

The Canadian Nail Combination.

The Canadian nail makers have for some time maintained a strong combination regulating prices and limiting the output of wire and cut nails in Canada. In the United States a powerful combination has existed for several years under the name of the National Cut and Wire Nail Manufacturers' Association. During the last few months the affairs of the American combination have become complicated, and it is now reported to be on the verge of dissolution. These two pools, Canadian and American, have been connected through Commissioner Port, who has attempted to regulate nail making in both countries. The exact basis of understanding between the two associations is probably known only to the members but trade conditions have shown the public that definite arrangements have been made to prevent international competition.

American merchants have been able to import nails that had been exported by members of the association to Europe, and undersell the combination price lists in New York. The American nail makers, in regulating the home market, had exported their surplus stocks, and selling them in competition with the makers of other countries, were compelled to accept competitive prices. American manufacturers have, however, not shipped their surplus stocks to Canada, although the Canadian duty was not high enough to prevent them selling goods in this country at European prices. Canada has been "protected" from the American nail manufacturers, and, it is said, this "protection" was secured through a royalty upon the output of the Canadian mills paid to Commissioner Park.

The Canadian combination of nail makers has used the familiar rebate system with which to force their terms upon the trade. Goods are sold at uniform prices, and the buyer is compelled to sign an agreement that he will not sell the nails at less than the minimum prices fixed by the association. In at the expiration of a limited time the manufacturers cannot prove that the merchant has violated his agreement, he is entitled to a rebate from the buying price, which forms his profit. While these uniform price lists have some redeeming features, they have all but destroyed the advantages to be gained from skill in selling merchandise. The business of the country is being absorbed by the few houses that can afford to employ numerous travellers and make frequent visits to the retail trade.

When the association was formed here it was probably true that prices were below the point of production at a profit. At first only moderate advances on cost price were made, but in the course of time the combination grew bolder, and it is a general opinion in the trade that nails have been sold at exorbitant prices during the past year. Excessive prices are the natural result of price regulation by the producer. The policy is short-sighted, but the temptation of present gains is not to be overcome by the possibility of future losses.

When manufacturers are carrying excessive stocks it is the usual custom to lower prices, but the combined nail makers found it a better plan to raise prices. Notice is given to the wholesale trade that prices will be advanced on a certain day, and to cover themselves, the merchants are forced to buy stock although they may have sufficient goods on hand to answer present requirements. The merchants have been compelled, oftentimes much against their will, to assume the burdens incident to carrying large stocks.

The Canadian manufacturers of wire nails have prospered in an especial manner through the combination. They have control over the supply of raw material used in the manufacture of wire nails, and the independent fac-

tory at Brantford, which has recently offered opposition to the combination has been compelled to import supplies from the United States. As Mr. Waterous, the owner of the factory, pointed out to the Tariff Commission when in session at Brantford, the combination had resorted to various devices to effect the closing down of his factory or force him into the association. The method of warfare used by the nail combination, withholding supplies of raw material from competitors, subsidizing the manufacturers of nail-making machinery and buying up competitors, are expensive, and would not be resorted to if it were not the intention to make the public, in the long run, stand the cost.

The combined wire nail makers appear to have overplayed their part. Capital has been attracted to the industry by the reports of excessive profits, and the nail-making plants in Canada have a far greater capacity than the limited consumption of the country requires. On the strength of this excessive plant the manufacturers have raised the "hard times" cry, and have asked that the tariff be left unchanged, and some would even petition that it be increased. It is for the Government to consider whether under the circumstances high protection would bring relief, or whether a reduction in the tariff would not, in destroying the weapon of the Canadian combination, induce American makers of wire nails to export their surplus stocks to Canada in preference to more distant markets. The Monetary Times is adverse to making Canada the market for surplus stocks of American manufacturers; but the nail-making industry has become affected with a disease that can be cured only by drastic remedies.—Monetary Times.

The Tick Pest.

The Commercial has been asked for information about the new disease which is working much havoc on the Australian ranges. The following from the Town and Country Journal, of Sydney, Australia, tells about the epidemic:

With surprising rapidity of development a new enemy is making its appearance at the gates of the pastoralist. This is the tick pest, which has of late been heard of so much from Northern Queensland, where its ravages among big stock are of a character to excite well-grounded alarm for the future of the cattle-raising industry, not in Queensland alone but throughout the length and breadth of Australia. Herds of cattle attacked by the insidious pest have been almost wholly decimated in some of the effected districts within a few days. In the most infected places, cattle, after camping for the night, have been found to be literally covered with ticks, and they have succumbed within three days. So serious has the pest been that the Queensland Government has been compelled to take stringent measures for preventing its spread. With this object that portion of the colony north of the 24th parallel has been declared infected, and no cattle are allowed to travel southward from a point which may be defined by a line drawn westward from Rockhampton. But it is not only from travelling stock that the danger of the pest spreading is to be apprehended. It has been found that the vermin may be conveyed in hides and skins, and even in horns and hoofs and tallow. In a small piece of hide 6 inches square, exhibited in the Legislative Assembly the other day, there were some 80 full grown ticks, along with some thousands of younger ones in various stages of development. These were all dead, it is true. Salting, it is believed, kills them, but too much reliance must not be placed upon that. It is easy to see that if once this destructive pest spreads from Queensland to the other colonies the great dairying industry, as well as

that of meat-raising, would be menaced with destruction, and no one needs to be told what that would mean to New South Wales and Victoria, to say nothing of the other colonies. Very properly, therefore, the Government of New South Wales has taken prompt measures to guard against the introduction of the pest into this country. The Chief Inspector of Stock, Mr. Bruce, has, with the principal Government veterinarian, been sent to Queensland to make inquiry and to report. Further, a bill has been introduced into Parliament, and dealt with as a matter of extreme urgency, under which the Government is empowered to stop any cattle or the products of cattle, such as hides, horns, &c., from entering New South Wales from any colony declared to be infected. The Imported Stock Act of 1871 and the Amending Act of 1881 give large powers in this direction, but only in regard to stock arriving by sea. The new bill will empower the Government to declare any colony not a clean colony, and prohibit the entry of cattle or any stock products which may convey the disease. The promptitude of the Government in the matter is entirely commendable. In spite, however, of the seriousness of the danger, objections have been raised to a too hasty dealing with it, but these have not been strongly insisted upon. It will be impossible, of course, to apply a drastic preventative measure, such as the one now referred to, without injury to certain local interests. So large a number of cattle come into New South Wales from Queensland that a sudden stoppage of supplies from that quarter must materially raise the price of beef, particularly at such places as Broken Hill. The tanning industry, too, cannot but suffer, as also many callings directly connected with the cattle and meat trade; while, on the other hand, there will be the fortunate few who will largely profit by the artificial scarcity thus created. Still, desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and lesser evils must be endured in order that greater ones may be averted.

Literary Notes.

The Christmas issue of the Farmer's Advocate recently to hand appears in lithographed covers and contains a splendid colored engraving of three Shire mares, also many fine photo engravings from all parts of the Dominion and two from Scotland. This number contains articles by representative agricultural writers from every province in Canada, Great Britain and the United States. This Christmas number will be mailed to any one for 25c. The Advocate is an excellent authority on stock raising, dairying, and all other branches of agriculture and should prove a reliable journal for western farmers.

The Colonist Christmas number, issued last week, is a fine publication. It is devoted largely to sporting matters, and as Winnipeg is a city of champions in various lines of manly sports, there is room for a considerable display in this direction. The number is splendidly illustrated.

The January number of the Delineator is called the winter holiday number. With the new year is begun a feature of personal interest to women in the series of "Talks on Beauty," by Mary Cadwalader Jones gives a comprehensive glance at "Social Life in America." "At the Bayou," by T. C. De Leon, is a short story of the South. "The Division of the Income," is a suggestive consideration of how to make both ends meet financially. Mrs. A. R. Longstreet furnishes a readable biographical sketch of Miss Stimson. Maud G. Murray-Miller describes the "Debut in Society." Emma Haywood tells how to embroider fancy screens; and there is an article on the Mountmellick work now so popular. The Delineator Publishing Co., Toronto.