

THE
WOOLLEN
INDUSTRY
IN
CANADA

—BY—

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THE MAINSTAY OF MANY VILLAGES.

NEARLY three hundred small towns and villages in Canada have woollen industries, which in many cases are their mainstay, giving employment to hundreds of workmen, who buy all the necessaries of life from the local merchants and the farmers of the surrounding country. Unless the tariff on woollen goods is increased many factories will be forced to close, causing ruin to thousands of homes and blighting the prospects of many thriving villages. Doctors, lawyers and other professional men, as well as the local tradesmen would be seriously affected by so many people being thrown out of employment. The circulation of the local newspapers would fall off and the ruin of the tradespeople would take away the most profitable source of newspaper advertising. The banks in many small places would be withdrawn for want of business. The farmers who now find a profitable market for many of their products in these

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small towns and villages would have to send everything they produce to distant markets, paying high railway freights thereon in many cases. In the little town of Paris, Ont., for example, one woollen manufacturing company employs 800 people. Imagine the consternation in that town if such a concern should close, throwing all its employees out of work ! On the other hand consider what would be the effect upon the prosperity of that town if owing to increased protection the capacity of the mill should be doubled !

THE WOOLLEN INDUSTRY IN CANADA,

OF all great Canadian factory industries probably the manufacture of cheese most affects the farmers, but the woollen industry follows very closely. Both cheese making and woollen manufacture were formerly farmhouse industries in Canada, but the latter was the first to be transplanted. The first process transferred from the farmhouse to the factory was the carding of the wool. Carding mills were established at a very early period in the history of this country. In the year 1818 Smith Griffin, one of the United Empire Loyalists, had in full operation at Smithville, in Lincoln County, a flour mill, a saw mill, and a carding and fulling mill. The stone dam he built to secure the power still remains in good condition, but the mills have long since passed away. The farmers brought their wool to the carding mill to have it carded and then took it home to their wives to spin into yarn. It was then woven on farmhouse hand looms and taken back to the mill for the fulling, dyeing and finishing processes.

ONTARIO'S FIRST FACTORY WOOLLENS

Probably the first factory woollens made in Ontario were manufactured in a mill established by Hon. James Crooks, in West Flamboro, about the year 1827. In 1832,

E. C. Griffin, a son of Smith Griffin, built a woollen mill at Waterdown, and in 1835 he was manufacturing there a variety of cloths, flannels, blankets and other woollen goods. George D. Griffin succeeded his father, E. C. Griffin in the ownership of this factory, and it continued in operation until 1850, when it was destroyed by fire. About the same time that the Waterdown factory was built, Hon. Mr. Street established a woollen factory close to the sulphur springs between Niagara Falls and Chippewa, using power from the Niagara River, and another factory was established about six miles south of St. Catharines by Russell Rich. Between 1835 and 1860 woollen mills were established in about fifty different towns and villages of Ontario, scattered throughout the province. The early history of the industry in the other provinces was much the same.

From such small beginnings the manufacture of Canadian woollens has gradually developed so that there are now nearly three hundred woollen factories in the Dominion, giving direct employment to from 10,000 to 12,000 people, and the capital invested in the industry amounts to between twelve and fifteen million dollars.

FINE GOODS MADE IN CANADA

If the farmers and their wives who prose-

cuted this industry in their homes in the early part of the century were alive now and could go through the woollen mills of Canada, they would be astonished at the revolution which has taken place in the industry and the perfection of the machinery for carding, combing, spinning, weaving, knitting and all the other processes, for some of the best equipped woollen mills in the world to-day belong to Canada, the machinery being thoroughly up to date. They would be surprised, too, at the great variety of goods manufactured and the fine quality of many of the articles produced. But it is probable that if every man and woman now living in Canada could walk through the same factories and inspect the goods produced in them the majority of the visitors would be almost as much surprised at the character of these articles as their ancestors would be, for few Canadians have any idea that such fine woollens are produced in Canada. The term "Made in Canada" has quite a new meaning to anyone who has had the privilege of inspecting a number of modern Canadian woollen mills. It may be said: "Can not these goods be seen in the retail stores throughout Canada?" They can be seen in many stores, but unfortunately they are not always displayed as Canadian goods. They are too often sold as

Scotch or English, and the buyer wonders why such fine goods cannot be made in Canada.

THE BEST MODERN MACHINERY

The leading Canadian woollen factories not only have the very best modern machinery, but they draw upon the whole world for fine wools, and the long period during which the industry has been developing in Canada has produced a class of skilled workmen who know how to make the best use of the machinery and the wool, so that no one need be ashamed of wearing Canadian cloths or Canadian knitted goods. But this does not mean that all Canadian woollens are of the best quality. In Canada, as in other countries, it is necessary to produce goods to suit all kinds of tastes and every size of purse, so sometimes in the same factory there may be seen goods made of the very finest wools piled up beside coarse and cheap fabrics. Salesmen have no hesitation in calling the coarser fabrics Canadian, but many of them imagine that it pays better to label the finer qualities as imported. There would soon be a different story to tell if every customer would demand goods "made in Canada."

EXTENSIVE IMPORTATIONS

However, it is not the selling of Canadian goods as imported that causes our manu-

facturers most anxiety, but the extensive importations of real English, Scotch and German goods that are no better than Canadian goods, yet are sold in preference to the products of the home factories in almost every dry goods store in Canada. This is due largely to the preferential tariff by which the protection against British goods was reduced $33\frac{1}{3}\%$. This preference not only opens the door wide for British goods, but affords opportunities for the manufactures of Germany and other countries of Europe to fraudulently come in. Our manufacturers complain that goods made in Germany and Belgium are shipped to England in large bales, cut into short lengths, rolled on an English board, and then brought into Canada as British goods, getting the advantage of the preference, although not five per cent. of British labor has been put upon them.

The importations of woollen goods during the last six years have been valued as follows:

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1897..... | \$ 7,016,097 |
| 1898..... | 8,133,938 |
| 1899..... | 9,716,188 |
| 1900..... | 9,801,585 |
| 1901..... | 9,944,805 |
| 1902..... | 10,949,909 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total... .. | \$55,562,512 |

Thus nearly fifty-six million dollars of Canadian money has been sent across the

ocean during the last six years to pay for woollen goods, most of which could have been made just as well in Canada, giving employment to Canadian labor and benefiting every branch of trade.

COMPETITION OF IMPORTED SHODDY

The manufacturers say that the most serious competition comes from cheap goods beautifully got up but made of the most inferior stuff, being mostly composed of cotton thread filled with shoddy and waste woven by expert workmen so that the material looks well and feels soft and pliable, but has absolutely no wearing qualities.

CANADIAN FACTORIES LOSING MONEY

The past six years have probably been the most prosperous period the world has ever known, and Canadian manufacturing industries in general have shared in that prosperity to a great extent, but the Canadian woollen industry has had a struggle for existence owing to the keen competition of imported goods. Some of the factories have been obliged to close down, some have been run at a loss, and very few of them have made any money during the last six years. People are apt to be incredulous when told that a manufacturer continues to run his factory at a loss. They say: "If he were losing money he would surely shut down." Yet it

is true that a number of Canadian woollen manufacturers are losing money while keeping their factories in operation. Why don't they shut down at once, then? Because having a large amount of capital invested in the industry they do not wish to abandon it without some effort to secure just consideration of their claims for protection. "Why not shut down temporarily?" someone asks. "Would not that be the most effective way of drawing public attention to the necessity for protection?" The answer is that if the Canadian factories shut down, the skilled workmen would quickly drift to the United States, and it would be most difficult to bring them together again. Then it would be most injurious to the delicate, high-priced machinery of a modern woollen mill to stand idle even for a short time. Rust and dust very quickly damage such machinery. The woollen manufacturers believe that the Government will soon give a favorable response to their appeal for protection, and so they keep their factories running at a loss. They have presented their case in a very forcible manner. Their arguments may be briefly summarized as follows :

PROTECTION OF THREE INDUSTRIES

At present Canadian woollens have only $23\frac{1}{3}\%$ tariff protection against their most

dangerous competitors. Against the same competition the woollen manufacturers of the United States have from 60% to 150% protection, although the United States market is itself very extensive, affording scope for specialization which Canadian woollen mills do not enjoy. They point out that in this country each branch of woollen manufacturing may be said to comprise at least three important industries which in England are usually conducted separately, viz.: (a) the scouring and mixing of the wool and its manufacture into yarn; (b) the manufacture of the yarn into whatever product is desired; (c) the dyeing and finishing processes. Thus if a duty of from 30 to 35 per cent were placed on the finished product it would actually mean the protection of three industries. The Canadian manufacturers do not ask for such high protection against British woollens as the United States woollen industries enjoy. Recognizing that it is a settled policy of the Government to maintain a preferential tariff in favor of British goods, they do not ask for the abolition of the preference. They propose that the general tariff shall be so increased that when the British preference of $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ is allowed, Canadian woollens will still have from 30 to 35% protection against English and Scotch woollens instead of $23\frac{1}{3}\%$ as they have now.

However, they would like to see more strict provisions, to guard against the fraudulent importation of German and Belgian goods through British channels.

EQUIPMENT UP-TO-DATE

Some of the newspapers having alleged that if the machinery of the Canadian woollen mills were thoroughly up to date no more protection would be required, the manufacturers reply that while they will not contend that every woollen mill in Canada is equipped as it should be, Canadian woollen mills generally compare favorably with those of England and the United States in equipment, having the latest improvements in American, English and German machinery. The manufacturers point out that the cost of manufacture is necessarily higher in Canada than in England and Germany for a variety of reasons. The raw materials cost more; the wages are much higher; the buildings and machinery are more costly; fuel is more expensive, and owing to the rigorous climate it is necessary to use much more of it; the rate of interest is fully two per cent. higher both on the original investment and on the constant banking accommodation required in running the business; and the restricted market necessitates the production of a great variety of lines in one

mill and frequent changes of machinery, whereas the English and German mills with a large market can run steadily on a few staple lines, thus greatly reducing the cost of production, and it is easy to understand that as every yard of imported woollens sold in Canada decreases the demand for the products of the Canadian mills, the extensive importations resulting from the preferential tariff must materially increase the cost of production.

WAGES HIGH IN CANADA

The manager of a Canadian knitting mill, after visiting the leading factories in the same line in England and Germany, prepared a statement comparing the wages actually paid in his own mill with those paid in English and German mills. - The figures are as follows :—

DAILY WAGE ROLL.

| Employees. | Canadian mill. | English mill. | German mill. |
|------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 95 men | \$155 75 | \$99.75 | \$71 25 |
| 125 women | 118 75 | 93.75 | 62.50 |
| 66 girls | 39 60 | 33.00 | 24.75 |
| 40 boys | 24.00 | 20 00 | 16.80 |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | \$339.10 | \$246.50 | \$175.30 |

WAGES PAID IN 300 DAYS.

| | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Canadian mill. | English mill. | German mill. |
| \$101,730 | \$73,950 | \$52,590 |

It will be seen that in the one item of wages the Canadian mill is at a disadvantage of \$27,780 when competing with the English mill, and at a disadvantage of \$49,140 in competition with the German mill. The German manufacturer has a decided advantage over the British manufacturer in the matter of wages. This is one reason why the British market is being flooded with German goods and the words "made in Germany" have become hateful to the British workman.

Knitting is only one branch of the Canadian woollen industry, but the disparity of wages between Canada and its competitors across the sea is fully as great in the other branches of the industry. The Canadian manufacturer cannot reduce the wages of his employees or they will leave for the United States, where all classes of workmen are well protected against the cheap labor of Europe.

FEARS FOR THE FUTURE

The manufacturers who are now running at a loss cannot long continue to do so, and even those who are making both ends meet during this time of prosperity are looking forward with apprehension to the next period of world-wide depression when Canada may be made the slaughter market for woollens.

The free trader of course says: "If the manufacture of woollens is carried on in Canada under such disadvantages it would be better to abolish the duties altogether, allow the industry to die a natural death, and buy all our woollens from Britain or Germany."

CONSUMER WOULD PAY MORE

If every Canadian woollen factory were wiped out of existence, the Canadian consumer would probably pay more for his goods than he does to-day. The profits would be divided between the foreign manufacturer and the importer. The operation of nearly three hundred Canadian factories has a very important effect in keeping down the price of imported woollens. There is no telling what price the importers would make the Canadian consumers pay if all the woollen factories of the Dominion were shut down. But even if the consuming population could get cheaper woollens by driving the woollen manufacturers and their employees out of the country, the people at large would lose far more than they would gain. The greatest sufferers would be the numerous small towns and villages in which the woollen factories are located and the farmers of the surrounding country, but every section of the community would feel the loss of the

money that is put in circulation by these industries.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF WOOL

To understand just what effect the extinction of this great industry would have upon the country at large, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the sources from which the raw materials are obtained, the nature of the multifarious processes of manufacture and the general conditions of the trade.

The most important factor in woollen manufacture is, of course, the wool. The great difference in the wool of different sheep depends in general upon their descent, the crossing of breeds, climate, food, manner of living, and among individual animals of the same breed upon age and sex. The sheep which produces the finest wool has very greasy flesh, which is of little use except to be boiled down for tallow. The fine wool, absorbing oil from the flesh, is always very much more greasy than the coarse wool. The distinction between fine wool sheep and mutton sheep is not so marked as formerly, for in recent years an effort has been made by crossing breeds to secure moderately fine wool from sheep that will also produce good mutton. In New Zealand especially this cross-breeding has been successful, and as a

result the price of wool is much lower than it was some years ago. Softness of fibre does not depend upon fineness. Two samples of wool of equal fineness will sometimes differ greatly in the quality of softness, which has been defined as "a peculiar feel approaching to that of silk or down" and adds greatly to the value of the wool. The wool of the same animal differs much on the various parts of the body.

WOOLLENS AND WORSTEDS

Manufactured woollens are divided into two great classes, known respectively as woollens and worsteds. For the former short staple wools possessing good felting properties and known as carding wools are used. Worsted goods never undergo the felting process. They are made from long-staple wools known as combing wools because they are prepared for spinning by a process called combing, designed to stretch the fibres and lay them parallel with each other.

BLENDING WOOLS

For different purposes the manufacturer requires wools of various degrees of fineness and softness, and often the best results are obtained by blending different wools to

gether. There is no country in the world where the manufacturer depends entirely upon native wools. The Canadian manufacturer, like the British manufacturer, imports every variety of wool from all the countries where wool is grown, the largest supplies being obtained from Australia and New Zealand. The wool is not always imported direct. It sometimes comes to Canada by way of England, and there are generally extra charges for freight, insurance and exchange.

Notwithstanding the extensive importations of wools large quantities of Canadian wools are used.

TO HELP CANADIAN WOOL GROWERS

What would help the Canadian wool grower more than anything else would be the exclusion by high protective duties of the cheaper grades of imported woollens. These are the goods that come most directly into competition with fabrics made from Canadian wool. Such cheap goods include not only woollens manufactured from coarse wools, but many fabrics made of shoddy, which, although presenting a fine appearance, have very poor wearing qualities. The farmer needs to be protected against such shoddy fabrics, not only because their importation lessens the demand for Canadian wools, but

also because it is a waste of money to buy such deceptive goods. The most effective form of protection against shoddy would be by means of specific duties, as ad valorem duties have very little effect in excluding such trash.

GOOD WOOL FROM NOVA SCOTIA

Perhaps the best wool produced in Canada is that which comes from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The grade known as Halifax wool has a high reputation, and is said to be equal, if not superior in strength of fibre and softness to any other wool in the world of the same grade of fineness. The wools of Ontario and Quebec are very suitable for coarse underwear, the coarser cloths, flannels and blankets. The lustrous combing wools of this province are particularly well adapted for braids and for making bright effects in ladies' dress goods. For such purposes they are quite extensively exported to the United States, but there is a duty to pay. The United States mills buy from Canada only wools suited for combing purposes, and the wool must be strictly graded before they take it, as they cannot afford to pay duty on anything but the special sort they require. If the Canadian manufacturers had sufficient protection the production of ladies' dress goods in Canada would create a

large home demand for this wool and the farmer could get a better price for his wool than he can get from United States buyers who have to pay the duty. A factory for the production of this class of goods was established in Hespeler some years ago, but the protection was insufficient, and the factory was moved to the United States, where it became a great financial success. That factory is now importing combing wool from Canada and paying the duty on it. While located in Hespeler the manager secured seven samples of English and Scotch cloths of the same class as he produced, and placing with them several samples of his own manufacture, sent the fourteen samples together to a leading Montreal importer without explaining that some of the samples were imported, and asked him to pick out the best seven. The Montreal importer picked out the seven samples of Canadian make and sent them back to Hespeler, saying they were the best.

GOOD WOOL FROM ALBERTA

Considerable quantities of wool of fairly good quality are now being produced in the ranching country of Alberta near the foothills of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. A leading woollen manufacturer of Ontario said he believed that with careful breeding a very

good quality of wool might be produced in that section of the Dominion. The flocks are rapidly increasing, and unless there is a great extension of the Canadian woollen industry, the far-western farmers will have to seek a foreign market for their wool. There are great beds of coal and many streams of swift running water near that ranching country, so that as the Northwest increases in population extensive woollen industries will be established there if adequate protection is given. Thus the wool growers of Alberta will have a market close at hand for their wool which will pay them far better than sending it great distances over rail and water to the market of Britain, where it must compete with wool from all quarters of the world.

WOOL FOR CARPET YARNS

Canadian wools are particularly well adapted for the manufacture of carpet yarns. A Canadian carpet manufacturer said the other day that Canadian wools were the best in the world for this purpose. If all the carpets now imported were made in Canada it would mean a large increase in the demand for Canadian wool. The carpet factories also use considerable quantities of hair from goats, cattle and other animals. A large demand for the hair of cattle would,

of course, increase the value of every animal in the farm yard. It is used together with wool in making carpets, and not only improves the wearing qualities, but gives spring to the carpets. Unfortunately there is grave danger that most of the Canadian carpet factories already established may be crushed out of existence owing to the wholesale importation of carpets under the preferential tariff.

FLEECE WOOL AND PULLED WOOL

The wool comes to the manufacturer in two distinct forms, known as fleece wool and pulled wool. The former is obtained from the annual shearing, all the wool from one sheep remaining in a connected mass being known as the fleece. The pulled wool is taken from the skins of slaughtered sheep. Much of the pulled wool used in Canada comes from the south of France, where wool pulling is an important industry, sheep's hides being brought there from many countries. This pulled wool is used extensively in making underwear, as the shrinking qualities are to a considerable extent removed by the pulling process

EXPENSIVE MACHINERY

In all the branches of the Canadian woollen industry the factories are equipped with most

expensive machinery. The writer was particularly interested in the marvellously complete equipment of a large Canadian carpet factory. This factory would compare favorably with any in America, not only in respect to machinery, but also as regards the perfection of the carpets and rugs produced in beauty of design and durability. The manager, after showing the visitor his great stocks of raw materials, said proudly, "Not one pound of shoddy is used in this factory."
