

Extracts from the REPORT of the Committee on Manufactures, to Congress, on the petitions and memorials respecting an increase of duties on imports, Jan. 31, 1828.

[After reciting the circumstances, &c. under which the Committee were appointed and required to act, the Report proceeds:—]

They have examined little short of thirty witnesses, and the testimony of each, hastily written out by way of question and answer, and annexed to this report, will show what facts have been collected by the examination, as well as the extent of the labor which the committee have performed. The testimony of each witness, after it was taken, has been carefully read over with him, and so corrected as to meet the full assent of the witness as to its accuracy.

The leading subjects presented to the committee for additional protection, are iron and several manufactures of it, wool and its fabrics, hemp and some of the manufactures from it, flax and its manufactures, domestic distilled spirits from grain, particular descriptions of glass, and fine and printed cottons. Upon all these subjects, witnesses have been examined, and their testimony, herewith reported, comprises the evidence, upon each subject, which the committee have taken under the resolution of the House, and embodies most of the information upon which they have acted in determining the features of the bill which they have agreed upon.

The first subject which will be found in the bill, is that of iron, and considering the importance of the article, as one of both national and individual necessity, the changes in the present rates of duty are comparatively very light. An increase upon "iron in bars, not manufactured, in whole, or in part, by rolling," of from ninety cents upon 112 pounds, to one cent per pound; upon "iron in bars, manufactured in whole or in part by rolling," of \$7 per ton of 2240 pounds; and upon "pig iron," of 12 1-2 cents per 112 pounds, beyond the present rates of duty; are the most material changes upon this article.

The next subject in order, is that of wool and woollens. To these subjects the greater part of the testimony of the witnesses has been directed, and the Committee have used every effort in their power to obtain precise information as to the facts as they do actually exist in relation to the interests both of the wool grower and the manufacturer of wool. The real importance of these subjects to those sections of the country where wool is grown, and in which the manufactories are located, the feeling which has for some time agitated the public mind throughout the whole country, in relation, on the one side, to the necessity of further protection to them, and, on the other side, to the injurious effects which such a measure would have upon the purchasers of woollen fabrics, have all conspired to induce this exertion on the part of the Committee.

In relation to unmanufactured wool of domestic growth, the Committee consider it to be fully proved that the present prices, in our markets, are unusually low, and the sales very dull; and that these effects are produced by the combined influence of the large importations of foreign woollen goods. Contrary to the opinions of some of the witnesses, the committee are strongly convinced that the provision of the present law, permitting the introduction of foreign wool, costing not exceeding 10 cents per pound in the foreign market, at the almost nominal duty of 15 per cent. ad valorem, does admit wool, paying this duty, and invoiced at and below this price, which, in quality and use, materially conflicts with the common native wool of this country.

This opinion is strongly corroborated by the presentation, by one of the witnesses to the committee, of five different specimens of foreign wool, imported into, and during the last Fall selling in, the Boston market, at 6 cents to 14 cents per pound.

The following positions, as relating to the manufacture of woollen goods, the committee believe themselves warranted in deducing, from the evidence they have taken, and they depend upon the evidence and opinions of the witnesses for the soundness of them:

1st. That the manufacture of woollen goods in this country, is, at this time, a business laboring under severe depressions, and attended with loss more severe upon the finer qualities.

2d. That these depressions are owing, in a very great degree, to the excessive and irregular importations of foreign woollen goods into our markets: thus causing a fluctuation in and an uncertainty of price for those goods, more injurious to the American manufacturer than even the depression of price which these importations produce.

3d. The difference between the prices of wool, of the same quality, in this country and in England, is, at the present time, about fifty per cent. in favor of the latter country.

4th. That the cost of the raw wool in this country is about one-half of the cost of the fabric, when prepared for the market, as a general rule applying to most kinds of cloths.

5th. That, if the cost of the wool and the cost of the foreign materials used for dyeing, were the same in both countries, the process of manufacturing the wool into cloth, fitted for

the market, can be performed as cheap in this country as it can be in England.

6th. That the present duty upon woollen goods does not furnish the desired protection, and that no reasonable duty can be effectual, unless it be a specific square yard, instead of an ad valorem duty.

The propositions of the committee as to the alteration and increase of duties upon woollens, generally, are as follows :

1st. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, shall not exceed 50 cents per square yard, a specific duty of 16 cents upon every square yard.

2d. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported shall exceed 50 cents per square yard, and shall not exceed \$1.00 per square yard, a specific duty of 40 cents upon every square yard.

3d. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which, at the place whence imported, shall exceed \$1 00 per square yard, and shall not exceed \$2 50 per square yard, a specific duty of \$1 00 upon every square yard.

4th. Upon all manufactures of wool, or of which wool shall be a component part, the actual value of which at the place whence imported shall exceed \$2 50 per square yard, and shall not exceed \$4 00 per square yard, shall be deemed to have cost \$4 00 per square yard, and, at such valuation, shall be charged with and pay a duty of 40 per centum ad valorem.

5th. Upon all manufactures of wool, &c. the actual value of which, at the place where imported, shall exceed \$ 4 per square yard, shall be charged with, and pay a duty of, 45 per centum ad valorem.

Hemp and flax, and some of the manufactures from them, have next claimed the consideration of the committee. The evidence which they have collected upon these subjects, though by no means voluminous, in their opinion, satisfactorily proves, that large sections of the country are capable of producing either kind of the raw material above mentioned, to any extent. So far as the committee have been able to learn, the State of Kentucky seems to have paid the most attention to the culture of hemp, and, at this time, to possess the most extensive manufactories of the article of any State in the Union ; while the States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey seem, as yet, to take the lead in the growing and manufacture of flax. Yet, there cannot be a doubt, but that the soil of either of these States, as well as of many, and, perhaps, most of the other States, is well adapted to the growth of either hemp or flax, and that they only need the consumption in duck, cordage, &c. of our extensive commerce, and of our growing Navy, to give to these branches of agriculture, an encouragement which would soon make the raw materials, articles, not of import, but of export, and would supply the wants of our own country with as cheap and as valuable a fabric as is now obtained from foreign hands. Indeed, if there are any articles, the produce of agricultural and manufacturing labor, which, more than others, would seem to claim the fostering care of Government, not as a matter of policy merely, but as a matter both of interest and independence, hemp and flax would seem peculiarly to belong to them.

The next subject in order, though not second in importance to the agricultural interests of the country, which has occupied the attention of the committee, in the draft of the bill they now submit to the House, is that of a further protection to the domestic spirits distilled from grain in the United States. And here the Committee feel bound to inform the House, that it is not with any view to benefit the manufacturer of this description of ardent spirits, that they have at all entertained the subject. It is the interest, and solely the interest, of the farmer who grows grain from which these spirits are distilled, which renders it a subject at all worthy of the consideration of Congress, as connected with the protection of the industry and substantial interests of the country. But, if the most extensive farming interests of these United States, the grain growing interests of almost every section of the country, are subjects of importance, then, surely, the protection of domestic spirits, distilled from grain, cannot be unimportant. For it is a fact, too well and too generally known to require a repetition by the Committee, that this manufacture has, for a number of years now last past, afforded almost the only market for the coarse grains in the interior of the country.

The subject of glass has also been proposed as a matter of examination before the committee, and two very intelligent witnesses, living in sections of country remote from each other, have been examined in relation to it. A reference to their testimony will show that the present protection to window glass, of smaller size than 10 by 14 inches, is abundant, and that most other descriptions of glass are in the same situation. In this these witnesses both agree, and they are both practically acquainted with the manufacture of various descriptions of the article. But one of the witnesses proves that the denominations of window glass exceeding 10 by 15 inches, is not sufficiently protected, and the committee have proposed an alteration in the present duties upon these sizes of window glass.

The only other material alteration which the committee have proposed in the existing laws regulating our duties upon imports, is an increase of the minimum upon cottons, from 30 cents, at which it now stands, to 35 cents. The object of this has been to reach a finer description of cotton cloths ; and, for the evidence upon which they have recommended this alteration, they refer the House to the testimony of the witnesses who have been examined upon the subject of cottons, herewith reported.