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Mercantile Summary.

It would appear that the end of the New England cotton mills' strike is near. The new Bedford strikers have issued an appeal to other workmen for financial aid.

THE aggregate receipts of thirty-three railways in the United Kingdom, mileage 19,163 miles, for six weeks to 18th February, amounted to £8,944,604, an increase of £332,123 upon those of the corresponding period last year.

A GENERAL merchant of some 20 years' standing at Edmundston, N.B., J. A. Bernier, is reported to be offering 50 cents on the dollar. He has been reported slow for several years past, through overstocking.

THE working of a plan of ventilation of rooms devised by Dr. Castaing, principal physician of the French armies, is highly commended. It consists in the use of double windows, with openings at the bottom of one and at the top of the opposite one, through which the air comes in freely without anyone feeling it. The system is said to possess simplicity, efficiency and cheapness.

SOME time ago an action was brought by J. Demers against the Quebec Government for cancelling a contract for printing the official Gazette, etc., of that province, amounting to \$85,000. It was shown that after securing the contract the plaintiff had gone to some expense in purchasing paper, etc., and Judge Larue, in rendering judgment, allowed \$9,325 as damages, being the amount of profits which would have been made on the contract from July 1, 1897, to July 1, 1898, interest and costs.

THE Government at Ottawa has been repeatedly interviewed by licensed victuallers and brewers, and is said to be decidedly uncomfortable over the plebiscite question. Last week a deputation consisting of Messrs. Dawes, of the Dawes Brewery Company, Lachine; Hooper, of the Dow Brewing Company, Montreal; O'Keefe, of the O'Keefe Brewing Company, Toronto; Robt. Davis, of the Dominion Brewery; Labatt and McCarthy, of Prescott. In their view the whole matter of prohibition should be put squarely before the people, and not the mere question whether the voter is in favor or not of prohibition. There is the question of compensation, for instance.

ONE of the sufferers by the recent big fire in Winnipeg was A. G. Morgan, who did a very considerable boot and shoe trade. Owing to his heavy loss his creditors have agreed to write off a portion of their claims.—Blake & Ramsay, publishers at Wellington, B.C., have had their assets sold by auction under power of a chattel mortgage.—In the same place, John L.

McKay, grocer, finds that he cannot meet his bills. Recently a judgment of \$759 has been recorded against him, and it is probable that he may assign.

THE customs authorities have broken up a dangerous gang of Syrian smugglers, who have been carrying on business for the past two years, and have defrauded the Canadian customs of \$15,000. For the past six months the hardware firms of the city have found their business suffering from the competition of a number of Syrian peddlers, who were going about selling notions and hardware at prices far below what the regular dealers could afford to sell them at. The only explanation of the matter that appeared at all possible was that the goods were being smuggled in from the United States. Officers were placed on the case, and found that the goods were smuggled across from Richmond, Vt., to Sutton, Que., whence they were shipped to Montreal. A number of arrests have been made, and the trial began this week. At the headquarters of the gang in Montreal about \$3,000 worth of goods were seized.

HALIFAX papers of last week say that the rolling mills of the Londonderry Iron and Steel Company, which it was rumored were about to be removed to Halifax or St. John, are likely to change hands at an early date. The prospective purchasers being experienced and practical mill men, who will run the mill to its fullest capacity and furnish bar iron made from puddled bar made largely from local brown ore iron. They will also make the cheaper grades of bar iron to supply the general trade. They also intend, so the story goes, to again roll as a specialty the same class of iron which in the early days of the Canada Steel Co. had a world-wide reputation. The Londonderry Iron Company is preparing to sell at once its present stock of bar iron in order to make room for the improvements to be made by the new prospective buyers, who will also put up a large storage house for their new stocks of iron. We trust the movement here outlined may prove true, for the cessation of these extensive works would mean a great deal to the county of Colchester.

THE rush for the Klondyke, as it is called, is not fanciful, but a very real rush. The C.P.R. authorities made the statement on Saturday last that two thousand six hundred people left Pacific coast points for the Yukon country from February 12 to 19. From January 6 to February 19, the number going north was nearly ten thousand, and coming south 600. Groups of men, principally young and stalwart, are being formed into Klondyke parties to start this month or next. We hear of such parties in Sarnia, Petrolia, Paris and Prescott. An Ottawa party, among whom is Kodak Cameron, as his chums at Toronto University called him, and a number of the many Edwards from that vicinity. Another group includes Mons. Dubray, of Paris, France, and some Cardinal and Prescott people, both parties going via the Stikine-Teslin route. A Toronto party, which purposes to start March 24th, takes provisions for fifteen months. Their outfit includes a catamaran steam barge, 18 feet long and 9 feet wide, with 8 inches draft, having a stern paddle wheel, a portable sawmill, a forge, a sand pump. They will ship their freight, five tons altogether, from Vancouver to Dyea. From there they will go over the Chilcoot Pass to Lake Lindeman, and sail up the Stewart River as far as possible. They expect to get a lot of gold-dust from the streams which flow into the Stewart River. Mr. C. M. Merritt, formerly of the Imperial Bank, with a small party of friends, is to start for the Yukon this week.

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