

## COMMERCIAL SUMMARY.

The French are beginning to make artificial silk from wood pulp. The pulp is by chemical treatment reduced to a viscous substance from which the silk thread is produced. Silk goods have already been made from it, and though there are yet some difficulties to be overcome, it is believed that silks produced by the new process will figure largely in the commercial world.

The railway statistics of Canada for 1892 show that during that year 233 persons were killed in the Dominion as follows: Falling from cars or engines, twenty-seven; getting on or off trains in motion, twenty; at work in making up trains, five; coupling cars, ten; collisions and derailments, twenty-two; striking bridges, two; walking or being on track, eighty-nine; explosions, one; other causes, fifty-seven. Total, 233.

According to the bulletin issued by the Ontario Bureau of Industries dealing with the crops and live stock of the province, the winter, on the whole, has been favorable to fall wheat, though smothering by too much snow in some quarters is reported. The prospects are reported as above the average. Cattle suffered more or less from exposure. Spring work is reported late in the western part of the province owing to the weather.

The estimated quantity of standing timber in British Columbia is something over 1,000,000,000,000, feet. Of the 190,000,000 acres in British Columbia 170,000,000 are put down by the Canadian Pacific Railway as timber and grazing lands. Computing half of this area as either grazing or inaccessible land and lumping the balance off at the very low average of 15,000 feet to the acre the unauthentic estimate of 1,275,000,000,000 is reached.

Mr. Edward Atkinson, of Boston, the well known authority, estimates that the fire loss in the United States for 1893 will reach \$150,000,000. As the management expenses of insurance companies will be about \$65,000,000 more, and the cost of maintaining fire departments about \$35,000,000, he places the total cost to the community on account of fires at \$250,000,000, a tax equal to between ten and twenty per cent. of the whole net profits of the country for a year.

The staple trade of Belfast is quiet. Prices are still getting firmer, and the prevalent opinion exists that raw flax will be scarce and dearer before the next season's crop has been reached. Fine sets of Ballymenas are not in high demand, but white linens are growing firm. There are now commencing to arrive some of the United States buyers, with instructions for the autumn requirements. Canadian business has somewhat improved. Other markets are unchanged, the home trade showing no visible improvement.

Speaking of the cattle export trade prospects for the present season, the *Canadian Trade Review* expresses the opinion that it will, this year, be cautiously conducted and restricted in volume. The trade, it says, is trembling upon the verge of a radical change, and, until the direc-

tion of the new trade is ascertained, shippers will not act on so large a scale as they have done heretofore. Apart from the en bargo, the dead meat trade is assuming proportions not to be despised, and this, it seems to think, will be considerably increased this year.

Now that the members of the Board of Trade have got into their new quarters, it is to be expected, that with their better accommodations they will find greater facilities for talking over business matters which concern them all in connection with which reforms are required. Among these are, as we have frequently pointed out, an efficient Dominion Insolvency Act, which shall have among others the following features as insisted upon by the Board of Trade, of Montreal: Complete doing away with preferences; equitable distribution of the assets of all insolvent estates; a reasonable discharge clause for honest debtors; and no class of official assignees.

In the last report of the factory inspectors of New York, the fact is brought out that not only the cheaper grades of clothing, but nearly all the better kinds, are made in the tenement house workshops of that city—in other words, by the sweating system. Of 350 wholesale manufacturers of clothing in New York, only 10 do not get work done by sweaters. The sweating system is carried on to a not inconsiderable extent even in Canada, as can be shown in cities like Montreal and Toronto, and it has increased especially in the province of Quebec in the last ten years. One of the functions of the new labor bureau will be to see to it that the sweating system does not get a footing here.

The late sealing season has been most unfortunate for Newfoundlanders. The estimated catch is short of 100,000 seals, which is not one-third of the average yield. Last year, 350,000 seals were taken, and, in 1891, still more, while, in some years, the number of seals killed has exceeded 500,000. Twenty-two steamers went to the resorts this spring. Of these, nineteen had returned at last advices, and seventeen were either without cargo, or had insignificant catches. The harp seals, which furnish the best quality of fur, escaped altogether, and none of the ships got any. All the furs of the fleet are hood seals. Some 6,000 men are employed in this industry, and it is feared that this will completely paralyze trade in the colony.

The *Monetary Times* thus refers to the recent establishment in Victoria of a Retailers' Credit Agency. "An unexpectedly large number of business men came together in Victoria on April 17th, in order to effect a combination of the credit-giving business men of Victoria. The system of the Merchants' Retail Commercial Agency of Chicago was adopted and a branch of that agency organized. By this method every delinquent debtor is given a fair opportunity to be heard. A list of the unsettled claims is furnished to each member periodically after debtors have been notified, and each member refuses credit to all delinquents who will take no steps toward adjustment of their obligations. The debtor is re-instated when he settles up, and every member is bound to notify the agency of the adjustment of a claim."

The *Iroquois News*, a Conservative paper, charges that though the contractor who had the contract for dredging the channel at the Galops rapids, St. Lawrence river, did not complete his work, he has received his money from the government, amounting to more than \$360,000. It adds that it believes "that the day will come when the Connolly-McGreery scandal will pale into significance beside the greater one that is just rising into sight on the jobbery horizon. Connollys anyway always did their work well." It seems that the channel was to be dredged to a uniform depth of 11 feet, but owners of vessels say there is no such depth in places, and the *News* affirms that vessels drawing only 11 feet of water have grounded in the channel. Mr. Gilbert, the contractor, has replied that the government engineer has approved his work. Here is surely an occasion for the most thorough investigation.

Recently the Toronto and London Commercial Travelers' Associations represented to the Ontario government that the closets and lavatories, as well as the apartments, in a large proportion of the hotels of the province are in an unsanitary and sometimes filthy condition, and asked that the license inspectors be instructed to see that reforms are made by the hotel keepers. They also complained of the sample rooms being badly lighted and heated. Filthy closets, unsanitary kitchens and ill-ventilated or unventilated rooms are the disgrace of a large proportion of hotels throughout Canada, and the trouble is not confined to one province or to village and third rate city hotels, but to very many houses who claim to be the best in their town. The government of Ontario at once took up the question of the sanitary conditions of the hotels, and issued instructions to the license inspectors to see that the evils be remedied. The possibility of a visit of cholera this summer renders the case urgent, and if it were possible for some such action to be taken here a large section of the country would be benefited.

The *Canadian Journal of Fabrics* complacently makes the following remarks: "Chinamen are gradually taking the place of whites as help in the woollen mills of California and adjoining states, and one superintendent praises them highly. The Chinese have for some time been employed in the western boot and shoe factories with great success, but the adoption of that class of labor in the textile trades is an innovation, and its extension will be watched with interest, although that interest may not be very sympathetic on the part of mill hands." Our contemporary, manifestly, is in ignorance of the Chinese question in all its repulsive and disadvantageous features, and has apparently yet to learn that there are others than the vital labor interests concerned which, upon this Pacific coast, strongly protest against the introduction of Chinese who, with their exclusive characteristics and relations, have no *raison d'être* in countries where it is possible to do without them, there being countries other than white men's in which there is yet plenty of room for them and with, at the same time, more congenial associations.