

though there is still some complaint as to the North West.

Of interest to boot and shoe manufacturers was the deputation from those interests to the Tariff Commission in its recent session at Quebec. The chief spokesman of the party was Mr. John Ritchie, of that city, who stated that a serious matter to the eighty odd Canadian manufacturers was the large importation of shoes from the United States, which last year amounted to \$1,107,000 in value. If this amount, he contended, had been put into Canadian goods, it would have enabled our manufacturers to specialize further, thus reducing the cost of making and improving the character of the output. On the other hand, Mr. C. Blouin, of Levis, protested that it was all very well for manufacturers of fine goods to demand higher protection against American shoes, but the interests of the manufacturers of pegged work should be considered as well.

The following excerpt from the "Shoe and Leather Reporter," of Boston, will be of interest, as showing the trend of the trade in that important centre of the boot industry in the neighboring Republic:

Wholesalers have had, and are still having, a good and generally satisfactory volume of business, and in many instances showing a remarkable increase in their total sales. Retailers generally are carrying a large stock of goods which they have been induced to purchase on a steadily climbing market, and on the assurance that shoe manufacturers would be constrained to place a still further advance on account of the high range of prices for raw material and leather. All orders placed for this fall have been filled. Wholesalers have placed practically all their spring contracts, and delivery has been going on to the retailer during November and the current month. Shoe wholesalers' salesmen have concluded their trips among their retail customers and are now at home, and wholesalers do not anticipate many mail orders, for the reason that their customers are carrying large stocks. A large number of shoe manufacturers who have fully informed themselves as to the existing conditions, draw no other conclusion than that there will be a slow trading during April, May, and perhaps June; and while the opinion of a number may be offset by the opinions of those who hold different views, there is a generally expressed sentiment that it is a good time for conservatism.

USURY IN MONTREAL.

The pitfalls which the usurer prepares for his unfortunate victims, and the disgraceful lengths to which he readily goes to gain his inhuman ends have recently been shown up in such a lurid light in the city of Montreal that the authorities can hardly fail to push home the prosecution of such vampires as are now found out there to the utmost limit of the law. Some of the charges brought against one of these money-lending concerns, the Canadian Finance Company, which in reality, we believe is an American, not a Canadian, concern, are so revolting that one can only believe with difficulty that the transactions complained of are modern occurrences, and not the doings of the Middle Ages, or the fictitious inventions of a Dickens.

One poor widow, it is alleged, the keeper of a boarding house, fell under the lure and borrowed \$75. To repay this, she agreed to pay \$14 odd every month for a year. One day the poor woman had not the money ready when the collector called. He charged

her \$2 for the extra trouble, and threatened to seize her furniture the next time any delay happened. Delay did happen on another occasion, and to add to the woman's misery, her boarders were informed that their belongings also were not safe from seizure, with the consequence that they all left her house, the final upshot being that her landlord seized her furniture for back rent.

Another favorite plan of this nest of sharks has been to send out to their victims fictitious telegrams insisting upon immediate payment, for which they would charge an extra fee of one or two dollars or more for each one.

Not only this, but the Finance Company, by assignments of salary, threats to expose the borrower, and other blackmailing schemes, have been the means of bringing to wretchedness the lives, not merely of helpless women, but of civic employees, bank clerks, and others. Some, indeed, have already lost their positions through the machinations of these blood-suckers. Not content with extorting rates of interest varying from a hundred to actually three hundred per cent., they have refused to accept the principal of the money borrowed plus interest to the time at which it is offered in repayment, but have insisted on obtaining the full amount together with compound interest at their exorbitant rates until the expiration of the time for which the money was originally borrowed.

It is a matter for general rejoicing that the Montreal manager of the company in question, who, if all accounts be true, has shown himself peculiarly grasping and inhuman in his methods, has been arrested, and it seems likely that this blot of usury in our midst will receive such a check as to be put out of business for a long time to come.

THE COMING FORESTRY CONVENTION.

The Forestry Convention which is to take place in Ottawa on the 10th, 11th, and 12th of the present month, under the auspices of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, will be a striking indication of the change which has taken place in the attitude of the public mind towards this important question during the last thirty years. Long before that time, a few thinking men in Europe, more far-sighted than most, had begun to see the nature of the problem which was so surely arising, the double problem presented by the rapidly decreasing timber reserves of the world, and the rapidly increasing demand for timber. Indeed, it would appear that as long ago as 1669, there was held in France an "ordonnance" or convention to consider the various means of conserving forest resources. Only between two and three decades ago, however, can this matter be said to have been taken up in earnest in this country, and it was in 1882 that a regular convention took place in Montreal, the result of which was a new era in regard to public appreciation of the work of the forestry "cranks,"—as it must be confessed that the men particularly interested in the new subject were sometimes called. It was then that the Dominion and Provincial Governments organized systematic plans for administering, protecting, and renovating the forests of Canada, testing the planting and cultivation of trees in the treeless prairies, and that the forester's and lumberman's interests were seen to be identical. It may be noted as an interesting fact that Mr. A. Harold Unwin, who has achieved considerable fame on account of his experiments in the transportation of