in Manitoba and elsewhere in the West. Can any reason for this be assigned? Have they any interest in such exaggeration? It has been said, and it seems reasonable, that millers who have not got in their supplies of wheat have an interest in low prices, for some time at least. But against this supposition, it is only fair to place the fact that millers in the Western States are profiting by high prices. "While wheat has gone up on an average 27 cents a bushel," says the Philadelphia *Record*, "the advance in flour has been $1.75 to $2.15 per barrel; and the millers of the West and North-West, having a better margin of profit on their output than they had received for several years past, would not offer any resistance to the advance in the cost of wheat so long as the greater ratio of improvement in flour was being maintained."

American wheat is not turning out so well as was expected; it is deficient both in quantity and weight. The Chicago corner, occurring so early in the year, indicates what may be expected in this way before next harvest. The price will go high enough without this form of speculation, by which it is very likely to become abnormal. If after a while there is no longer a surplus in the States, and corners continue, it may become a question on what terms Russian wheat can be imported into the Republic.

FAILURES IN CANADA FOR NINE MONTHS.

The failure figures of Canada for nine months of the present year, as tabulated by Messrs. Dun, Wiman & Co., are before us. The number of mercantile failures in that time has been 1,249, and their aggregate amount $11,440,068. It is true that failures for the same period of last year came to a larger sum, viz., $13,458,000, but they were not so numerous, and their greater aggregate was largely caused by the Maritime Bank trouble and the failures of some large concerns that arose out of it. If we allow the excess in nine months of 1887 over the average of preceding like periods in New Brunswick to be $4,000,000, we shall find that the failures of the Dominion thus far in the present year show a steady and unpleasant increase from say $7,000,000 in 1885 and 1886 to $9,400,000 in 1887 and $11,400,000 in 1888. But we append the actual figures:

	No.	Amount.
Nine months, 1885........	941	$7,042,155
do. 1886........	967	7,266,997
do. 1887........	1,017	13,458,268
do. 1888........	1,249	11,440,068

In all the principal provinces, New Brunswick excepted, the number and amount of failures in the last nine months exceeds those of the same time last year, and the aggregate increase of liabilities in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba is some $2,512,000. We append the list of failures up to September 30th this year, in all the provinces, by quarters:

Province. 1888.	No. Failures.	Total Amt. Liabilities.
Ontario—1st Quarter........	300	$2,570,692
" —2nd "	216	1,348,488
" —3rd "	200	1,699,938
Nine months............	716	$5,619,118
Quebec—1st Quarter........	141	1,365,140
" —2nd "	77	954,426
" —3rd "	111	1,240,908
Nine months............	329	$3,560,474
New Brunswick—1st Quarter	25	518,816
" —2nd "	11	64,525
" —3rd "	16	55,150
Nine months............	52	$638,491
Nova Scotia—1st Quarter....	34	189,000
" —2nd "	23	215,403
" —3rd "	34	584,800
Nine months............	91	$989,203
P. E. Island—1st Quarter....	4	103,000
" —2nd "	1	11,278
" —3rd "	..	......
Nine months............	5	$114,278
Brit. Columbia—1st Quarter	6	46,200
" —2nd "	3	31,449
" —3rd "	4	20,000
Nine months............	13	$97,649
Manitoba—1st Quarter......	15	194,300
" —2nd "	12	156,105
" —3rd "	16	70,450
Nine months............	43	$420,855
Total, nine months	1,249	$11,440,068

Twelve hundred and forty nine failures of traders in nine months, the liabilities averaging about $9,200 per failure. It must be admitted to be a disgraceful showing; to a large degree the result of, and a fit commentary upon, the foolish habit of excessive crediting on the part of wholesale men, and the foolish plunging into shop-keeping by farmers, young clerks, mechanics, and other classes who have become "merchants" without fitness or adequate training for the occupation. How much dead loss, *i. e.*, destruction of capital, is meant by these failures we are not told, for the table does not give any estimate of the proportion of assets to liabilities. But as it is considered that creditors are "doing well" when they secure fifty cents in the dollar out of a bankrupt estate, we may consider that somewhere near six million dollars has been utterly lost, largely by the folly of the men, wholesalers and retailers alike, who are doing the business of the country.

It is no more, but rather less, encouraging to analyse the figures more closely; we are getting no better of late days. Comparing the last three months of this year with those of 1887, and the failures are found to be more numerous than last year's similar quarter:

	No	Amount.
3 mos. to Sep. 30, 1887.....	308.....	$2,996,000
do. 1888.....	381.....	3,671,000

If such results as these do not warn people to restrict their credits, no preaching from rostrum or pulpit or editor's desk can stop them. At the rate we are going on, we shall have had, at the end of this year, sixteen hundred mercantile failures in Canada, with liabilities of $14,000,000 to $15,000,000. Very hard, this, upon the competent and deserving retailers, to have had bankrupt stocks by the million thrown into competition with them, to the jeopardy of their capital.

MERCANTILE FAILURES IN THE UNITED STATES.

The business failures throughout the United States for the third quarter of the present year, as furnished by R. G. Dun & Co., amount in number to 2,361, with liabilities of a trifle over $22,000,000. The failures for the third quarter of 1887 numbered 1,938, with liabilities aggregating the enormous sum of $73,000,000. But all three quarters of the year already past do not show so favorably in the present year, as comparison makes plain. For the nine months of 1888 the failures number 7,550, with liabilities of over $90,000,000, as against 6,850 failures and $128,000,000 of liabilities in the same period of 1887. The reason given by the Mercantile Agency for the increase in July, August, and September, 1887, over the average of like periods in 1886 and 1888 was that while there was, in the quarter referred to of 1887, a marked expansion of commercial obligations throughout the United States, still the amount of liabilities was much swollen by a few heavy speculative disasters.

THE MOLSONS BANK.

For the year ended with September, the authorities of the Molsons Bank have been able to keep their funds generally well employed at remunerative rates, and have earned 14½ per cent. on their capital. This enables them, after paying dividend at the rate of 8 per cent., to add sufficient to the Rest to bring that fund up to $1,000,000, half the amount of the paid-up capital. On this very desirable achievement, which has been long kept in view by the management, the bank is to be congratulated.

With the suggestion made at the meeting by Mr. Crawford, that the bonus to officers of the bank, proposed for the year now current, should be postponed until a contingent fund of a quarter of a million shall be accumulated "for the purpose of equalizing dividends," we cannot agree. If the Molsons Bank were paying dividends of ten or twelve per cent. there might be more force in a proposal to form a contingent fund to fall back upon in poor years. But eight per cent. is not so large a dividend that there should be any reasonable doubt of the bank's being able to pay it, especially when we remember the scale of its earnings in recent years.

A further suggestion found favor with Mr. Barbeau as well as Mr. Crawford, that of investing a considerable sum—the last-named gentleman appeared to wish to make it the whole of the Rest—in immediately realizable securities of some sort. We take this to mean that Dominion bonds or some such investments should be purchased, as has been done of late years by the Dominion Bank, the Ontario Bank, and some others. This is a matter of administration upon which there may well be difference of opinion. It is a safe thing to do, doubtless, and to a certain extent a desirable one. But to put a whole million into what would yield only 3½ to 4 per cent. per annum, would be to reduce the earning power of the institution to a degree