either town or country. But there are in our smaller cities and larger towns shops with a large assortment of goods, the proprietors of which may well take some pains with their window-dressing, and which would be none the worse of internal decoration. We feel certain it would pay. Cheese cloth and other draperies are greatly used in window-dressing now. Visitors to the Industrial Fair last year will recall how much some of the booths were improved by it. Figures or busts, too, are much used to display the draping of dressings, and few objects are more attractive to the female eye than a well-draped figure.

"REBATING" PRICES.

A matter which attracts attention in commercial circles in the States just now is a lawsuit arising out of the rebate methods pursued by the National Wholesale Druggists' Association. It appears that the John D. Park & Sons Company, of New York, brought suit against the druggists' association named, because the latter refused to sell the plaintiff company certain goods on the terms granted to other druggists in the trade. The Park Company, it appears, have the reputation of "cutting" prices on proprietary articles unnecessarily, just as certain big stores in Toronto have been doing, thereby destroying the profits of many a druggist. The committee on proprietary articles of the druggists' association therefore says, "we will prevent you obtaining goods on the same terms as other druggists, unless you agree to maintain reasonable prices like other druggists." The reply of the Park Company is, "if we buy goods and pay for them, we can sell them as we please." Being, therefore, deprived of the rebate which the association allows to those who agree to its regulations, Messrs. Park sue the N. W. D. A.

Having applied for an injunction to restrain the association from disabling them by cutting off the rebates or trade discounts, the company was granted by Judge Truax a temporary injunction, which prevents the association not only from maintaining its antagonistic attitude towards Parks, but which shuts their rebate arrangement off altogether—a grand carnival time in fact is thus given to the "cutting" houses until the settlement of this suit.

An attempt has been made lately in Great Britain to establish something similar to the American association's rebate plan upon proprietary articles. The legality of this movement has been seriously questioned there. What seems to be the same principle was adjudicated upon in a suit brought by a steamship line against the representative of a number of other lines and ships some time ago. This was commented on in the MONETARY TIMES at the time. The cause of the suit was a circular issued by the defendant, in which he offered a rebate of five per cent. to exporters who would confine their shipments from China to certain European ports to the vessels represented by him. The question being whether it was a combination in restraint of trade, and, therefore, illegal on the ground of public policy, the Court found that it was not of that character. Quite a different opinion has, however, lately been obtained in France in a suit against a number of Lyons pharmacists, who formed a syndicate to control the sale of certain mineral waters. To this end, says the *Chemist and Druggist*, they contracted for the entire output of the springs, and the dealers who were excluded from the syndicate succeeded in mulcting the latter in heavy damages. The report, however, does not state whether the plaintiffs might have joined the syndicate if they so desired, and upon this question of fact must hinge the point of difference between the French decision and those of British courts, as well as the resemblance of the former case to that now attracting attention in the United States.

BRITISH COLUMBIA NOTES.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Customs returns, inland revenue returns, and other facts and indications show that business is improving steadily in the districts served respectively by Victoria, Vancouver, and by the leading towns of the Kootenay mine country. At Nanaimo and New Westminster depression continues with less abatement than is noticeable in other town centres; but if either the movement to erect a railway and traffic bridge across the Fraser develops into accomplishment, or an alternative suggestion to connect New Westminster by electric railway with Steveston matures, a great impetus should be given the city by the Fraser. New Westminster has witnessed the diversion to Vancouver of much of the supply trade of the neighboring cannery district, of which Steveston is the centre; but if the proposed electric line were built and worked as suggested by the Consolidated Railway Company, no doubt many cannery workers would spend money in New Westminster which now goes elsewhere. That city can never, however, hope to regain much of the wholesale supply trade of the cannery district. This trade is now mainly divided between Vancouver and Victoria. The proposed electric railway to Steveston would, on the other hand, give ready access from New Westminster to a fertile farm district. The branch proposed would, of course, also benefit Vancouver, since it would be connected with the main lines between New Westminster and Vancouver, and bear to the latter city additional through traffic from the cannery and adjoining farm districts. Both the Fraser River bridge and Steveston electric railway proposals are, however, in part dependent upon the grant of civic aid from New Westminster by guarantee and bonus respectively, and the city concerned is not in a position to add largely to its present liabilities. On the whole it would, therefore, seem more likely for the electric railway proposal to mature into early accomplishment, than for the Fraser River bridge, a far larger and more costly undertaking. The electric railway scheme is, moreover, formulated by a strong and energetic organization; the line could be easily built and cheaply worked, and the connections thus made with Vancouver and New Westminster promise fair returns on capital.

Meanwhile the Consolidated Railway Company is preparing to generate its electricity for lighting, heating and haulage from ample water power recently acquired at Seymour Creek, North Vancouver. The present use of steam for the same generating purpose at power houses established in Vanconver and Burnaby would thus be largely superseded.

THE MINES.

The Vancouver Island coal trade is still depressed, but in West and South Kootenay all are busy and hopeful in view of steadily enlarging outputs of gold, silver, lead and copper, and rapidly increasing smelting. The number of mines shipping ore is increasing monthly, and there is every indication of a full realization this season of previous hopes of a satisfactory further development of mine districts that are still but infantile in age and growth. There is movement, also, though on a much less extensive scale, in East Kootenay—more especially in the Fort Steele district—and the season's work has already well begun in the hydraulic gold fields of Cariboo and Similkameen. At last, too, in and about Alberni, Vancouver Island, it would seem as if several mines would in the early future begin to make fairly substantial outputs; though progress has hitherto been slow, there has been far more promise than performance. The Alberni district, as a whole, may yet, however, be said to be on trial as a precious metal-bearing region of substantial worth.

REAL ESTATE.

Real estate has to be very cautiously handled by those who would profit by investments therein, even in the progressive mine towns where things are fairly active in this line, and in New Westminster, in Vancouver, in Victoria and in Nanaimo, it cannot be said that there is any real improvement in property values yet noticeable. Many experts hold that values are still almost at the low level of bedrock, and it is notable that nearly every municipality of ours has greatly reduced its real property assessment this year and adopted a policy of timely retrenchment.

Speaking generally, Eastern investors will be wise if they refrain, even at this time of low prices, from large ventures in unimproved land either in our cities or in our rural districts, for local taxation, specially devised for this purpose, reduces to a minimum in most cases the possibility of profit from re-sales of lots at increased ground values. For some time to come real property investors in this and like districts on Vancouver Island will have, as a rule, little chance of making much profit, unless they build on or otherwise improve their holdings, and obtain resulting returns in rent. And at present our cities and suburbs