

son or two from that of Canada in the care it exercises to foster and develop what must ever remain the first of industries."

Several important shipments of dressed beef have been made from Toronto this week for export *via* Portland. It is pleasing to know that the long desired beginning of this trade has at last been made.

The Prussian Minister of Finance, Dr. Miguel, issued a decree on the first of the month, which goes into effect immediately, prohibiting the importation of every kind of American fresh fruit. The decree has been sent to all the German ports and frontier stations, excepting Bavaria, Saxony and Wurtemberg. The United States Consul at Hamburg, Dr. Hugh Pitcairn, telegraphed that 16,000 barrels of American apples have been forbidden to be unloaded, and that two trains full of American fruit have also been forbidden to cross the frontier at Emmerich, which, aside from Hamburg, is the principal place of entry for American fruit. On receipt of this news a strong remonstrance was sent by the United States Government to the Foreign Office, calling attention to the evident violation of treaty rights. The Prussian Government prohibits the entry of American fruit on the allegation that California and other vermin threaten to infect German trees and fruit. The Canadian authorities cannot be too watchful of the interests of our own fruit growers, and it is agreeable to note that some measures are being taken to prevent the destruction of our fruits.

There have frequently been men or concerns who proposed to develop Canadian trade in foreign countries by acting as general agents for manufacturers of all sorts of commodities. This kind of "by-and-large" representation has given anything but good results. Speaking to the *Journal and Bulletin of Commerce* a New York merchant recently said: "It is impossible for one man to be thoroughly posted and able to overcome the many obstacles with which a salesman meets, and particularly in foreign countries, where they have to deal with the competition of other markets. A well known fact is," this merchant continued, "that this state of affairs has been one of the greatest drawbacks to the manufacturers' interest in developing foreign trade. How can a traveling salesman do justice to a jewelry concern, a shoe factory, and an agricultural implement manufacturer at the same time; any one of the lines would take a salesman a year before he is well posted. If such is the case with three lines, how must it be with, say, ten or fifteen different branches? Export trade is every year being done under more favorable conditions and to better advantage for the manufacturers. One seldom hears of those combination salesmen who start abroad with a number of accounts, thus deceiving the majority of manufacturers they assume to represent. The greater portion of these travelers have only served to interfere with the healthful growth of export trade, but the tide has turned and now it is difficult to find a manufacturer who has not been warned by a neighbor or an export firm to beware of the combination traveler."

RETAILERS' PROSPECTS.

As to the predictions of the last few years concerning the fate of the retailer—that he must pass away and be heard of no more for ever, they have not all been fulfilled, for there are hundreds and thousands of retailers in business. Wholesale dealers tell us that there are probably more really competent retail storekeepers, and more cash buyers among them now, than ever before in Canada. At all events a larger proportion of them. Still it is true that many of the weaker and less competent small

shopkeepers have gone to the wall, and it is just as well that some of those who remain should consider what changes and chances are ahead of them.

Department stores have come, and they are likely to remain; they sell for cash, they keep enormous stocks, they deliver goods promptly, and they sometimes give real bargains. With the probable extension of trolley lines of rail, and with the actual excursion trips that railways make to the cities, the road of the small retailer in city or country is made harder to travel. Therefore let every merchant fortify his business by adopting the soundest rules. Let him collect his accounts promptly; let him sell more nearly for cash; let him meet competition rationally; let him push profitable goods with all his strength, and restrict his buying to what he can sell, and sell quickly. As the *San Francisco Country Merchant* puts it: "The necessity of the hour is to make the business pay, whatever it is, or else the retailer must prepare to join the wage-workers of the world with whatever grace he can command."

"WHERE ARE YOU DRIFTING?"

This is the question put to business men at the beginning of this year by an American financial journal, *American Investments*, published in Buffalo: a journal which has a racy American way of putting things, that is calculated to make the reader think. It asks the business man whither he is drifting? and then goes on:—

"Probably not one business man out of a hundred knows with any degree of accuracy. Some don't know enough to find out, and others are in such bad shape that they are afraid to see it put down in cold figures. The first class have no business to be in business, and the second need to learn the lesson of courage and look a bad thing squarely in the eye for all it is worth. About eighty per cent. of our business men go into enterprises without knowing whether they are precisely fitted for them. They had a little money, could borrow some more, and as others had succeeded, they thought, of course, they could. Where there is neither adaptability nor sufficient capital, is it any wonder there are so many failures? These ill-fitted business men are the very ones that do not "keep the run of their affairs." They argue that as the other fellow made money in the same business, they must necessarily be doing the same. They would feel insulted if asked to put their hopes and expectations on paper. As an example how many business men can figure out the difference between selling strictly for cash and on ninety days time? Precious few. How many can figure out the annual advantage in buying under a three per cent. discount for cash and on sixty days' time? The number is also equally few."

We have some reason to know how large a proportion of retail businesses, and even factories in Canada are conducted by Rule of Thumb. The proportion is probably not smaller in the United States. And the pressure of competition by ignorant traders and traders without skill or method makes it hard for the competent trader to live. Our contemporary perceives this, and says: "And because fools and ignoramuses rush into a business because others have succeeded, really worthy men are compelled to suffer. Ignorant competition is of the worst kind. Business men, active or retired, need to do two things in order to insure success and ward off impending disaster. First they need to study and understand the transpiring of events and endeavor to compile from them a formula that will enable them to shapen a course that will fit the future. Then they should have the ability to carefully analyze the results of their past work and ascertain its trend."