

**REFORM NOW.**

NO position in the world requires a greater amount of ability and prudence than that of the merchant. No profession demands closer attention and more constant supervision, and in none is there so large an amount of apprehension and anxiety. The career of the merchant is essentially a game of skill. Without ability it is almost impossible he should succeed, and without the strictest attention to details, there is no hope of success. Yet how futile does it seem that a merchant should labour the year round to accumulate profits, and find at the end of the year that the balance to his credit is greatly lessened by bad debts. He labours to no purpose for the extension of his business if the result of increased exertions is counterbalanced by increased losses. There is no department of business which requires greater watchfulness, and none in which there is greater liability to failure, than in granting credits. The firm that continuously assumes hazardous accounts is certain to collapse. The experience has been, and always will be, that no matter how profitable may be the prices obtained, they will never compensate for improper risks. Besides the prospect of positive loss from weak accounts, the anxiety and increased exertion which they necessitate is most trying.

Any rapid extension of trade is sure to result in the creation of a number of this class of accounts. This was especially the case in Canada from 1860 to 1863, the rapidity with which new establishments sprung up all over Canada West was startling. There was hardly a locality in which the legitimate trade was not divided and subdivided by a number of new establishments in the proportion of three to one, as compared with even the palmy days of '61. The consequence was an amount of competition and reckless trading which was most destructive of all profits and very generally disastrous. We believe the merchants of Montreal were a good deal to blame for this condition of things. A very great increase had taken place in the imports at this point, and more, the usual pressure was made to sell goods; and, we fear, not the greatest amount of discrimination was exercised in the choice of parties to whom sales were made. Other cities were not quite blameless, however, and the general result could not fail to be unsatisfactory. Unquestionably the depression of the past year was greatly enhanced by the existence of a large number of unnecessary and unprofitable establishments throughout the country, and there is no doubt that next to the deficient crops, the failure of this class of traders has largely augmented the misfortunes of the year. A new season is now upon us. We have lived through a most critical period in the commercial history of the country, and we think it is most important that an improved system of transacting business should be adopted. If it is a fact that risky accounts are dangerous, is it not wise to avoid them? Should the experience of the past three years be lost upon our importers? We are now receiving an amount of imports which will require no very great exertion to place in profitable and safe hands, and it appears to us very desirable that more than the ordinary care should be exercised in discriminating to whom these should be sold. There can be no excuse whatever for assuming undue risks; and if the trade of the country is ever to be placed on a proper and legitimate footing, there never was a period when so much could be accomplished toward that end as now. Every importer has an interest in the success of the legitimate and honest retail trader, and if he encourages the unworthy and unnecessary dealers by unwise credit, he effectually prevents success to the more deserving. Men lacking alike capital, character and capacity, who may be successful in obtaining credits, act as financial lepers, and taint the commercial atmosphere in which they exist. With nothing to lose, and everything to gain, it is useless for the capable and honest trader to contend with them. A moral responsibility rests with every grantor of credit, and he who is in the habit of entrusting his goods to this class, deserves not only to make bad losses, but should be held up to the condemnation of the entire trade.

There will for the next few months be a great effort made on the part of the retailers to collect in their outstandings, and we believe it will result in the reduction of a large amount of their indebtedness to importers. Experience, however, teaches us to suspect that the amounts said to be due by farmers to store-keepers have been greatly exaggerated, and in not a few cases we fear it will be found that the surplus which apparently existed in outstandings has no existence at all. After the developments of the past

year, in seasonality, we are prepared to hear almost anything in the shape of misrepresentation and deceit by a certain class of traders; and our importers will do well to closely scan the statements submitted to them before granting new credits. It is a pretty safe rule that where doubt exists, the grantor of credit should take the benefit of the doubt; and if our importers will but pursue the conservative policy which so far, in this year has guided them, we cannot but think that the best results will follow.

**PRODUCE PROSPECTS.**

THE Department of Agriculture at Washington has just completed a statistical showing the condition of the crops in the United States as reported by its correspondents on the 1st of August. At that time the harvest had not been secured, but from the estimates made, a marked deficiency was apprehended as compared with 1864. The figures are as follows:—

Crop of 1864	bush	160,635,823
Estimates for 1865	.....	134,454,125
Decrease	..... bush.	26,211,698

The loss is as follows:—

In the New England and Middle States	bush	657,383
In Maryland and Delaware	.....	1,719,675
In Western and Northwestern States	.....	23,834,744
Total	bush	26,211,698

The Department has issued another circular calling for similar returns on the 1st of September, when, it is probable, information of a more definite character will be obtained. An attempt will also be made to ascertain the amount of old wheat in the country. If it should prove to be a fact that the crop of this year is even less than that of last, it may have a most important effect upon prices, especially in view of the existing condition of things in Europe. The last two or three steamers indicate a continual advance in bread-stuffs. In Liverpool, within ten days, wheat has got dearer nearly in twopenny a bushel, and in other places in proportion. In France also marked improvement has taken place. These circumstances imply an anticipated deficiency in the growing crops, which, if correct, will influence prices all over the world to a very material extent. While we cannot but deplore the misfortune of bad crops anywhere, it should make us doubly grateful that in Canada we have a large surplus, and will be benefitted thereby.

We present herewith an important table, showing the proportions of wheat and flour received in Great Britain from all quarters of the globe for the six months ending June 30th last, as compared with the two previous years:—

	WHEAT.		
	1863.	1864.	1865.
Total importation.	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.
Russia	11	12	36
Prussia	23	23	59
Denmark	13	4	3
Schleswig	1	13	2
Mecklenburg	2	3	1
Hanse Towns	13	31	3
France	4	43	6
Turkey and Wallachia and Moldavia	21	21	5
Egypt	15	4	—
United States	35	28	3
British North America	2	11	01
Other countries	2	21	73
	100	100	100

  

	FLOUR.		
	1863.	1864.	1865.
Total importation.	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.
Hanse Towns	7	6	8
France	27	48	79
United States	57	10	7
British North America	6	4	1
Other countries	3	2	5
	100	100	100

The changes indicated by these figures are startling. It will be observed that while America contributed in 1863 and '64 over one-third of the entire quantity of wheat imported by the United Kingdom, the amount fell off in 1865 to three per cent! The deficiency has been supplied by Russia, the proportion having risen from twelve to thirty-six per cent in the year. The London Times remarks that "few instances have been known of sudden changes in the course of trade more striking than that which these figures exhibit."

If the result of the harvest in the United States should be as indicated by the above figures from Washington, and if the fears of a partial failure in crops in England and France should prove true, it seems more than probable that the recent advance in prices may be maintained. Still the fact that in a

single year Russia should trouble her exports, and this during the season of depressed prices, shows how impossible it is to calculate upon future supply or demand in the English market. After all, that policy is the true one which realizes a profit at the earliest moment. The recent advance in prices ought to stimulate early deliveries of Canadian grain; and it is to be hoped that both farmers and shippers will hasten to avail themselves of the improved condition of the market, and not run unwise risks in the hope of better rates.

The condition of Produce matters in England at latest dates is thus epitomized in the circular of Messrs. Biddell, Picard & Co., London, August 12, by the Paris Press:—

"A great deal of rain has fallen the last forty-eight hours, which has stopped harvest work entirely. About one-fifth of the English wheat crop has been housed, two-fifths more have been cut, and are waiting to be carried; and the remaining two-fifths are still standing. Complaints of blight, rust, and mildew are on the increase, and some of the white wheats have sprouted. There can be no longer much doubt that the crop will fall below an average, and that a considerable portion of it at least will be in such condition as to render it unfit for market till the Spring. Under these circumstances, there is no doubt that we shall require more than an average import of foreign wheat and flour, during the next six months; and considering that the crop, but a middling one, at best, both in Europe and America, it would seem unquestionable that to attract to our shores the necessary supplies, we must offer the temptation of higher prices than those now current. Such is the general feeling of the trade, but expectations of improvement have been so often disappointed of late years, that people seem to regard any price above 40s. per qr. as unsafe, and follow an advance with great hesitation. The potato disease has appeared in a bad form in some parts of Ireland, and the present damp hot weather is calculated to develop it. Our markets have been in a feverish state this week, varying with every change in the weather, but closing at a further advance of 1s to 2s. per quarter. In France, prices continue to tend upwards, and the crop is unquestionably short and the quality poor."

**CANADA GLASS COMPANY, LIMITED.**

THIS enterprising Company held its First Annual Meeting recently at the office of its secretary, Mr. A. McK. Cochrane, St. Paul st. The President, Benjamin Lyman, Esq., who was one of the founders of the Company, occupied the chair, and presented the Annual Report. It appears the Company has been in operation eight months, and has given a dividend of eight per cent, beside placing a small amount to the contingent fund. The glass manufactured was declared by some of the largest dealers to be equal to the English, and superior to that imported from the United States. The buildings of the Company, erected at Hudson, are of a superior class, and the houses built for the work people are very comfortable, and well suited to their wants. Over eighty hands are employed in the works. It is the intention to increase this capital, and commence the manufacture of flint glass, which is generally more profitable than the green, to which the attention of this Company has hitherto been confined. If well managed, glass manufacture is one of the most profitable of all the industrial arts, and we congratulate the Company upon its success.

**Canadian Iron.**

We are happy to hear that the great mineral resources on the Canada side of Lake Superior are attracting the attention of American capitalists, and that very enterprising efforts are about being made towards their development. We understand that a Boston Company have bought several thousand acres of rich mineral land, some thirty miles north-west of Sault Ste. Marie, and are erecting machinery and all the necessary appliances for a success. There is no possible doubt that iron and other minerals exist in paying quantities in all parts of this region; and it needs only the magic touch of capital and skilled labour to be productive of the most satisfactory result. We trust that the new enterprise, although it is composed of foreigners, may be eminently successful. Better that our resources should be developed even by strangers, than not developed at all.

**Custom House Receipts.**

We give daily receipts at the Custom House here for week:—

	1864.	1865.
Friday, 18th August	\$24,061.99	\$14,991.09
Saturday, 19th "	23,572.41	833.00
Monday, 21st "	6,477.86	23,422.18
Tuesday, 22nd "	33,591.99	41,318.76
Wednesday, 23rd "	20,630.41	16,753.69
Thursday, 24th "	39,997.61	13,738.01
	\$148,272.27	\$116,832.72