

the British merchant *wants to sell*, and tells his prospective customer: "See here, I was in business before you were born. My goods are the best in the world. I have been selling them in a certain way since 1799. You don't know how to buy, and you cannot have my goods unless you will agree to buy them in the way I recommend," it is a totally different proposition. The Canadian merchant may not know all he should about buying goods abroad, but he knows when he is snubbed. And he is very apt to say to the proud merchant prince of "our little mother isle, God bless her," that he can be served with less fuss and more satisfaction by producers in other countries.

Some illustrations of the kind of reception a man meets with when he goes over to try and interest British houses in Canadian import trade must be reserved for another issue. Our readers will find them rich though they are not rare.

EARLY PROSPECTS FOR THE CROPS.

The spring season is advanced sufficiently now to render it possible to gain a fairly definite idea as to the condition of fall wheat after it has passed through the winter. Some of the reports from Ontario, which is becoming an increasingly fall wheat Province, are adverse, but on the whole they are very encouraging, particularly so in view of the many dismal forecasts which have been made on account of the absence of snow. From Guelph, which is quite a centre of this industry, comes word that wheat has never passed a winter more successfully than the last. A few spots on the knolls look bare, but on the whole the plant never looked finer. It is browned somewhat on the top, but this is attributed to the light snow-fall, and the roots seem thoroughly sound and healthy. In Peel county, for instance, around Streetsville a remarkable improvement has set in during the past few days, and most people say there will be an average crop, if not one better than usual. Clover in that county has suffered somewhat, the frost having heaved it considerably on low-lying ground. There is still hope, however, for a fair crop even there. A different tale comes from the Bay of Quinte district. In Prince Edward county clover is said to have been almost ruined by the alternate spells of cold and warm weather, but wheat seems to have suffered less than expected. Port Hope reports are favorable. Chatham district farmers say the prospects for wheat are good, and some add "never better." Around Tilbury, in Kent, there is a larger acreage planted than usual. Spring seeding in this section is already well advanced. Both clover and wheat in the district around Kingston have suffered a good deal, according to latest reports, and many farmers will sow the latter again. Pastures, too, have been affected detrimentally. On sandy soil around Welland in the Niagara district the wheat crop, we hear, has not looked better than now for years. The wheat in the neighborhood of Brantford is well advanced, and the clover, barring untoward weather conditions from this time forward, will probably be fair. A good wheat crop seems assured near St. Thomas. Around Stratford, except in cases where it got a bad or late start, it looks very promising.

From Waterloo county comes word of a large increase in sugar-beet acreage, contracts having been signed for a total acreage of 1,769 acres.

In the Grimsby fruit district spring work has begun in earnest, and most observers state that the prospects for a good crop of fruit were never better than they are this year. It is anticipated by some that the strawberry crop will be light, but at present most beds look very good.

Interesting reports are beginning to be received from C. P. R. agents in the West. These indicate that seeding operations, while not in full blast, may be said to be general throughout the Western Provinces, and in some portions the work is far advanced. On the main line West seeding

has begun at many points, Burnside, which includes Portage la Prairie, being the first district to report operations as general. Seeding is as fully advanced in the new Provinces as in Manitoba, especially in Saskatchewan. On the whole the spring is opening in a way quite satisfactory to those concerned in the grain crop, a large majority of agents report an increase of from 5 to 10 per cent. in the acreage of that crop sown. In rare cases an increase of 25 per cent. is reported, and in a few instances there is a small decrease. At certain comparatively new points the increase is still larger. Weyburn, for instance, reports an increase of 40 per cent.; Macoun, 65 per cent.; Dundurn, on the Prince Albert line, 50 per cent., and Stoughton, on the Moose Mountain, 35 per cent.

OUR AUSTRALIAN LETTER.

The Canadian agents seem to have stopped grumbling at Canadian manufacturers, though the causes, therefore, have not ceased. The Canadian trade is better done than it used to be, but is not better than it ought to be. One complaint made is the inequality of goods shipped. In some cases it is evidently due to the lack of proper supervision in shipments, the packer taking what comes to hand without proper inspection. In other cases it is attributable to the fact that the agent here has, to secure orders, cut the price, and the Canadian manufacturers have cut the quality in accordance with the price. This is a serious mistake. The purchasers here expect the goods to be equal to the sample. The Canadian manufacturer is not bound to fill an order if his conditions have not been observed, and he should advise, not only his agent, but the Australian buyer of the fact. In no case, unless the buyer has assented to it, should lower grade goods than sample be sent.

The old story is constantly heard that orders have been refused because prices have gone up in Canada without the agent here being notified. He has taken the orders in Australia in good faith and only finds three months afterwards that they will not be filled. The Canadian manufacturer should cable changes of prices, and if he carelessly does not advise his agent he is in honor bound to fill at the old rate the order sent to him. Failures to do so may tell against his trade in a time when he will be more anxious for this market than he is to-day.

Another point that manufacturers seeking this market must carefully consider—the matter of introduction. There is some inclination on the part of large houses to make direct connection with the Canadian exporter, but still the probability is that no business will result from correspondence; and commission agents must be employed when a direct representative is not sent out. The great difficulty in this system is that the agent does business only with wholesale houses, who in reality do not introduce goods; and many lines which, if properly made known, could be sold here, utterly fail to get a recognition. As an illustration, a man was selling a very considerable number of Canadian washing machines. There was not a house, wholesale or retail, who would look at this line, though efforts had been made to get some one to take hold of it. This man securing the agency paid no attention at all to the trade, but went directly to the housekeeper, as Yankee clocks were sold in the olden times, and he reports that it is a rare case where he makes these machines known that he has to take them out of the house. The difficulty is to get a man of this kind, and still more difficult is it to get a firm who will import the goods and employ such a man to properly introduce them. Canadian exporters are, no doubt, beset with offers to introduce goods upon payment of a fixed amount in addition to the regular commission and, as some of them know who have paid it, without much success following. The payment of a certain sum is legitimate, but the Canadian exporter should have some assurance that the money will be expended for the purpose for which it is paid, and that the recipient knows sufficient of the trade here that he will not undertake to introduce a line unless he knows that the market will take it.