



## OUR ORIENTAL TRADE

### Chief of Bureau of Statistics Speaks of the Need of American Enterprise.

O. P. Austin, Chief of the Bureau of Statistics Department of Commerce and Labor, recently delivered an address on "Our Commercial Relations with the Orient," before the Portland (Me.) Economic Club. Mr. Austin began his address by saying that he welcomed this opportunity to discuss the subject of our commercial relations with the Orient, especially because of the statement now frequently being made that we are losing our hold upon the commerce of that part of the world. This assertion, that we are losing our share in the imports of the Oriental countries, is not, he said, sustained by an examination of their official records down to the end of 1908, the latest year for which complete statements of those countries are available.

While it is true that our records of exports to China and Japan do show a large fall in 1908 and 1909 when compared with 1905 and 1906, it must be remembered that the imports of Japan were abnormally large in 1905 because of requirements in carrying on her war with Russia and that she in 1905 increased her imports from the United States, her nearest source of supply, 125 per cent. over those of 1903, making a record of our exports to Japan in that year abnormally high. The reopening, in 1905 and 1906, of northern China, which had been closed to commerce during the war between China and Japan, made an equally large growth in the purchases of American merchandise for China, especially cotton goods, and our exports to China in 1905 were, like those to Japan, abnormally high. The excessive importation of American cottons into China in 1905 and 1906—an importation far in excess of the consuming power of her cotton goods market—almost suspended purchases of American cottons in 1907 and 1908, thus causing a great fall in the value of our total exports to that country.

Still another cause of the recent reduction in our exports to the Orient, especially those to China and Japan, is the large reduction in the purchasing power of those countries in 1908 and 1909. The financial depression which made its appearance in the United States in 1907 extended eastward around the world, reaching China and Japan in 1908 and 1909, and was followed by a large decline in their imports, those of China falling from \$349,000,000 in 1906 to \$254,000,000 in 1908, and those of Japan from \$246,000,000 in 1907 to less than \$200,000,000 in 1909, a fall in the case of China of about 30 per cent., and in the case of Japan about 20 per cent.

#### EUROPEAN VS. AMERICAN EFFORTS

About one-third of this total of two billion dollars' worth of Oriental imports is inter-Oriental, merchandise drawn by one Oriental country from another; but the remaining two-thirds, or about 1,400 million dollars, is imported from Occidental countries, chiefly Europe and America. Of this 1,400 million dollars' worth of Occidental merchandise imported by Oriental peoples, the United States supplies but about 6 per cent., while Europe supplies practically all of the remainder.