

## LEATHER AND HIDES.

Tanners will begin the new year in a comparatively strong position. At the close of 1895 stocks were large; the warehouses were filled with leather. These surplus supplies have been cleared away, and not only this, but a considerable part of the production of 1896 exhausted. November and December are usually quiet months, but during the past six weeks tanners have had little cause to complain of dullness of trade. The export movement of leather to Great Britain has proved a source of profit to Canadian tanners, and is partly accountable for the reduction in stocks. As is usual, the English trade is quiet during the holidays, but business may be expected to revive early in January. Canadian manufacturers of shoes, harness, belting and other commodities into which leather enters, are waiting until the market of the new year becomes established before making purchases for the season's trade.

Hides have advanced several points in Chicago within the past fortnight. The rise in values was apparently unexpected, and buyers are in a quandary as to the future course of the market. Last week a transaction in No. 1 cured cow hides, Toronto inspected, was reported at 7½ cents per pound, although 7½ cents was asked by sellers. At present, as a result of the "flurry" in Chicago, full rates are being realized. Canadian tanners, with few exceptions, are not carrying large stocks of hides, and as there are no accumulations in the cellars of hide merchants, the local situation has every appearance of strength.

The situation in Chicago is described by *Hides and Leather*, Dec. 26th, as follows: "It was thought a few weeks back that light hides would fall to the level of 7c., on which basis tanners figured they could sell grain leather at 12 and 12½c. The market touched 7½c. for a very brief period, and has since then veered between 7½ and 8c., sales occurring at the latter price this week. Evidence of the waiting demand for hides is apparent by the readiness of tanners to take them directly the market softens. Western grain leather is produced mostly at Sheboygan and Milwaukee. The Milwaukee grain leather tanners have an understanding to keep grain leather at a price which will return them some profit, without any attempt to bolster prices unduly or keep quotations up artificially. The Milwaukee men, by acting together and restricting production, have been able to check inflated values in hides, but in spite of their efforts, it looks as though buffs are not to be forced below 7½ to 8c., and it is on this basis that tanners have regulated their prices for grain leather."

## THE MANITOBA HARVEST.

It was never expected that the cereal crop of Manitoba in 1896 would rival the remarkably large harvest of 1895 in that Province; but it was thought a few months ago that it would have produced say 15 bushels wheat per acre, and of other grains in proportion. This expectation has not been realized, according to the Government bulletin issued last week. "Crops were lighter on the ground, with less straw, and heads not so well filled as was expected on the 1st of August." Actual yields for the year are in the December bulletin, whose tables give a summary of the yields of the various crops of the Province:

	Area in crop. Acres.	Yield per acre. Bush.	Total yield. Bush.
Wheat .....	1,081,960	13.34	14,433,706
Oats .....	442,445	28.25	12,502,318
Barley .....	127,885	24.80	3,171,747
Flax ..	....	..	259,143
Rye .....	....	..	52,255
Peas .....	....	..	23,383
Total grain crop ....	....	....	30,442,552

The yield of potatoes and other roots approached two million bushels each, the average of potatoes reaching 160 and roots 280 bushels to the acre. The 12,260 acres of potatoes yielded 1,962,490 bushels, while the 6,715 acres roots produced 1,898,805 bushels. Of the five subdivisions of the province made by the Bureau for statistical purposes, the North-western group of counties appears to have given the largest average of everything, except roots, in which it is surpassed by the South Central group, whose yield was 375 bushels per acre.

It is stated by the bulletin that although the average yield of wheat for the whole province is only 13.34 bushels per acre, the greater part of this is of a high grade, No. 1 or No. 2 hard. "The expense of harvesting and threshing has not exceeded half the cost of saving last year's crop, and the price received for this year's crop has really given farmers, on the whole, as much money as was realized from last year's immense crop," which is a very pleasing condition of things for the farmer and for everybody else. Another satisfactory feature is that this year's crop was virtually free from smut, a result assisted by the plentiful use of bluestone.

Oats and barley not a heavy crop, the fine appearance of the growing fields having been turned into disappointment by rust or blight. While barley shows a fair yield, the kernel of the grain is thin. Flax, though a fair sample, gives a smaller yield than usual, owing, it would seem, to the hurried manner of sowing in the spring. It sounds oddly to learn from the Bulletin that instead of being an exporter of poultry, Manitoba does not produce enough chickens, turkeys and geese for her own consumption. There were, however, 13,833 beef cattle and 3,834 hogs exported during the year. Dairy products are receiving increased attention; the quantity of creamery butter made in 1896 was 776,000 lbs., and of dairy butter, 1,469,000 lbs.; of cheese, nearly a million pounds. The estimated expenditure for the erection of farm buildings, dwelling houses, etc., for the year, is \$675,315.

## THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

## WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF HIM.

A lengthy essay, and an entertaining one, might be written about the commercial traveller. Books have, in fact, been written about him, also letters innumerable. Everybody does not like him; some question the necessity for him; but no one denies that he is, collectively, a tremendous force—indeed, that would be an able polemist who could satisfy the business community that it could get along without him. Some praise him as a God-send, as a promoter of trade; others denounce him for a nuisance and a producer of bad debts; still others damn him with faint praise, because he is not perfect—because he is expensive—because there are far too many of him.

Sifting all these likes and dislikes, these prejudices or opinions, we may deduce the conclusion that the prudent, temperate, competent travelling salesman is a treasure to merchant or manufacturer. And we may safely say, on the other hand, that a rash, a green, or a drunken drummer, is a hindrance to healthy commerce. The house which selects its travelling representatives with due care, and pays them as their sense and experience deserves, will have small cause to complain of the results they achieve. But the firm or company which sends out green youngsters on part commission, because they are to be had "cheap," will have unsatisfactory service as surely as grass grows or water runs.

We have often heard praise of the commercial traveller from sensible persons whose experience of him has been