

abounds. Here and there the food supplied the table is bad, and the sleeping accommodation on a par with it. The bar, it is almost needless to say, is usually well supplied. The responsibility for this condition of affairs lies largely with the license inspectors. The Government regulations call for certain conveniences to the travelling public in order to secure a license, but that these seldom obtain is evident to everyone who has occasion to "put up" at a rural hotel. Even "in towns and villages of respectable size there is often a lack of proper accommodation. Patience has long ceased to be a virtue with the commercial travellers. Some time ago the Commercial Travellers' Association of Canada took the matter up and decided to lay their case before the Ontario Government. In pursuance of this plan a deputation waited upon the Provincial Treasurer, Hon. Mr. Harcourt, a few weeks ago, and how well it presented its case may be gathered from the fact that last week instructions were sent out to all license inspectors to more rigidly enforce the regulations. The commercial travellers may just as well, however, disabuse their minds of any idea they may have that there will be anything more than an isolated improvement here and there. Experience teaches this. Now that the Government has stirred up the inspectors, the "commercials" should see that the inspectors stir up the hotel-keepers and specify instances where they do not. They now seem to have got the ear of the Government, and they should not hesitate to make good use of it.

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Toronto needs a fruit market. Long before it became the fruit centre that it now is was the want felt. More than once have the fruit men started an agitation for one, and more than once have they been on the point of securing the desideratum. Another of these periodical agitations has again materialized, and one day last week a deputation representing wholesalers and growers waited on the Property Committee of the City Council asking for the establishment of a fruit market. What is desired is a market that would be both adjacent to the railways and to the steamboats, and it seems that the fruit men have in view such a site just west of the foot of Yonge street. It is owned by the city, and is no doubt the best obtainable for the purpose, and there

would be no need of curtailing the space for there is room enough and to spare.

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The Patrons of Industry are extending their operations in the Province of Quebec. The Grand Trustee was in Montreal a few days ago negotiating with salt dealers for the supply of Liverpool salt to all the associations of Eastern Ontario. How easily some people can be gulled may be gathered from the fact that the Patrons around Belleville alone recently contracted to take 5,000 barrels of salt a year for three years!

ADVANCE IN STARCH.

An all round advance of about one cent per pound is announced in starch. An agreement between the manufacturers seems to be the cause. Something like a year ago the understanding between the three manufacturers in the Dominion fell through on account of one of the parties to it selling direct to retailers instead of through the wholesale houses as formerly. From then until the present each was for himself. Now they appear to be acting in unison again. At any rate the notice issued Thursday of last week withdrawing quotations was signed by the three manufacturers, and all were of one mind in regard to announcing an advance.

"There has been a loss on almost all lines of starch made by the Canadian factories since the agreement fell through last year," said a Front street man to THE GROCER, "and they found it absolutely necessary to recover this. Today's prices are not higher than those charged prior to the break in the agreement," he concluded.

These are the manufacturers concerned in the agreement: The British America Starch Company, Brantford; Edwardsburg Starch Company, Montreal, and the St. Lawrence Starch Company, Port Credit. The list just issued is subject to change without notice, and freight is prepaid on ten-box lots assorted.

CHATS WITH BUSINESS MEN.

"Yes," said E. G. Williams, of Warren Bros. & Boomer, to me Saturday as he tucked away his samples, "the roads are still in a terrible condition. Yesterday I was driving in four feet of snow, and sometimes the wheels would be right down to the hubs in the ruts. Occasionally you'll strike a place where you'll find a little sleighing, but it's rare I can tell you. How do I find trade? Oh, not so bad. One thing I know, and that is that a good many who were careless about buying sugar a few weeks ago are now getting anxious," he concluded as he closed his valise with a click and placed it on a stool with a thud as if to emphasize what he said.

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"I was just thinking," said a coffee man to me Saturday as he emerged from

his lavatory, towel in hand, "of the peculiarities of the coffee consumers of this country. Now up among the German population of Waterloo and Berlin, and in the Mennonite and Icelandic settlements in the North-west Brazilian coffees are most used. They like strong coffee, and I can tell you they know how to make it. They buy their coffee green, and do their own roasting and grinding. In the cities the people go in more for mixtures and the milder grades of coffees. They won't go to the trouble of roasting and grinding. Oh, pshaw, city folks don't know what good coffee is," he added, giving his hands a vigorous rub and throwing the towel over his shoulder.

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Saturday I ran against a gentleman who is interested in the Lakeport Preserving Company. "I might tell you," said he in answer to a query, "that our manager, H. J. Matthews, has just returned from a trip down through the Eastern and Maritime Provinces, and he says that dealers generally are pretty well cleaned out of canned goods, and that"—

"What kind of canned goods? All kinds?" I interposed.

"Just such kinds as these," he replied, as he adjusted his specs, drew a sheet of paper from a drawer, and ran his finger down the list. "Tomatoes, peas, corn, apples, and so forth and so forth. And he says the prospects are favorable for good prices."

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"I hear a good deal of complaint these these days from people who have recently started into business regarding seizures of tobacco," remarked a city traveller to me a few days ago. "For trivial, and often unintentional, infractions of the regulations, they have had their tobacco taken from them, and some of those who raised opposition were fined in addition. Of course the regulations must be enforced, but there is a right as well as a wrong way of doing so. What I claim is that with regulations so complicated the Inland Revenue Department should issue instructions more frequently than it does regarding them to those selling tobacco, cigars, etc."

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"Do you know," said a grocer who had been denouncing pedlars to me, "that we can frequently buy oranges, lemons, bananas, and such like cheaper from the Italian pedlars than from the wholesale houses? I have done it myself, and have seen others do it. How is it?"

"I don't know. But I suppose you are aware that they sometimes club together and bring in a carload themselves," I remarked.

"By Jove, that's so. I had forgotten that. And I guess that's how they do it," he resumed, the perplexed look vanishing from his face.

BYSTANDER.