

CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES BANKING.

Admirable as is the system of Canadian banking, and superior though it be to that of the United States in some of its leading features, we could very well afford to introduce into our own banking laws a principle that affords such absolute security to the holders of bank bills as that of the guaranteed bank circulation of the United States. It is true we have a mutual guarantee or redemption fund amounting to about \$1,700,000; but what is that as security for nearly \$31,000,000 of bills in circulation? Of course, if our future bank failures are confined to such small concerns as that of the Commercial Bank of Winnipeg, and occur only at extended intervals, the 5 per cent. redemption fund may prevent any depreciation in the notes of suspended banks; but in the event of any financial crisis striking Canada, similar to that which has swept over the Argentine Republic, Australia and the United States, what protection would our redemption fund be to the great mass of bill holders in the Dominion? Very little! And as all young countries are subject to these financial upheavals at different periods, it is essential that the involuntary holders of Canadian bank bills should be perfectly secured by Government guarantee, the same as holders of American National Bank bills are. So absolutely safe are those bills, that they pass current in Canada as if they were so many gold pieces, while, in the United States, Canadian bank bills are looked upon with the greatest distrust, and it is difficult to pass them except at a pretty steep discount. Although between one and two hundred banks have suspended during the late severe crisis in the United States, not one of the many thousands of holders of National Bank bills have been put to the slightest inconvenience, for the reason that every bill is guaranteed by deposits with the Government for its full face value. Now, let it be supposed that the value of these bills had not been absolutely protected by government guarantee, what would have been the state of business in the United States during the reign of depression that has usurped the normal condition of things for such an unusually protracted period? To say that it would have been far worse, conveys a very faint conception of the intensified and panicky condition into which business would have been flung, had the bank circulation of the United States not been as good as gold. So that while advocating the adoption of the Canadian system of banking by the United States, we should not forget our great fundamental weakness in the matter of a partially guaranteed circulation, in singular contrast to the fundamental strength of the absolutely guaranteed circulation of our neighbors. — *Trade Bulletin*.

BUYING NEW GOODS.

It is the business of every retailer to handle goods superior to those on the counters or shelves of his competitors. In the general lookout for new goods, of course somebody gets left; but it is the popular and wise merchant who keeps on the topmost wave of popular favor. New

goods are launched upon the market unceasingly. There are some dealers who buy their goods as they buy their books, adhering strictly to the old and well-established products and ignoring the new until it has established for itself a reputation. They are too conservative, and their trade undoubtedly suffers. There are other merchants who stock up with the latest novelties regardless of merit, just as some people are constantly thirsting for the latest novel. They are too hasty. The golden mean is the proper course. It is the duty of every merchant to closely watch the markets for new and improved goods. If he fails in getting the latest and best, his sales will surely shrink, but before he displaces the old by the new he should be reasonably satisfied that the latter is the most desirable. A test of the goods with his judgment and the knowledge of the tastes of his customers will help him in the decision. In a measure he is a moulder of public tastes, which are seemingly as uncontrollable as they are surprising, and it behooves the dealer to keep abreast with the trade. Every new device is worthy of careful examination. Those are the defective should be rejected; those that are doubtful should be handled gingerly until their standing is determined.

SPECULATION IN PURCHASING.

It is a trite saying that "vice is virtue carried to excess." Herein lies a world of truth. Gambling is a vice, yet all men are gamblers and were born so. Gambling has its virtuous form; its earlier stage. It is called speculation. Some men pass through life without once experiencing the fascination of gambling, even in the most virtuous form, for the latent passion of gambling is never developed in their human nature by opportunities. In business, the opportunities to gamble are always convenient. Nowadays, the exercise of the gambling faculty in its virtuous form is a necessity in trading, and especially so in dry goods trading. The frequent variation in styles in all classes of goods demands a certain amount of speculation in purchasing. But therein lies the danger, and only the wise man can draw the line between what is virtuous speculation and what is reckless speculation, which is gambling.

INVENTORS' RECORD.

The following list of United States patents, granted to Canadian inventors, Aug. 15, 1893, is expressly reported for THE COMMERCIAL JOURNAL by James Sangster, solicitor of patents, Buffalo, N. Y.:

William J. Hamill, St. Catharines, sulky.
Henry A. C. Hellyer and William T. Lawless, Ottawa, shade and shade holder.
George L. Williams, assignor of one-half to Alexander Hume, Galt, boot and shoe.

Total issue, including patents, designs, trade-marks and reissues, 518.

A great drought exists in the centre of Illinois, no appreciable quantity of rain having fallen since May 27. No rain has fallen in Minnesota or either of the Dakotas in six weeks, and the pastures have been destroyed by the heat.

PARCELS POST IN ENGLAND.

In an interesting sketch of the parcels post, the London Times says:

"The Act authorizing the parcel post was passed in 1882. But it might well be imagined that time was necessary to mount an entirely new postal service without disorganizing the ordinary mails, and it was not until Aug. 1, 1883, that the post was actually placed at the disposal of the public. The original scale of weights and charges was for a parcel not exceeding 1 pound, 3d.; up to 3 pounds, 6d.; up to 5 pounds, 9d.; and up to 7 pounds, 1s. At 7 pound the post stopped. The maximum dimensions allowed were $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length and 6 feet in length and girth combined, and these dimensions have been found throughout to be sufficient to meet the public demands. May 1, 1886, a new scale of weights and charges was issued. This scale, which still obtains, ascended by single instead of double pounds, and thus represented a charge of 3d. for the first pound and 1d. for each succeeding pound. At the same time the maximum weight was raised to 11 pounds, a parcel of that weight being carried for 18 pence. Compensation was promised for the loss or damage of any parcel in the post up to the sum of £1, while further sums of £5 and £10 might be secured by the payment of 1d. and 2d. respectively. The effect of these charges at once became visible. From June, 1886, onwards to the number parcels increased by more than 20 per cent. over the numbers for the corresponding months of the previous year, and the total number of parcels carried in the year 1890 rose to 31,000,000. In the meantime parcel posts had been established with many colonies and foreign States. The admirably managed post office of India and the post office of Egypt (organized by this country) were the first to respond to the invitation of the Postmaster-General, and the interchange of parcels with India, Burmah, Aden and Egypt commenced on July 1, 1885. At the end of another six months Germany and Belgium (forerunners of this country in parcel post enterprise) had entered into similar relations, and from the commencement of 1886 the work of connecting this country with the rest of the world for the purpose of interchanging parcels by post proceeded apace. The next change of importance took place on June 1, 1891, when the system of registration was for the first time extended to inland parcels, together with compensation on a liberal scale. For the ordinary registration fee of 2d. compensation to £5 was promised, while for every additional 1d. another £5 could be secured up to a maximum of £25. At the same time the compensation payable on an unregistered parcel was raised from £1 to £2. Finally on December 1 last, a scale of payment rising to £50 (which had previously been applied to the post to India and the West Indies) was adopted, and it is now possible to obtain compensation up to that amount by payment of the registration fee of 2d. and an additional fee of 9d., or 11d. in all. It is not surprising that under the influence of these improvements the number of parcels sent per head of the population has more than doubled since the post was instituted.