

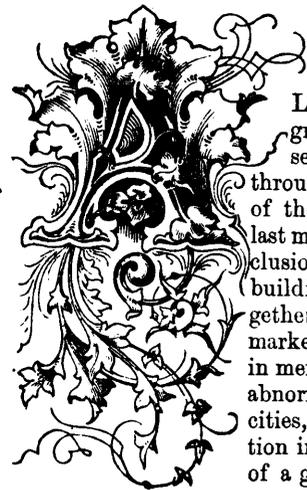
THE CANADIAN MECHANIC MAGAZINE AND PATENT OFFICE RECORD

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BUSINESS PROSPECTS FOR THE YEAR 1877.



ALTHOUGH there has been a great falling off in the past season in the building trade throughout the Dominion, the state of the labour market during the last month will not warrant the conclusion that this decrease in the building business has arisen, altogether, from the state of the money market and the general depression in mercantile affairs, but from an abnormal state of trade, in large cities, that has caused an immigration into them, from the country, of a great number of mechanics,

and who are now the principal parties who are the sufferers from the present cessation to all speculative building operations. These men, and inferior mechanics and untrustworthy men, are those who are sure to suffer, and ever will be sufferers under such contingencies. It would be far better for the country mechanic to remain in his village, where he generally receives fair wages for his labour, than to allow himself to be enticed into large cities for the sake of a temporary increase in wages, and where he becomes exposed to its vices, pays a high rate for his board, and, perhaps, in the course of a few months, finds himself without employment and without a cent in his pocket to keep himself, or a family, should he have one, from enduring all the hardships of poverty, sufferings from cold, and, too often, heavy expenses arising from sickness, which, if he had remained contented in his proper sphere, would have been avoided.

As a rule, good workmen always obtain a fair rate of wages, no matter how depressed the building business may be; there is always a sufficient quantity of work in progress, which cannot be postponed, and for which skilled and steady hands are always in demand. The following prices, which we now quote, will show that business, during the past season, has not been so dull as generally believed. For example, we give about the average prices in the principal cities in the Dominion that

artificers have been receiving in the following trades during the past summer.

STONE MASONS AND BRICKLAYERS.

In these trades there has not been much difference in the rate of wages between this and last year; the rates having averaged about \$2.25 for the former, and \$2.50 for the latter. Building material, however, has averaged fully 20 per cent lower in price than last year, except in importations from England, which maintain much about the same figures as in former years. The prices of building materials and hardware from the United States are considerably lower.

CARPENTERS AND JOINERS.

During the past season the demand for *good* carpenters and joiners has, also, been pretty steady, and has fully kept pace with the supply—inferior workmen are always at a discount in slack times. The wages have averaged from \$1.75 to \$2.00 a day according to skill; there is, however, a visible flatness in the business as winter approaches.

PAINTERS.

Of course what affects one branch of the building trade must affect another, but probably this branch has suffered more than any other; there are many proprietors of household property, who have this year dispensed with the usual painting and papering of their private dwellings and tenements, and we may here observe that the remarks as to skilled and steady men in the first mentioned trades, as always obtaining employment in slack times, do not apply so truthfully to the painters' trade. Few proprietors are capable of discriminating between good and bad painting, or the quality of materials used; and the public are frequently imposed upon by men, out of employment, offering to work cheaply; but, however low their wages may be, they are mere daubers themselves, giving bad work, and worse materials. At this season of the year the trade is a little brisker, as the men always follow the last of the workmen engaged in buildings. The wages have been fairly remunerative; plain hands have been paid \$1.75 a day—better skilled and grainers \$2.00 and over. Prospects for the coming spring are not very bright for the painters' trade.