

PROHIBITION.

In view of promised legislation by the present Dominion government upon the retail liquor traffic many journals of Ontario are taking time by the forelock, and discussing the question of prohibition or restriction of that traffic, and defining, according to their different views, the powers of the Dominion and provincial governments in connection with such legislation. The political, more than the social bearings of the question are the subjects of discussion, and few, if any, journals attempt to reason from a commercial stand-point. That such a subject should be considered one of great importance by social philosophers is very natural, and is a proof of the healthy state of the social atmosphere, but that it should be made a matter of party politics is much to be regretted, and lessens the chances of an early and permanent settlement of the question. This is made evident in the results of some of the late American elections, more particularly in Ohio, Iowa and Kansas, where the question has been made a political test of parties, and as a natural consequence, intolerant fanaticism and defiant drunkenness have collided and produced a state of legislative chaos on the matter. Such a course it is to be hoped will be avoided in all the Canadian provinces.

It is impossible to discuss the question of liquor prohibition from a purely commercial standpoint without being accused of being sordid by a certain class of philanthropists so called, and indeed it is necessary to view it socially even for commercial purposes.

There can be no doubt but a great amount of evil must ever be connected with the liquor traffic, so long as one class of mortals are inclined to the excessive use of alcohol, and another to make money by questionable means. The complete eradication of these evils it is safe to say cannot be accomplished, and the social philosopher must look for the best means of mitigating them. Two systems of securing this end have been tried, one in Europe and Great Britain in particular, and the other in some of the United States. The first of these is to legislate the liquor traffic into respectability; and the other is to crush it out of existence, or if that be impossible to degrade it so that no respectable and reliable man will engage in it. It is an axiom of commerce that a traffic which is not directly

criminal, may be restricted, but must be tolerated; and any violation of this principle on the plea of philanthropy has as yet proved impracticable when enforced by legislation. Such legislation has only driven the traffic into the hands of more unscrupulous parties than would otherwise engage in it, and by the degrading process in some portions of the States above mentioned the dealers in liquors and their patrons have become a strong and unscrupulous organization that puts law at defiance. Such a state of affairs is by no means to be wished for in Canada, and it is safe to predict that any legislation upon that subject the representatives of the people will act upon the elevating principle, and secure for liquor dealers a class of men whose reputations at least are some pledge for the conduct of their business in a manner that will reduce the evils of drunkenness to a minimum.

In the North-west prohibition is enforced in certain parts for the protection of a weaker race, for whose moral welfare the invading whites are to some extent responsible. As the work of settlement progresses it must vanish before the march of civilization, and the efforts made by some to enforce this law, which was meant only for Indians, upon intelligent communities, only has the effect of driving a perfectly legitimate traffic into illegitimate channels.

Winnipeg Wholesale Trade.

AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, CARRIAGES, ETC.

Agricultural machinery of every description is out of demand at present, and trade in these goods may be said to be at a standstill. City houses are getting matters ready for spring consignments, and calendars and other ornamental advertising matter are beginning to make their appearance. The snow of the past week has stirred up the trade in sleighs and cutters, and orders for fresh supplies have been received from different points of the country. This is the only branch of the trade showing any life, and wholesalers calculate upon that demand being soon over.

BOOTS AND SHOES.

The winter trade in this branch of business is virtually over, and the present volume of business is confined to a few orders for sorts, and these come almost entirely from the country. A few spring orders have been received during the week, but spring trade cannot be said to have commenced. Wholesale houses are receiving their consignments of goods for that season, but are not yet ready to launch fully into that trade. The fruits of the fine fall trade are now being received in the form of

free collections, which are reported by all dealers.

CLOTHING.

There has been quite a little bustle in this line during the latter days of the past week. Sorting up orders caused by the sudden cold created one of those hectic rushes, which resembles, while it lasts, the heat of an opening season period. The wholesale dealers of the city were previously very low in winter stock, but they are now almost cleaned out, and they have found themselves deficient in numerous lines of goods. Travellers are now out with their spring goods, and some have tapped Prince Arthur's landing and other towns of Lake Superior, where they are competing with houses in Ontario. Quite a number of spring orders have come in during the week, but the general trade in these goods will not open until January. There is a general feeling of satisfaction over the results of the fall and winter trade among the wholesale men of the city.

CROCKERY AND GLASS WARE.

During the week there has been a steady continuation of the rushing business of the previous week, and the trade generally is in a most encouraging state. Country orders are still numerous and heavy, even for the finer grades of goods, and the city trade is good. The demand for Christmas goods is still in full volume, and will continue right into the holiday season. The outlook therefore in this line is a bright one.

DRY GOODS.

This line of trade like several others has profited by the cold spell of last week, and quite a little rush has been general in winter goods. Orders for sorts have been numerous, and have greatly lessened the limited stocks of winter goods which were held. The demands of this class are still coming in from the country, and will probably continue during the present week. Spring orders are beginning to be heavier and more frequent, but the trade in these has not opened fairly up. Collections are reported fair to good, and there is a feeling of general satisfaction pervading the trade mingled with good hopes of a prosperous business as soon as the spring demands fairly set in. The fall and winter trade, now about over, has far exceeded the most sanguine calculations of every house in town.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.

The report of the week from this branch of business is a very favorable one. There has been a steady demand from both town and country, and in certain classes of goods there has been a livening up caused by the advent of extreme cold weather. Travellers are at home at present, but will start out generally in a few days, when an increase to the already brisk country trade is anticipated. There are no new features connected with the trade except an extra demand for tent and other medicines commonly used for the cure of slight colds.

FANCY GOODS AND SMALL WARES.

In this line a brisk business has been doing during the week, especially in holiday goods, which are now in great demand. Demands from the city are heavy, and country trade is