

the east. The sole point of superiority in the latter over the United States is the higher average of production, and even this does not possess the element of permanence. Precisely what has to be feared from the competition of India in the growth of wheat is as yet uncertain. An Indian cultivator receives his pay in depreciated silver, which, as a means of paying debt in the country with a gold standard, is worth only about two-thirds its face value. In this way, cheap production has been made still cheaper. But this process has reached its lowest point, in the misery of the cultivators of the soil, who could not subsist on a lower ration than they now receive. Indian cheapness of cereal growth can go no further. But it is another question whether, at the present cost of production, the area of exportable wheat can be largely increased. On this point there is uncertainty, and opinions differ. In the older parts of Russia, deterioration of the soil goes on, as it does in the United States, and in a less degree in Canada. But there, for a long time, new lands may be made to supply the defects of the old.

On the whole Canada is likely to continue to meet severe competition in agricultural produce from various quarters, and the prospect of a considerable rise in prices, unless from exceptional and temporary causes which cannot be foreseen or counted on, is not discernible. From the present strain on agriculture no relief is visible. At such a time, and with such a prospect before us, an increase of the tariff for other than the most pressing revenue necessities—and such necessities do not exist—would savour of agricultural oppression. And even from the manufacturer's point of view, it would be the worst possible policy. It would raise a cry against the tariff which would probably produce a revolution at the polls, in which the National Policy would be in danger of sudden and violent reversal, if not absolute destruction.

THE CONFLAGRATIONS AT LYNN AND BOSTON.

In quick succession have come these two disastrous events, the great fires at Lynn and at Boston last week, resulting in the loss of a vast amount of property. In the case of Lynn, the extent of the loss, variously estimated at from five to six millions of dollars, is not at all surprising, as the buildings of the burned district were principally of wood. The fire began in the boiler-room of a frame factory, the rate of premium on which is said to have been ten per cent. It burned over 12 acres of ground, and the loss included nine-tenths of the boot and shoe factories of Lynn—the largest shoe manufacturing city in the world. One hundred and twelve frame and 42 brick buildings were totally destroyed. It is estimated that over 150 families in that New England town are homeless, and 8,000 hands thrown out of employment.

The Boston fire on the other hand broke out in a six-storey granite building, owned by the firm of Jordan, Marsh & Co., and occupied by Durrell & Co., dry goods merchants. The buildings destroyed were

nearly all first-class structures, and many of them were deemed fire-proof, but when the fire got fairly going, fire-doors and fire-walls fell before the fiery fiend as if they were paper. The losses will in all property put the balance of the insurance companies for the year on the wrong side of the ledger. It is when conflagrations such as these occur that the general public are forced to admit the wisdom of insurance companies in charging such a rate of premium, even in favourable years, as will enable them to meet catastrophes like these with prompt payment of all losses, which will no doubt be the case in the instances we have cited.

CANADIAN TEXTILES ABROAD.

An importer in Toronto sends us a communication from a merchant some twenty years established in Smyrna, towards the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, dealing in opium, &c. He states that he has dealt largely with Europe, the East Indies, &c., and is in a good position for the sale of cotton goods in general, such as cotton sheetings, shirtings, drillings, both brown and bleached, the consumption of which is considerable in those countries.

"Of late competition in these dry goods has reached to such a pitch, that one feels compelled, in order to do something worth while, to seek every day new means by which to supply this article one or two per cent. cheaper." He says further that he had lately "been informed by one of my friends in the United States that your Canadian manufacturers are in a position, owing to exceptional facilities they possess, to supply dry goods in general on far more favorable terms than English or American manufacturers," by which we understand that he refers to the Canadian Pacific Railway and its connections on the Pacific. It is at all events encouraging to find a merchant in Asia Minor asking for samples, prices, discounts, and shipping particulars as to Canadian textile manufactures. And it is a noteworthy circumstance that it should be "from a friend in the United States" he learned that such goods can be made and shipped by Canada.

MONTREAL EXPORT TRADE.

The character and extent of the shipping trade of Montreal must always be a matter of interest to Canadians. It is very satisfactory to find the season of navigation now closing that this year compares favorably with last. This is shown in a comparison of shipments of some twenty commodities during the navigable season of this year and last. Grain, flour, meal, dairy produce, hog products, leather, tallow, tobacco, in all these satisfactory increase appears. The articles in which there is a decreased export are few and of minor importance. We do not find in the Board of Trade list appended any mention of live stock, nor yet of apples or asbestos, all items of moment in the export trade of the port.

The following table, which we compile from official figures found in the *Gazette*, gives the shipments from Montreal for

seven months, April 27th to November 23rd :

Article.	1889.	1888.
Wheat, bushels.....	2,287,512	2,033,325
Corn ".....	6,559,780	2,721,282
Peas ".....	925,377	895,314
Oats ".....	23,012	3,484
Barley ".....	5,291	4,822
Rye ".....	69,213
Total grain, bus.	9,870,185	5,658,327
Flour, barrels.....	715,669	585,602
Oatmeal ".....	58,499	15,595
Cornmeal ".....	2,182	2,726
Potashes ".....	2,282	2,901
Butter, packages.....	55,380	27,409
Cheese, boxes.....	1,145,991	1,116,627
Pork, barrels.....	11,289	7,185
Lard ".....	15,186	14,319
Beef ".....	1,768	3,774
Canned meats, pkgs. ..	103,117	107,775
Bacon, boxes.....	53,745	38,724
Tallow, barrels.....	3,104	914
Phosphate of lime, tons	21,824	14,466

All six descriptions of grain mentioned in the list show a noticeable increase, the total being some sixty per cent. over the previous season, corn heading the list with 3,838,000 bushels. Hamburg, Antwerp, and Havre are ports which took nearly a million bushels of grain and a fair proportion of other merchandise. Liverpool, Glasgow, London, and Avonmouth received the great bulk of breadstuffs and shipments of all kinds, Leith taking some 800,000 bushels of wheat, corn, and peas, Aberdeen and Dublin wheat and maize only. It is proper to remark that out of the totals for 1889, 200,000 barrels of flour and meal, 26,000 bushels of grain, and 25,000 packages of provisions went to the lower ports of the St. Lawrence or the Canadian Atlantic coast.

The importance to the North-West of the St. Lawrence route of water transportation and the rail facilities which are now converging at Montreal cannot well be over-estimated. It is not alone the Canadian North-West, but such great grain-producing States as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Dakota, that find outlet for their products by this route to the markets of Europe. At a banquet given this week at Minneapolis to a deputation of Montreal aldermen, Mr. Charles Pillsbury, the well-known flour miller, spoke in strong terms of the importance of Montreal. Said he: "All that Montreal has to do is to improve its port; this done to an extent commensurate with her commanding position, no attempt to shut out Montreal from the carrying trade can possibly succeed."

BUSINESS MEN'S LETTERS.

Many shop-keepers and tradespeople are careless about their correspondence. Careless, we mean, as to its form and materials. Unfortunately it is also true that they are too often negligent about answering letters at all. But what we now wish to call attention to is the slipshod and go-as-you-please style of their paper and envelopes. The morning's mail of any wholesale merchant or manufacturer usually brings a great variety of communications: Important orders finely written on postal cards, with details and shipping instructions crowded in; half-sheets of flimsy note paper, written on both sides, with hardly room for a signature; a request scrawled in pencil on a bit of news-