

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and commerce in Western Canada, including that part of Ontario west of Lake Huron, and the provinces of British Columbia and the Territories.

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A BAD FAILURE.

The failure of the Brandon Fruit and Produce Co., Ltd., which was briefly referred to in last week's Commercial, draws attention to the weakness of Canadian insolvency laws. There are numerous cases surrounding that failure which made it look very bad for the management of the company and which under the laws of Great Britain and other enlightened commercial countries would probably lead to the principals being sent to jail. Yet under Canadian law the offenders are safe from any punishment whatever.

The insolvency of the company was admitted on the 8th September, and must have been a foregone conclusion since the management for some time before that. Companies do not fail, as a rule, unexpectedly to their management. Yet in the face of what is in this case have been certain failure, large orders for goods were placed in the month as late as the 1st of the month and immediately after their receipt assignment was made. To honest people this looks like deliberate stealing, and should be a prison offence.

The only logical conclusion is that the houses with which it had dealings, particularly those with which it had dealings, were not to be insolvent, set out at the eleventh hour to enhance its assets by securing as much as it could of the goods of the unsuspecting wholesale dealers, and as late as the 1st of the month. Fortunately such cases as this are not common in the west. Failures, when they occur, are usually marked by honest desire on the part of the insolvent to entangle the least amount of money with the creditors involved. This case is one of the exceptions and furnishes tangible evidence of the need for some sort of legal enactment whereby the creditors may secure redress when defrauded of their goods, and the dishonest trader be brought to punishment.

BLUE BOOK ON BRITISH TRADE.

London, Eng., Sept. 16.—On the heels of Premier Chamberlain's academic display of his personal views of the fiscal problem, contained in his pamphlet "Familiar Free Trade," advance sheets of which were issued last night, came the long promised and much demanded government statistics dealing with that subject. They were issued this morning by the board of trade, in the shape of a blue book of nearly 500 pages of bewildering tables of figures, showing the trade and the industrial conditions in Great Britain and the industrial conditions in other countries. The interesting deductions were drawn, although the report upon what are regarded as points of fact. The statistics are, however, were chiefly confined to France, Germany and the United States.

Dealing exclusively with the tariffs of the various nations the blue book says the American system of draw-backs,

"necessarily results in inequality of treatment and may yield an export bounty to the best equipped manufacturers, while others sustain a loss."

In a table showing the ad valorem equivalent to import duties levied by foreign countries on the principal articles of British export, Russia comes first with 131 per cent., followed by States next with 73 per cent., and Austria follows with 35 per cent. That Germany comes sixth, it is pointed out that her existing tariff is so effective as to be more highly protective against Great Britain than any other country shows. Before the trade of the United Kingdom and any of the colonies should be reserved to British vessels, the board of trade states that the existing treaties with Austria, Greece and other countries should have to be denounced.

The tables show that the United Kingdom is most dependent on imported wheat. The question of wages and the cost of living, especially the price of food, which has figured so largely in the recent Chamberlain agitation, takes up pages and is summed up as follows: "The average level wages in the United States are one and a half times higher than in the United Kingdom, while in Germany wages are only two-thirds and in

to the protected countries and 44 per cent. to the others. In 1902 the proportion was 42 per cent. to the protected countries and 58 to the others.

A usual explanation is given of the much quoted excess imports over exports which so often has been held to be a sign of British trade decline. "The latest books says that while the excess yearly averages about \$90,000,000, the income receivable from foreign countries is calculated at \$312,500,000, added to the earnings of the British merchant fleet engaged in foreign trade calculated at \$450,000,000, is probably more than sufficient to account for the average excess of imports. Such estimates have never before been included, hence the misleading character of the usual figures.

Americans have made large investments in the United Kingdom of recent years and American re-purchases after exports and other securities are admitted to have to some extent affected the fiscal figures. "But they are not likely to form a serious factor."

Much attention is devoted to the tin, plate, iron and steel and the effect of the Dingley and McKinley tariffs. The figures show that the total ex-

porter of trade and commerce be provided to take action in the manner provided by subsection 2 of section 25 of the Grain Act.

It is to be noted that this resolution be forwarded to the minister of trade and commerce through Mr. Castle, and he be directed to cause the same to be done.

A new committee was appointed to interview the railway officials in an endeavour to ascertain what their intentions are in regard to the advanced storage rate.

TRADES UNION LAW.

Two very important cases affecting trade-union law were before the British court of appeal recently, in which judgment was given adverse to the unions. These are discussed in the current issue of Engineering. The first case had reference to what is known as the "Wish wash-day." It was first tried last year, before Justice Bigham, when the plaintiffs—the Glamorganshire Coal Company and seventy-three other colliery proprietors—sought £76,000 as damages against the Miners' Federation. The judgment that the application had not rendered itself liable, because it was actuated by an honest desire to benefit the miners, and that there was no malice towards the employers; and, further, that the defendant federation had no prospect of success in its appeal was against that decision, and the appeal was allowed. The points raised were not only those of a breach of contract, and the federation not only advised the men to break the contracts, but actually instructed them to do so, and called the men out. The federation in this action did not differ materially from that taken by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in a similar case. The second case was of a totally different character. This arose out of some defalcation of the British total of defalcation of the Amalgamated Laborers' Union.

The officer of the branch was proceeded against for the recovery of the money, without success. The case was then expelled from the union, and the secretary was held to be in legal limits. But when the man obtained work, the secretary of the union instructed him to employ him. If the defaulting member was employed, all the union members ceased work. The union then instructed the secretary, Mr. Justice Walton ruling that the union was not responsible for the action of the secretary. That decision was appealed against, and the Lords allowed, the Lords Justices Vaughan Williams, Romer and Stirling being agreed that the union was responsible. In the face of the Taff Vale case, the other cases fixing responsibility upon the union for the action of its officials, one cannot see what other decision could be arrived at. A certain amount of dismay seems to have been felt by some of the labor leaders over the two decisions. The member for Worcester expressed his opinion to have said that he rather welcomed the decisions; the member for Battersea said that the union was bound to see their real position. We must work for an alteration of the law, and the union must not be allowed to "better case we shall have." That may be so, but parliament is hardly likely to sit in the present session, even at the behests of trade unions.

RESULT OF STARTING RIGHT.

It is related that W. A. Garrett, who recently resigned the general management of a great railroad to become an agent, was approached when he began as a clerk in a railroad office by another clerk, who said: "Mr. Garrett, you are a man of a tin." You want always to keep your card littered with papers, so that when you are asked to do anything you will think you're terribly busy. "Then he won't pile any more work on to me," he thought, and he ignored the suggestion and cleared his desk as rapidly as possible. The result was that in the next month, while Garrett draws nearly that sum per day,

Residence Street in the Town of Pilot Mound, Man.

France three-quarters of the average prevailing in the United Kingdom."

The percentage of family incomes, taking New York as the capital of the United States, is estimated on the basis of 100 per cent for the United Kingdom, for France, 88 per cent., and for Germany, 59 per cent. The mean weekly rate of wages in skilled trades in the United States is estimated at 173 per cent. on the same basis. Dealing with the iron and steel trade, the report says that the iron market has fallen off in the United Kingdom since the introduction of the American iron, and that the iron market has actually closed. It points out that imports from the United States have increased since 1900. The available evidence goes to show that the United States, for some time past, for the most part has been able to absorb a great proportion of the total output.

Dealing with the proportion of America's exports to all foreign countries, the report says: "This export trade could hardly have been carried unless the foreigners were granted lower prices than prevailed in the United States."

One of the most important phases dealt with in the blue book are imports and exports. The tables show that exports from the United Kingdom to the United States declined from \$15,000,000 in 1899 to \$17,500,000 in 1902, while the imports rose from \$485,000,000 to \$525,000,000. The total exports to all foreign countries declined in the same period \$36,000,000, though when the colonies are included the decline only amounts to \$3,000,000. The proportion of the United Kingdom exports, as between protected and unprotected countries, in the markets of the world, has been reversed since 1859. Then it was 56 per cent.

ports of tin from the United Kingdom have declined only a little over \$5,000,000 since 1897, with a marked increase in the quantity produced and in the value of a number of mills since 1898.

GRAIN EXCHANGE MEETING.

The regular weekly meeting of the Grain Exchange was held Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, and was presided over by the chairman. Two notices of motion to amend by-laws of the exchange, regarding the connection with the inauguration of an option market were given, and votes will be taken on these matters to be held on the 29th inst.

The committee of the council appointed by the minister of trade and commerce in connection with the first notice given the warehouse commission in regard to increased storage rates at terminal elevators, which was to include fire insurance, reported by correspondence that was passing between the warehouse commission and the railway officials, the committee had not taken action and as the railway companies had now notified the warehouse commission that they have withdrawn that part of their notice to him, including the insurance in the advanced rate, the committee now asked for instruction.

The following resolution was then carried unanimously: "This exchange strongly protests against the announcement, additional charges of 1/4 cent per bushel at terminal elevator for receiving, cleaning and shipping of grain by the railway companies at such an increased rate is unreasonable, especially in view of the increased volume of business. This exchange considers it an injustice to both the producer and the grain trader of the West, and would ask that the

October cattle season advanced the market. The price of live stock was only a small amount of space has yet been taken at the higher rate.

Due to the heavy rain on Saturday, Sept. 5, the live stock shipments from the port of Montreal numbered 3,162 head of cattle and 316 of sheep.