

A WORD TO THE WISE.

Speaking of the recent Chicago Exposition the *Hardware Trade Journal* of England says:

"Whatever the opinion of individual producers in this country may be, we cannot help thinking that these great exhibitions are calculated to have a beneficial effect on international trade. People from all ends of the earth assemble, and, as a rule, carry home with them some souvenir, which in course of time causes the maker's name to be known and his goods sought after in new parts. Producers, too, are afforded an opportunity of seeing what their rivals are endeavoring to secure the market with. It is true, of course, that exhibitors give away something in this way, but as a set off, have they not an opportunity of obtaining important information and ideas? Exhibitors are fortunate enough, too, in many cases, to obtain trade orders to a large amount, and where this is so all objection to exhibitions is surely removed. . . . The Paris people are enthusiastic exhibition organizers, and it is possible that the show that they are preparing to hold in the year 1900 will beat all its predecessors, not perhaps in the amount of ground it will cover, but in being more thoroughly representative of the art and industrial products of the world."

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

Some nineteen or twenty retail grocers of the city a few days since advertised their intention of discontinuing the old-fashioned practice of giving Christmas presents, as being "unsatisfactory both to buyer and seller." It can readily be believed that this has been the case, for never was there a Christmas present of this kind made which did not come out of the customer in some way or another. We have received several communications on the subject, whose purport we give for what it is worth. In some cases there are complaints of short weight, in others of the substitution of an article of a grade inferior to that ordered and paid for. One complaint in particular may be mentioned, viz., the supplying of soft white sugar for a harder and more economic article. Then there has been, it is said, the weighing in as part of the purchase of the canvas or other wrappers of ham or bacon. Another ground of grievance is the almost universal neglect to enclose with the purchases a memorandum invoice of the goods delivered, thus rendering it impossible for the customer to compare what he has paid or is to pay for with what he gets. The "old-fashioned practices" in these and other regards will, it is also hoped, be discontinued at the same time as the merry but old-fashioned and unsatisfactory custom of giving Christmas presents. When the grocers made their announcement why did they not leave out the, to them, meaningless compliment of "A Merry Christmas" as?

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

MR. JAMES O'BRIEN, the well-known wholesale clothier of Montreal, has re-

tired from business, after a successful career dating from 1858.

THE import of hay into the United Kingdom for the ten months ended October 31 were 181,000 tons, against 11,000 tons the corresponding time last year.

THERE are good prospects of Canadian manufacturers opening up a trade with South America in agricultural implements on which there is no duty.

AUGUSTIN CONTIN, the well-known shipbuilder at Montreal, who had to do with the construction of many vessels that have plied in the Upper and Lower St. Lawrence, is dead, aged 81 years. His works were on the Lachine Canal.

It is reported from Winnipeg that there is no possibility of replacing in Manitoba wheat at present price. Fully two-thirds of the crop of wheat is out of the farmers' hands and after providing for seeding and local millers there will be no wheat for the all-rail trade.

It would appear that all the reports that the Australian conference to be held in Ottawa next spring to discuss trade relations would not take place are incorrect. The meeting will be held in June, Sir Thomas Mellwrath, of the Queensland Government, being about to visit Ottawa and London to make arrangements, it is presumed, on behalf of all the Australian colonies.

A contemporary remarks: "In connection with the Bank of England irregularities the highest loss mentioned, £300,000, is not great for so large a bank to bear. The worst defaulting official is said to have done is to lean upon securities which he was not authorized to accept. The directors must have kept a sharp look out to be able to prevent the irregularity, once begun, going further; and the fact of discovery being early made and a prompt remedy applied, speaks well for the management."

THE following are some of the leading points contained in the draft of salmon fishery regulations forwarded from Ottawa to this Province to obtain the views of the parties interested:—There is no limit to the total number of licenses that may be issued; each *bona fide* fisherman who is a British subject is entitled to one, and the cost is reduced from \$20 to \$10. Each cannery is entitled to twenty fishing licenses, and for the rest will have to employ or buy salmon from fishermen who have licenses of their own. Settlers who wish to net salmon for family use can get a domestic license for \$2 a year.

ELSEWHERE will be found an article on the subject of pilotage and the opinions expressed by certain American captains, who kicked, figuratively speaking, like steers against the system obtaining here. Since that was written another American, Captain Gibson, has spoken, who said he had no fault to find with the British Columbia system. There is, he said, not a port in the world where cheaper pilotage

can be had, and he had always been willing to pay the rates charged. He, however, decidedly objected—and, in view of the experiences of others, there is no wonder that he should do so—to the fact of his ship last year when in Esquimalt harbor being moved from one anchorage to another, notwithstanding the fact that there was nothing in the harbor regulations to show that he was out of place. It is to be presumed that the captain had unwittingly transgressed some of the hard and fast rules of the naval authorities who, as experience has shown, do not hesitate—no matter what the special conditions—to exercise their authority.

IF it be true, as was recently alleged by one of the leaders of the unemployed labor of London, England, that many articles for Government use are made abroad and paid for by the British taxpayers, no wonder that there is the most serious dissatisfaction prevailing. Among the specific charges made was that boilers of British gunboats were made in France, that an order for 200,000 swords and bayonets had been placed in Germany, and that the London School Board had its printing done abroad. A system which, under existing conditions, could sanction matters of this kind can scarcely be regarded as otherwise than infamous. But granting that the greater part of all this cannot be substantiated even a little of it cannot be too severely reprehended. The principle of free trade may, and most certainly does commend itself to many people, as well as the idea of making purchases in the cheapest market, but the idea of giving out public contracts in the manner indicated, when so many persons are hanging on the ragged edge of starvation makes one's blood boil to think about.

WHAT a good job it is that the 165 witnesses who testified at the Tariff Reform Inquiry before Controllers Wallace and Wood—this, we suppose, is outside the number who were heard by the Finance Minister himself and others who have had a hearing on the subject—had not to readjust the Tariff! An announcement from Ottawa, and that of a semi-official character, comes to the effect that among the number named there is among consumers a divergence of opinion as to a general rule for remissions. In cases where the producer of a certain commodity was interested he invariably desired the highest protection for himself. Self-protection with all these people appears to be the prevailing first law—no matter who is made to suffer, and this being the case we have the spectacle of something very much resembling a gathering of business anarchists, all wanting to pull down or put up something no matter who suffered or to what extent injustice be done. How matters will again be got into something like an equitable working condition it is hard to see, and the more one thinks of it the harder appears the task of reforming a tariff which, upon not a few occasions, has been revised and amended—not for the sake of the public; but in order to catch or retain the votes of particular interests,