

count were to be met by their customers with similar proposals they would have less hesitation in knowing what to do. And it is not alone the man who has usually been recognized as a good mark that takes the commercial traveller by surprise with cash offers for heavy discounts: the man whose custom to the wholesaler bordered on speculation has also begun to discount his own paper. The position of the traveller is rendered exceedingly difficult by this change, a condition of things brought about largely by the increased amounts of country produce, grain, cattle, &c., sent to outside markets—by the larger number of persons employed in the various new or enlarged industries, but also, to a great extent, by the thorough weeding out of superfluous dealers during the depression, which thus happily wrought its own cure. We trust that the many thousand readers of the *JOURNAL OF COMMERCE* have each and all become partakers of the long deferred improvement, and shall be glad to have substantial proof thereof from those whose date on their address label still shows '79, '78 and even remoter years.

#### THE RIVER DISASTERS.

The comparatively open weather of the early part of the week effected little towards materially improving the positions of the grounded or ice-bound vessels down the river. The *Peruvian* and *Dominion* after an ineffectual attempt to get away have been obliged to put back into the mouth of the Richelieu river, while the positions of the *Boyne* and the Dominion steamship *Ottawa* have become more threatening. It is feared that the latter may become a wreck.

Various causes are assigned for these disasters apart from the main consideration that they imprudently delayed their departure, and perhaps in one or two instances were greedily overloaded. Blame is attached to the pilots by people who fancy that these so-called experienced navigators should be able in case of necessity to run the channel without buoys or other water marks to guide their course. It is said that the *Ottawa's* pilot, uncertain as to the new channel, which is only 300 feet wide, attempted to enter the old passage and instead of striking it, ran on the boulders in the ridge between. The vessel is said to have been drawing 23 feet 6 inches at the time, and in view of the fact that the heavy westerly storm had blown much water out of the channels, quite a common occurrence when rivers at intervals widen into lakes, it is doubtful whether, being so deeply freighted, she could have steamed through the older channel which is three feet shallower than the new one, even had the pilot succeeded in entering it. It is suggested that Can-Buoys surmounted by flag staffs would be more serviceable than the light poles now in use, as less liable to be over run by new ice. The former are liable in frosty weather, leaning at a sharp angle with the current, to accumulate ice on the upper surface, the weight of which

very soon sinks them; but there is nothing to prevent their being made cross-shaped or with such an attachment to the pole, so that as one sinks through the weight of ice another arm would be raised in its stead. Complaint is also made as to the narrowness of the channel, many of the vessels passing through being over 300 feet in length, but as there is little possibility of anchorage in such a bed there can be little or no probability of swinging across stream. It is not likely, however, in view of the expectations that the Ottawa Government may assume the channel debt that further widening will be undertaken very soon.

The whole circumstances are most unfortunate, for apart from the direct losses to owners, shippers and insurance companies, the reputation of our magnificent water course will suffer in other parts of the world and, of course, with the usual exaggerations. The lesson, however, will not be lost: masters of vessels are not likely to be caught again so late in port, and champagne suppers will be postponed to a more auspicious season. The increased business at this port has been more than enough for the carrying service, and some of the owners may have come to remember the "Last straw that broke the camel's back." Perhaps the most practical suggestion for a prevention of future accidents of the kind is that a strong vessel such as the *Progress* (unfortunately in the lower waters recently when wanted) should be ready and close at hand during the few weeks about the close of navigation. There need be no lack of employment for such a vessel during the early part of the season. It is also suggested that had there been more unanimity among the underwriters the recent unfortunate delays in port would not have been made; but companies who felt that in ceasing to write on the 1st November in previous years, they had been losing customers, tended rather to the other extreme to make amends the present season, and with most unfortunate results.

THE COMMUNITY has been exercised the last few days over the flight of Frank J. Keller, advocate, of this city, under peculiar circumstances. Complaint laid before the Police Magistrate by Mr. Wm. Kerr Hepburn on the 29th ult., set forth that on the 10th Oct., 1879, Dame Eliza Maria Mitchell, of Stonehaven, Scotland, by her attorney, Henry A. Budden, gave to the complainant, to Arthur Wm. Hepburn, of Picton, Ontario, and Francis John Keller, as trustees, the sum of £2,000 in trust for Miss Matilda Hepburn, her grand-daughter; £2,000 in trust for Miss Emily Hepburn, her second grand-daughter, and £1,000 for Miss Florence Hepburn, her third grand-daughter: which sums were to be invested in bank stocks or mortgages on real estate. The interest on these sums was to be paid in part to the complainant for the education and the maintenance of the said three young ladies until they came of age or married. It was provided also that in case of the decease of any of them, the money should go to their issue if any; and in case of the decease of any of them without issue, that the money should go to the next of kin. It was provided also that none of the said trustees should be responsible for any

of the defaults of the others. The complaint then set forth that the said Keller, on or about the 2nd of January 1879, did, with intent to defraud, appropriate \$7,149.75 of the trust funds to his own purpose. Mr. Keller was accordingly taken into custody, but was released on bail of \$4,000 furnished by Mr. Millen, contractor, and another distant connection resident in Montreal. His arrest on a capias was avoided by his sudden departure on the western train on Wednesday night. He has been heard of from Ogdensburg, N.Y., and it is not probable he will make his appearance in court to-day. Although said to be in possession of a good practice, Mr. Keller somewhat surprised his friends by the manner in which he dressed and lived, and he is said to have been lately addicted to gambling at cards. The misappropriation was discovered some time ago, when Mr. Keller's pretext that he had invested the money in life insurance policies would no longer wear, and exposure was avoided by his wife's relinquishing to the Hepburn family her sole right under marriage contract to the furniture and household effects. She is reported as having returned to her family in Quebec. Mr. Keller is reported to have attempted blowing out his brains in a restaurant on Wednesday evening, but was prevented by a brother barrister. He stated to some friends at the Bonaventure depot, when stepping on the train, that the matter was not likely to be prosecuted for the sake of some elderly persons, whose connection with the business would not well bear light. His papers will probably furnish some interesting information.

THE CANADA Atlantic Railway Company, the Amalgamated Coteau and Province Line, and the Montreal and City of Ottawa Junction railways, have cancelled the contract between the Company and Messrs. Baile and Stanton, for the construction of the railway, in consequence of their failing to proceed with the work at the time stipulated in the contract. It is said the Company have several offers for the contract under consideration, and that work is likely to be commenced upon the road at an early date.

Mr. W. GOODERHAM, jun., of Toronto, in a letter to the *Globe*, says that upon Toronto granting \$300,000, and some of the other municipalities who have already voted over \$800,000 modifying some of the conditions contained in their by-laws, he and his partners, Mr. Worts and Mr. George Gooderham, will be prepared at once to go on and build the Toronto and Ottawa Railway, to finish it with all speed, and run it as an independent road, free from the control of any other company. The *Globe* had charged Mr. Gooderham with being merely the agent and figurehead of the Grand Trunk in the purchase of the charter of the Road.

Messrs. Lake Bros., Napanee, have sold their grocery store to J. F. Smith; Mr. A. Tobey, harnessmaker, has sold his business in Napanee to R. J. Smith, and removed to Picton, where he is about opening a shop. Abel Yates has sold out the Briscoe House Napanee, to S. J. Potter, who has refitted and refurbished the hotel in first-class style. G. Tait Scott, proprietor of Scott's Banking House Wingham, Ont., has opened a branch at Oakville, Ont.