence and ingenuity of the people of many branches of trades and professions, and withal maintains many times as many high salaried people in permanent positions as do all the other employers of the country combined.