

there was a representative gathering in the city from different parts of the Maritime Provinces. Some of the visitors came very long distances, several being from Cape Breton, and one or two from the north shore of New Brunswick.

American authorities are unanimous in predicting a phenomenal parasol season this year. The "Economist" says: "The parasol world is a world of business to-day. Umbrella people have not been so largely in it, as far as pressure is concerned. In fact, umbrella styles, that is, of the finest variety of silks, have not been sold to such a great extent as formerly. It is to be a parasol season, and everybody can see it."

In Leeds there is apparently a somewhat brighter situation among textiles. A recent report says of that market: "At present most business is done in medium and low-grade fabrics. Some large colonial orders in these branches are to hand. Because of this, some additional machinery and labor has been set on within the last day or two. Prices are firmer a little than they were a week ago of fancy tweeds and medium and low serges in several quiet colors. Best worsted coating makers are taking orders more freely for Canada and France."

The annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Dominion Cotton Mills Company, Limited, has just been held at its offices in Montreal, when some forty gentlemen were present. The customary reports were submitted to the meeting, which appeared satisfied with their tenor. The gentlemen whose names follow were elected directors for the ensuing year: Messrs. A. F. Gault, Jacques Grenier, S. H. Ewing, Hon. J. O. Villeneuve, C. E. Gault, Samuel Finley, Charles R. Whitehead. At a subsequent meeting of the members of the board, Mr. A. F. Gault was nominated president; Mr. Jacques Grenier, vice-president, and Mr. P. C. Shannon, secretary and treasurer. Messrs. Charles R. Whitehead and Leslie G. Craig are the joint managers of the company.

#### ENGLAND'S PRINTED CALICOES.

Considerable comment is often made as to the remarkable variety in pattern which the British manufacturer of printed goods is in a position to offer the trade. The key to the situation lies in the enormous output of goods. An interesting summary and analysis of the official figures relating to printed calicoes is supplied by a correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. From this it appears that in 1896 England printed for export alone 1,072,848,800 yards, equal to 35,761,726 pieces of 30 yards, giving an average production for each machine in the trade of 39,735 pieces per annum, or 794 pieces per week for each machine. The price comes out for cloth and printing 2 37-64d. In 1897 there were printed for the same markets 876,797,200 yards, equal to 29,226,573 pieces of 30 yards, an average of 32,474 pieces per annum, or 649 pieces per week for each machine. The price comes out at 2 19-32d., a difference in favor of 1897, but there is a less quantity per machine. Assuming 10 per cent. as the minimum production for the home trade, the net result would be for 1896 1,180,130,680 yards, or, say 43,708 pieces of 30 yards per annum, or 874 pieces per week for every machine in the trade. For 1897 the net production would be 964,476,920 yards or 36,388 pieces per machine per annum, or say 727 pieces per week. These and similar goods are sent all over the world, to Turkey, Bombay, Brazil, Australasia, Bengal, Burmah, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy, Austria and many other countries. It will readily be seen from this what Canadian manufacturers mean when they talk of the ruinous competition of British textile manufacturers.

#### SOME BLUE BOOK FACTS.

One does not look to be amused by the contents of a Blue Book but he may occasionally be surprised by them, or if not exactly surprised, we will say aroused to a mild interest. Formerly we have shown some curious fluctuations in our trade with the West Indies. On another page of the same Trade and Navigation Return for 1897, we find a statement of merchandise received from foreign countries and trans-shipped at Montreal. The total value of such merchandise varies much in different years, but the highest point of recent years was reached in 1896, which was \$14,191,628. Ten years before, namely, in

1886, the amount was only \$5,745,606, whence it rose to \$13,202,000 in 1891 and declined to \$9,000,000 and \$8,000,000, rising to \$14,000,000 in 1896, as we have said, and declining to \$11,077,825 last year. The bulk of this very considerable business consisted of grain, flour, cattle, dead meats, dairy produce, tallow and lard from the United States, taken by the St. Lawrence water route or by Canadian railways eastward to tide water, destined for Britain, Germany, Belgium and Newfoundland. The share going to Britain, for example, exceeded nine millions of dollars in value; that to Germany four hundred and twenty thousand; to Belgium forty-two thousand; to Newfoundland a million and a quarter, the total thus shipped eastward being \$10,630,000. But the thing that is not so generally known is that there was received at Montreal from seaward and shipped to the United States half a million dollars' worth of goods, such as tobacco, \$38,485; cotton goods, \$19,431; earthenware, \$107,805; jute goods, \$26,534; wines and liquors, \$22,400; tin goods, \$117,991; woolens, \$52,090, besides other manufactured goods and household effects.

—A number of the prominent business men of Oshawa met last week to consider the formation of a board of trade for the town. The mayor, Mr. Hare, occupied the chair. About a dozen persons spoke, and it was the unanimous expression that the place would be better of a board of trade. Accordingly, a resolution was carried that such a body be formed and officers were chosen as under: President, Mr. McLaughlin; vice-pres., Mr. E. J. Rowse; 2nd vice, Mr. D. Cinnamon; sec-treas., Mr. T. H. Everson; and a council or executive committee consisting of the following: Messrs. L. Cassells, Miller, Ellis, Burns, Hawkins, Grierson, Murton and others.

—Some changes made in the premises of the Bank of Nova Scotia branch, in St. John, have greatly improved their appearance, besides yielding additional room, which the increasing business of the bank at that point rendered necessary. Instead of the apartment of Mr. Blair, the manager, being at the rear of the building, as it used to be, he now has a cheerful room near the entrance, finished in quartered oak and with plate glass windows. The tellers' cages, of bronzed metal, are very neat, and the quarters of the clerks generally improved. Woodwork and fittings were prepared by the Canadian Office and School Furniture Company, of Preston, Ontario. Nor are the staff the only persons to benefit by the new arrangement; the customers of the bank and the public generally have a lighter office and more space.

—For many years, the departure of the grain fleet from Chicago for Buffalo on the opening of navigation on the Great Lakes in the spring, has been an event of great interest. Year by year the condition of the ice in the Straits of Mackinac is watched by seafaring men and grain dealers—and by marine insurance men as well. In the old days, when vessels were comparatively small and of light draft, and the era of 20-foot channels and steel steamers of 4,000 tons capacity had not dawned, the fleet was more numerous and more picturesque. This year the Straits were reported open on 1st April, a very early date, but we are told the liners do not purpose leaving Chicago and Milwaukee till April 15th. The quantity of grain at present afloat on Lake Michigan is stated at 1,693,000 bushels of wheat, 8,254,000 bushels of corn, 2,500,000 bushels of oats, 389,000 bushels of rye, and 93,000 bushels of barley. The opening of the straits is the earliest in sixty years, and the grain fleet, which will possibly begin to move next Saturday, is the largest in Chicago's history.

So far, there appears to be a not altogether unjustifiable opinion abroad, that the present year is an unfortunate one for those branches of insurance included in the names of fire and marine. The fire losses have in the short ten weeks been unusually heavy in this country generally, but it is an open question how much of the losses will actually fall on the British insurance companies. If we turn to the experience of the marine insurance business, the reports to date are still more unsatisfactory. January and February of the present year of grace are believed to have presented to the underwriters a volume of claims, in connection with shipping, that is as unprecedented as it is unwelcome.—Insurance Spectator.