

exercise so potent an influence as on the English trade in grain, and what the course of that opinion is may be gathered from the steady and continuous fall in foreign wheats during January and February. From the 7th of January to the 14th of March there was a decline of 7/ to 8/ per quarter on wheat, and of 5/ to 6/ on corn. It was not the quantity forwarded from abroad that caused the decline, for stocks did not accumulate. The sole cause was the fineness of the weather in January and February. It is a little singular, however, that the price of home-grown wheats scarcely showed any decline whatever. The markets now will be more than ever affected by the weather from week to week, and if the favourable prospects raised by the winter weather be continued, it is not improbable that we may see a gradual bearing down till next harvest.

2. The prospect of supplies from abroad is the next great element in the calculation. England imported during the six months ending February 28th, 6,300,000 qrs., or 50,400,000 bushels, and her requirements for the next six months are estimated to be as great. To furnish this immense quantity, England looks to the United States and Canada (generally called by the one name, America, in trade returns), to California (always taken into account separately), to Russia, North Germany, Egypt, South America, and latterly, even to Australia. The stocks of grain in the United States and Canada are large, and when navigation opens we shall see a very great movement eastward. But, as we know very well, a considerable part of the grain crops of the West and of Canada never crosses the ocean. The manufacturing regions of the East and our own Maritime Provinces are great consumers. Still there will be a large surplus to export, but certainly not more than has been calculated on, and the prospect of lower prices from increased quantities being pressed on the market may be dismissed as very remote. There has been a large rain-fall in California, and already the probable fine harvest there is having its influence on the markets.

South Russia has supplied but very little wheat since harvest, and it is expected that deliveries from that quarter will considerably increase, unless the crops were far more deficient than they were reported to be. A singular element in the calculations is that the harvests of Australia, Chili and Egypt are already finished, and that supplies from those countries are expected to be shortly on the way. South Australia is taking its place amongst the many contributors to the food wants of the mother country, and the

present wheat crop is the heaviest ever known. As the conditions of the seasons are reversed in these southern hemispheres, they are reaping when we are sowing. The months of February, March and April correspond to our August, September and October; and the surplus crop will be arriving in England just about the time when other supplies may be supposed to be getting exhausted. At present these are considerable enough to affect the market value, and it will surprise many to learn that for the last three years the quantity shipped from South Australia in wheat and flour amounted to 4,060,000 bushels, 2,800,000 and 6,450,000 bushels respectively. The prospects of the new crop in Hungary are very good, and this is the case over the continent of Europe generally.

3. The general conclusion of well-informed men in England is, that a lower range of prices must prevail when all the above named causes have had time to operate. There still remains, however, so much time, within which all manner of changes may take place, that it would be very unsafe to base any speculation upon them. The weather is the main element in the account, and this not only in England but over the wide world. The telegraph system now extends to nearly all grain-producing countries, so that the market responds at once to any changes that transpire at points that are tens of thousands of miles distant from one another.

The market for coarse grains in England is very steady. Barley maintains an exceptionally high price, 56s. per quarter, and the production every year fails to keep up with the ever increasing consumption. Oats are in good demand at 23s. to 28s.—The quantity required by London alone during the season being 400,000 bushels weekly. Corn is 10s. per quarter dearer than it was last year at this time, being worth nearly 40s., but a lower range of prices is looked for as the summer season advances.

On a general review of the markets in England, we think it will be a wise policy for holders here to ship and get clear of stocks at present prices. The probabilities favour a decline; not to a great extent, certainly, but a decline—if there is movement at all. At the same time, a few weeks of bad weather would give rise to other calculations.

AN INSURANCE CASE.

A case of some importance to Insurance Companies was recently tried at the Assizes here—the Montreal Assurance Company

vs. the Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway Company. A Toronto firm, which had been supplying railroad iron to the defendants, had employed a shipping agent and insurance broker in Montreal, to effect policies on the iron they were furnishing, and which was to be delivered to the defendants at Hamilton, under their contract. The agent in Montreal accordingly applied at the Company's office there for insurance on the iron in the name of the Railway Company, on two separate occasions, signing the application papers in the name of the Railway Co., as agent, and stating that he had authority to draw for the premiums, and on obtaining the funds would pay them. The transactions were entered on the books of the Insurance Company in the usual way, the policies issued in the name of, and the premiums were charged to, the Railway Co. The premiums on the policies first taken out were duly paid, but those effected on the second occasion were not; and the Railway Co. on being appealed to for payment, repudiated their liability, stating in reply, that the applicant was not their agent, but the agent of the Insurance Co., and that he had been paid. This action was therefore brought to enforce payment of these premiums from the Railway Co.—the Insurance Company contending, that as the application emanated entirely from the defendants, and was for their benefit, the party applying should be considered as their agent, and not the agent of the plaintiffs, who had nothing to do with him, and who moreover proved that the applicant had never been employed by them, and that had they known they would have had to look to him for payment, would have declined to credit him. In addition to these circumstances, it was shown at the trial that the defendants having suffered loss on the iron, in transit, had threatened proceedings against the plaintiffs to recover for it, under these very policies, thus establishing by this claim, the question of agency, and ratifying the act of the agent who had effected the insurance in their names, as their act. The learned Chief Justice, who tried the case, however, sided with the defendants, on the ground that as the agent had no authority to pledge the credit of the defendants, it was the duty of the plaintiffs to withhold the issue of the policies until the premiums had been paid in cash, and although he admitted that such a course might prove very prejudicial to the interests of insurers, still he could only give effect to the law as he interpreted it, and accordingly gave a verdict for the defendants.

We presume that the Insurance Company will be compelled to pay the loss under these policies to the Railway Company,