

has received a heavy blow, while Japan has acquired a predominant position in Asia.

An illuminating glimpse of the feeling of the Japanese with respect to the war is to be found in a remark made by Hon. T. Nossé, the Imperial Consul for Japan in Canada: "We started to teach them [the Russians] a lesson," said he, "and I think we have attained that end. This being the case, we can afford to be generous." Japan engaged in this war because she was tired of Russian aggression, and in his opinion "the good offices and influence of the King of England and the President of the United States had much to do with the cessation of hostilities." How much these influences had to do with the settlement now reached by persuading Japan to yield certain points we may only speculate. But that a stop has been put to horrible bloodshed and suffering and to the waste of war is a thing that the whole world will be satisfied and glad to know. But the general impression remains that while Russia was stubbornly resolved to the last to do nothing to secure peace, Japan has shown generosity that leaves her a moral victor, while, indeed, she secures practically all she claimed before the war began.

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#### CANADIAN BUTTER IN BRITAIN.

Reports made by those who have recently investigated the dairy trade situation in Great Britain concur in stating the likelihood of a good demand continuing for Canadian butter for some time after the expiration of the war. Prof. J. H. Dean, of the Ontario Agricultural College, is authority for the statement that the best Canadian cheddar cheese is equal to the best English and Scotch cheddars, but it does not bring the same price. The best Canadian butter is probably equal to the best Danish when first made, but owing to the greater distance and longer time required to reach the market it is not so good when delivered. It also lacks the uniformity which is so characteristic of Danish butter. This uniformity is the result of uniform methods of manufacture and the adoption of pasteurization and pure cultures in making the butter. The trade in the Mother Country seems to be agreed that some form of preservative is necessary in order to have saltless butter hold its flavor, and the danger is lest the Canadian maker should add too much, one-half of one per cent. of boracic acid being the maximum allowed by British law. All investigators agree apparently in the idea that considerable preference is being shown in the Motherland to articles of Canadian make. The greater the necessity, therefore, that we should always send to the United Kingdom good and honest wares.

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#### RETAIL STOREKEEPING.

It was an Old Country wholesale merchant who once said to the writer long ago: "You may call it aspiration, if you like, or you may call it dissatisfaction at working for some one else, but there always have been and there always will be more persons wanting to 'go into business' than there is room for. And people are foolish to give them credit as they do." If that were true in the United Kingdom twenty years ago, it appears equally true in some parts of Canada to-day; and not less true that such people get credit to a degree and under circumstances which are enough to make us suspect the sanity of

the commercial travellers who send in the orders and the men in the warehouse who fill them.

We receive weekly from various correspondents particulars of failures of retail traders or compromises they have arranged, and we print them in our Mercantile Summary as part of "The Day's Work," so to speak, of the Canadian commercial community. Sometimes there is an exceptional case, where the man has met with misfortune, and his downfall cannot be attributed to the usual causes; but as a rule the failing retail trader is a weakling, who overbuys, or who does not get profit enough to cover his expenses, or who will not give his business proper attention. Illustrations of this will occur naturally to many who are interested, but we take from to-day's Quebec and Montreal letters some of the latest:

A dealer in hardware, named J. H. Lacroix, at Shawinigan Falls, Quebec, is insolvent, and his affairs are in the hands of Kent & Turcotte, assignees, Montreal. The liabilities reach to about \$9,000, and the over-liberal extending of credit is said to be the cause of failure. Lacroix was formerly a clerk in Nicolet, Quebec, and began business four years ago on quite small capital, hoping, no doubt, to grow with the place and become a merchant prince.

L. N. Cote, of Seven Islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, was born and brought up a farmer, but at the age of nearly sixty he became imbued with ambitions to become a merchant, so, selling his farm in Rimouski County, he embarked in a general business at the above location, which is far down the river on the north shore, a remote place, also doing something in a hotel-keeping way, as well as trading along the coast, not in a common schooner, but with a yacht, which he equipped with a gasoline engine. None of his ventures have panned out well, and he has now assigned on the demand of a Quebec creditor.

It is announced that A. Lamarche, of Montreal, is appointed curator to the estate of Myer Goldberg, who has been a dealer in men's furnishings in Montreal. Goldberg was formerly an operative in a clothing factory, and started storekeeping in a small way two or three years ago. It is a marvel that he ever got credit, for he had no means to speak of, no remarkable ability, no acquaintance with or aptitude for retail merchandising.

We need quote no more. Nor is the subject a pleasant one. Manufacturers and wholesale merchants are to blame if they give credit to a weakling, an incompetent, who essays to start a shop alongside some of their old and trusted customers. He can only divide their legitimate trade and render it harder for them to pay their bills and make a living.

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#### FIRE-FIGHTING IN SMALL PLACES.

We had occasion to mention in our summary columns last week a number of fires in small places in different Provinces. In one case a dozen houses were burned, in another twenty-nine. This week there are more such occurrences. Too often such little places have inefficient fire appliances, or none at all. Then there are forest fires, which sweep away villages which have been, without prescience, placed in the midst of the forest. For a fresh example here is Belmont, a settlement eight miles from Truro, in Nova Scotia, which was nearly swept out of existence last Tuesday afternoon by forest fires. The fire, which consumed seventeen buildings, including the railway station, is supposed to have started in the woods from a spark from a train, and as a result of it six families are homeless. We are all too careless in this country about fire; all too