IMPROVEMENT IN THE SHOE TRADE.

When things are at their worst they begin to mend; so says an adage. We are pleased to be informed of signs of "mending" among the boot and shoe manufacturers and dealers of Canada, in respect of the terms upon which they will do their business. Much irregularity has prevailed, for example, in the arrangements between Quebec shoe manufacturers and their customers, who are found among the jobbers of the West. And whether the terms on which the makers sold shoes were unduly advantageous to the buyers thereof, it appears to be now decided that they were disadvantageous to the Quebec manufacturers.

Purchases of footwear, although nominally made at four months, were dated ahead. Then the discounts given by the manufacturer to jobber were found to be excessive, since purchasers who did not pay for their goods for four months or even more, received a "discount for cash," which was surely misnamed. These arrangements, it is now resolved, must cease; the restricted profits of the manufacturers, and their heavy losses by bad debts will not admit of any such looseness. Hence, the Quebec makers have agreed to insist on shorter terms of credit, and to cease dating forward. No discount will now be allowed on purchases unpaid at a longer period than ninety days. The rate of trade discount will be 6 per cent. for 30 days; 5 per cent. for 60 days; 4 per cent. for 90 days. The move is one in the right direction.

PORK PACKING.

The winter pork packers will commence the season's operations in a few days, and packers are now discussing the trade prospects. A difference of opinion exists as to the probable supply of hogs in the country. At the present time the number of hogs available for the purposes of packers is apparently limited, but there is said to be a large quantity of small hogs which should be ready for the market within a month's time. Values at present are high, and no doubt packers will curtail their operations to the supply of immediate requirements. No stock will be put aside for the future until prices have declined, or until the season has been well established at present rates. Stocks of last season's pack are well nigh exhausted, and for some time past heavy meats have been imported from the United States in large quantities. Canadians have found a good market in the United Kingdom for hams and bacons at remunerative prices. The pork products of this country are in favor with British consumers, as the following comparative quotations made by a London, England, house, Sept. 18th, will show:

Bacon—Canadian singed Wiltshire, heavy to light	58/	to	60/
" " Long rib, light weights	none.		
" " Cumberland cut, light weights	47/	to	49/
" American Clear bellies in salt, heavy to light	38/	"	39/
" " Rib in bellies	35/	"	36/
" " Cumberland cut	34/	"	38/
" " Short clear middles	30/	"	31/
Hams—Canadian long cut, light	54/	"	56/
" American cut, heavy to light	39/	"	44/

The situation in the United States is reviewed as follows by the Cincinnati *Price Current*, September 30th:—

At the close of seven months of the summer packing season the Western killings have reached a number not previously equalled in the eight months ending November 1. Last year the October killings were 1,500,000 hogs, and it is hardly likely the coming month will fall short of this number. This would mean a total of approximately 11,750,000 for the season, against 9,980,000 last year, which was the highest record. The situation in the South, under the influence of yellow fever conditions, has not lessened the interruptions to traffic, but to some extent such interference with distribution has been intensified. Otherwise the movement has been good, and export clearances of product for the week were large, of both lard and meats. Values of leading articles have had something of a declining tendency, and at the close Chicago prices for December, compared with a week ago, show a decline of 22½c. on pork, 20c. per 100 pounds on lard and 22½c. on short rib sides.

HOPS AND BREWERY SHARES.

A short crop of hops, partly by reason of a reduced acreage, and partly of blight, is having an effect not only upon the hop market, but upon the price of brewery shares in England. The annual report of Messrs. Wests, Jones & Co. predicts an advance in price for hops. They say that the plantations were early suffering from an attack of the aphis blight. The result is a moderate crop of about 175,000 cwts., consisting mainly of hops of an exceptionally good quality. The acreage on which this crop is grown shows an important reduction of 3,354 acres, the smallest acreage for nearly forty years past. The crop prospects on the continent, likewise, must show a considerable reduction, whilst in America the yield in the New York States is somewhat smaller.

The consumption of hops in England is placed at 700,000 hundredweights per annum, and the present home crop is estimated at 400,000. According to the London *Shareholder*, of 21st September, a Dublin writer attributes the recent decline in the value of Guinness ordinary shares to the reports respecting the hop crop and the likely substantial increase in price of this important constituent in their manufacture. The question is undoubtedly a serious one for most brewers, but less so for Messrs. Guinness than almost any other, says "L.S.D." In addition to the ample stock of hops, which from good crop years they are accustomed to hold, such a failure as is reported in the present season affects "bitter ale" brewers to a much more serious extent than brewers of stout, as the former require the finest quality. And it is the bitter ale brewers who are looking with most anxiety for trustworthy news of the hop market.

SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD PRODUCTION.

It will be remembered that the production of gold in the mines of the Rand, for July, was disappointing. That for August was better, he production of gold having amounted to 259,603 ounces in that month, compared with 242,479 ounces for the preceding month, and 213,418 ounces for the same month of last year. Last month's yield, therefore, shows an increase of 17,124 ounces over July, and of 46,185 ounces over August, 1896, while there is an improvement of t8,074 ounces upon the previous largest monthly aggregate obtained in June. Particulars of some of the mines are given in the London *Economist*, from which we gather that of the 17,124 ounces increase obtained in the past month over July, the Crown Deep contributed 5,496 ounces from its first "clean up," the Rietfontein "A" yield increased from 923 ounces in July, to 5,034; and the Glencairn, which resumed milling operations in July, with an output of 1,549 ounces, increased last month to 5,593 ounces, the three items amounting to 13,600 ounces. The other more important increases are those of 697 ounces in the May Consolidated, and 561 ounces in the Simmer and Jack.

INFORMATION ABOUT MINING.

A Vancouver paper of September 28th announces the return on that day of J. C. Keith from a visit to the Lardeau and Trout Lake districts. He reports a rich strike of pyrrhotite and galena in the Lardeau district, opposite the Halcyon Hot Springs. In some parts it resembles Rossland ore; in other parts there is fine galena. A good strike has been made on the Silver Cup, near Trout Lake. This property has been acquired, it is said, by the Horne-Payne syndicate, who have built a road to Trout Lake City from the mine.

A gold-bearing property in the Shoal Lake district of Northwestern Ontario has been sold at a good figure last week. The Rat Portage *News* says that the Monarch mine, owned by the Bullion Company, is sold to Toronto capitalists for $25,000. The Monarch is near the Mikado mine, and has several lodes, resembling Mikado ore. Some development has been done on the property in the way of stripping and sinking test pits, one of which is down to about 75 feet.

Advices of last week from Vancouver attribute to Mr. Haney, superintendent of construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, that Mr. Jaffray and Mr. Ternie, manager of the coal mines, have arranged to at once put in machinery for the coal mines. The railway will have connection with the mines as soon as they are opened, and Mr. Haney is straining every nerve to get the road through to Nelson soon.

The produce of Rossland, Slocan, and Nelson mines in 1897 up to September 25th, is thus summed up by the Nelson *Miner*: Slocan via Kaslo, 23,066 tons ore; Slocan via Nakusp, 4,090 tons; Rossland via Northport, 9,327¾ tons; Rossland via Nelson, 52 tons; aggregate of ore, 36,535¾ tons. Total value $2,599,130, equal to an average of $71.13 per ton. There was shipped from the Hall Mines smelter at