

TRADE AND THE CROPS.

EDITORIAL NOTES.



SINCE our last issue buyers have been very cautious in placing orders, and wholesalers have, consequently, not been overburdened in shipping goods. First placing orders for woollens are over, and retailers have bought sparingly, but one and all speak confidently of wanting more goods before the season closes. Wholesalers are, therefore, looking out for large orders during the sorting season owing to the good harvest. In cottons there is rather a firm feeling, except in colors. Trade is, however, brisk, and wholesalers have hopeful views of fall prospects. Although raw cotton is comparatively cheap, it is not expected that there will be a drop in price for next season. Agents are now placing new goods with the wholesale trade. The demand for dress goods, gents' furnishings, and other lines has not been brisk, but great things are looked for during September and October. The experience of last fall has apparently made buyers more than usually careful. Crop prospects in the early part of July were then very bright, but the next few days saw all hope of even a fair average crop blasted. But there is no such fear this season, as the harvest throughout Ontario and the greater portion of Manitoba at the present writing has been garnered in its great abundance. In Ontario the estimated yield of wheat is 30,437,652 bushels, as compared with 21,951,288 bushels harvested last year—in other words, about eight and a half million bushels more this year than last. The yield of oats will be enormous, being estimated at 37.1 bushels per acre, or 9.1 bushels higher than last year. Barley also shows a yield of 1.2 bushels per acre over the average. The estimated yield of Manitoba and the North-West is 25,000,000 bushels, or two-thirds more than last year, and there is every indication that it will all be harvested in good condition. Although in Ontario the hay crop is below that of last year, the report comes from New Brunswick that a magnificent hay crop is being harvested in prime condition. Taken altogether this year's harvest throughout the Dominion is a most bountiful one, and all have great cause to rejoice thereat. The Dominion Millers' Association estimate that there will be 22,000,000 bushels of wheat for export. It is estimated that the farmers in Ontario alone will receive for the wheat, oats and peas, which they have this year raised in excess of the crop of 1890 over sixteen million dollars on the basis of last year's prices. But owing to the shortage in the yield in Russia and Europe prices will rule high, which means more money to the farmers, and as a natural consequence more money to the storekeepers. We do not wonder, therefore, that the anticipations of an exceedingly brisk and prosperous fall trade are general, and bid fair to be realized to the fullest extent.

A COOL CUSTOMER.

An instance showing the absurd condition of the present insolvency law occurred in Toronto a few days ago. John Goodmurphy, a general merchant of Gore Bay, Ont., came to the city to meet his creditors, with \$3,300 in his pockets. When he faced them he laid before them a statement of his affairs in which was an offer of a compromise of 50 cents on the dollar. With the utmost coolness he told them that he had the \$3,300 with him, but that he intended it to remain there, as he believed in the levelling principle. They could either accept or refuse his offer of 50 cents, as it was a matter of indifference to him. The creditors very naturally refused and told him plainly that he would have to hand over the \$3,300. After considerable argument he gave up the cash, and signed three notes for another \$2,500 payable in three equal instalments. The liabilities were estimated at \$9,000, and assets \$9,500. By the transaction Goodmurphy is \$3,700 in pocket with which to begin business again. His conceptions of morality in business must be very blunt. To boldly and unblushingly confront his creditors with the open determination to defraud them shows clearly that Mr. Goodmurphy has mistaken his vocation. He should not be in business, that much is certain. He has been in business in Gore Bay for about ten years and had some lumber interests there which he disposed of before coming to this city to meet his creditors. It was the lumber money he had with him. In accordance with our present insolvency law the creditors were powerless to compel Goodmurphy to hand over the money to them, and if it had not been for the fact that one of his creditors reminded him that he held a power of attorney from him, which he had executed two years ago on getting an extension, and which gave the creditor power to assign all the debtor's effects, he would have most probably gained his end.

A report having reached us that a leading wholesale house in Toronto had issued a circular to the trade giving quotations for flannels considerably under current market prices, we made enquiry and found that the report was correct. The explanation obtained is that the market for some weeks had been so irregular that it was difficult to know what quotations to give, and as their rule is strictly one price they decided to put their quotations where they would not require to be moved for the season.

The special fall trade issue of the N. Y. Dry Goods Economist shows to what extraordinary proportions trade journalism in the United States has attained. The issue consists of 94 pages and cover, 66 of which are filled with advertising matter. This points to two apparent facts, viz., the popularity of the Economist and that New York jobbers and manufacturers have implicit confidence in the benefits to be derived from liberally supporting their trade journals. The number is full of most interesting reading matter to the trade, and is something that the publishers have every reason to point with pride and satisfaction.

As soon as the holidays are over we sincerely trust that our Boards of Trade will devote prompt attention to our Bankruptcy laws. The fact is we must have an Insolvent Act not only for the protection of our own traders but of English and foreign merchants and manufacturers as well, who have dealings with Canadian houses. In our last issue we did what we could to allay the irritation in the minds of the latter, but unless some step is taken soon to back up our statement that there is a strong desire on the part of our merchants to have an Insolvent Act passed they will, we feel sure, adopt some stringent measures for their own protection. The Drapers' Record has this to say on the subject:—"In a recent number we felt called upon to write somewhat strongly upon the state of the bankruptcy law in Canada and the loss entailed upon British creditors whenever their customers in the Dominion go wrong. It is some satisfaction that our protest has been endorsed not only in this country, but in the Dominion itself. We felt at the time that we were pleading the cause of Canadian credit, while vindicating the claims of British merchants. 'Surely,' we argued, 'Canadian traders as a class cannot approve of a scandal which flings its shade of suspicion over the good as well as the bad; over solvent as well as over insolvent. Obviously, the danger which British merchants run with Canadian customers, over and above the ordinary risks of trade, must be a detriment to the general credit of the Dominion.' This sentiment, it will be observed, has found a proper echo in the THE CANADIAN DRY GOODS REVIEW, whose outspoken article on the subject we reprint elsewhere. We hope the agitation will not be allowed to subside, but that the demand for reform will be speedily pushed to a happy consummation."

The Ontario Express and Transportation Company, whose advertisement has appeared in the four last numbers of the REVIEW, has after a long stubborn fight against the Grand Trunk Railway fully vindicated their position to do business on all Canadian lines of railway. Although beaten in the courts they brought their case before the Committee on Banking and Commerce at Ottawa, and succeeded in getting their bill passed which removes any doubt as to the legality of the formation of the Company, and permits them to do a general express business as soon as they satisfy the treasury board that \$500,000 of stock has been subscribed and \$100,000 paid up. As \$631,000 stock has already been subscribed and \$137,000 paid up the necessary authority to do business will, no doubt, be promptly forthcoming. The Company now threaten to sue the Grand Trunk Railway Company and the Canadian Express Company for the loss they have sustained through their action in preventing them doing business since May 1st. They claim that their loss has been \$1000 per day which mounts up to a respectable figure.

CORRESPONDENCE.

We solicit letters from our readers on business topics. A practical merchant's views are always of great value to others in the same business, and we should be pleased to have our paper made the medium of exchanging such opinions and experiences.