

for all employers, and unfortunately those who are anxious to shorten the hours of labor are much more at the mercy of greedy competitors than in wholesale business. To the credit of many of the retail merchants be it said, that they have done much already in this direction, and paid no heed to their greedy opponents, or any advantage they may gain by their greedy policy. In the end they are, perhaps, not losers, for such men can always secure the services of the most valuable employees, and one has no difficulty in distinguishing between the smart, competent clerk of the liberal employer, and the dragged out poor blockhead of the greedy competitor. The very state in which stock is kept, and other items of general appearance in stores are sufficient of a guide to the most casual observer, so that he can distinguish between such establishments. In this, as in other cities, stores which close at reasonable hours in the evening, have invariably the cream of the trade in their lines of business, while the miserable niggard, who slaves out the existence of a lot of underpaid and incompetent clerks for fifteen or sixteen hours every day, has to content himself with the dregs which his more liberal competitors do not want. Misery loves to prolong itself, and the most long-winded developments of its love are to be found in the actions of the man who thus outrages all generous principles of trade, by making the paltry remuneration he pays his employees little short of the price of blood.

The way in which trade is divided between generous and greedy merchants shows plainly, that even the careless public have their leanings towards men of a generous policy. Few people care about doing business with a niggard, and men, who have that disposition so deeply ingrained in their nature that they cannot overcome its promptings, would, as a matter of policy, find it profitable to follow the advice of Hamlet to his mother: "Assume a virtue, if you have it not." But hints to such men are valueless, unless they are of the class received by the Irishman, who, on being kicked down a flight of stairs on to the street, got up, shook himself, and remarked coolly, "Begorra, that was a broad hint to get out." The public can make their hints to such niggards equally broad, without resorting to the shoe-leather application. They can come to the decision and abide by it, that they will purchase nothing

from any merchant who does not close his place of business by seven o'clock in the evening. Let a large proportion of the general public come to such an arrangement in their minds, and we will soon see an end to those blood-sucking employers, who carry on a slavery much more galling than millions of the African race have been held in by those who claimed the right to them as their property.

DECREASED IMPORTS AND LIGHT BURDENS.

In another portion of our columns will be found a statement of the value of imports and duty collected during the first four months of 1884, and a comparison of the customs returns during the first quarters of 1882, 1883 and 1884. The figures are not without their lessons, and form a basis from which conclusions can be easily drawn. In the boom with which 1882 opened the gross imports were valued at \$1,100,007, while the duties collected reached \$235,243.73, and but for the snow blocks, and other transportation drawbacks, which existed during that period, these imports would probably have reached \$1,500,000. During the first quarter of 1883, when population had materially increased in the Northwest, and inflation was on the decline, imports reached in value \$1,154,152, and duties collected \$254,515.18. During the first quarter of the current year the value of imports fell to \$402,865, and duty collected to \$86,390.77.

The casual observer, who did not understand the true state of affairs in this country, would at the first glance over these figures conclude that Winnipeg, and the whole Northwest to which it is the commercial key, had suddenly made a heavy drop in trade importance. A closer investigation of the matter would undoubtedly produce another opinion, and show how they are strong evidences of the health and growth of the same. In our boom days, when a policy of fill and fetch more was pursued here, almost every article, beyond the actual bread of our people, had to be imported, and instances are not wanting when even breadstuffs were imported. The extreme of over-importation was reached a year ago, and was quickly followed by a rapid depreciation in values, and a period of trade depression, such as few new countries have passed through. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the parent of ingenuity

in all things, and the necessity brought about by depression has set the people of the Northwest to local production. Importations of any description of breadstuffs, even to oatmeal, are now a thing of the past, the past winter is probably the last in which we will require to import dairy produce; the importation of meats has been steadily falling-off, and, in fact, such has been the case with all articles of food, and the demand is being gradually supplied from local production. In this respect decreased imports have been an inimical blessing to the Northwest, and this is heightened when we add the fact that our exports are increasing with equal rapidity. We are on the right track now, and the less we pay to the Dominion revenue through the Custom house the better for the Northwest, and, indeed, considering the way in which the Ottawa Government treats this province, we have no desire to see our payments to their coffers increase.

There is another circumstance which has no doubt contributed much towards decreasing our imports this spring, and that is the cautious feeling which pervades commercial circles throughout the whole Northwest. A year ago the trade of the country was carrying an enormous load, the result of overstocking. This spring purchases have been very light, traders are free from the load, and are progressing surely, if a little slowly. It would not be far from a correct approximation if we placed the liabilities of the whole community of the Northwest at 40 per cent. of what they were a year ago, while the prospect of trade is immensely brighter now than it was then. When we take all these matters into consideration we may safely calculate that the decrease in our imports is a sure sign of the country's progress. We want capital here, while we do not require imported merchandise, and at the rate our exports are increasing, we can give the older portions of the world bread for their money.

THE COMMERCIAL has time and again urged the necessity for non-attention being paid to the export affairs of the Northwest, for upon the development of our export trade must depend the country's solid progress. Adversity brings its valuable lessons, and a year of stringency has shown people the folly of depending upon anything but the country's ability to produce and export, as a reliable power in adding to the wealth of the Northwest. In short, people in this country have learned the value of self-reliance, and the decrease in our imports is only one proof that they have been putting their newly acquired knowledge to practical account.