

**Business and Politics.**

Business men take little interest in politics—too little for their own good as a general thing. But at present, matters political are presenting a phase that seems to be a matter of great importance at least to some lines of trade, and those therein engaged are being naturally a good deal stirred up by it. The phase of special interest now, is the relation of probable legislation to the wool trade. If the tariff is taken off of wool, it will of course create a very considerable change in the wool trade of the whole country. After the changes have been made under such laws, if passed, no doubt business will settle down to its usual routine, and the present interest in the law making will subside. Hide and leather men in this country not being affected, are unconcerned as to the proposed legislation in this country; while in England, a free trade country, efforts are being made by the leather men to get a tariff law on leather passed.

Thus it seems that business men only take an interest in politics, or law making when it directly affects their interests. It ought to be otherwise. Business ought to be so much interested in the general subject of politics and legislation as to discuss all proposed measures and to elect men of their own number to represent them. It is a surprising thing that, having so much at stake, they permit the men to represent them and make their laws, that generally do it. It is generally conceded that national elections, involving a change of administration, are periods of great interest to all business men. We do not think they are any more so, the fact that they are or should be less so than the election of legislators.

It is all very well for a business man to adopt as his motto, "Strictly Business," when actually engaged at business, but the best of sentiments may be abused. If the business men would take a life interest in the great vital questions affecting us all, their solution would be easier. The question of transportation is one of infinite interest to all commerce, so is telegraphic communication. Yet we do not hear that the business men of the country have been concerning themselves to secure legislation favorable to their interests. We do not believe when the great questions of Inter-state commerce was before the country, that one percent of the business men took any interest whatever in the subject, yet the law that was passed affected all of them to a greater or less extent, and some of them very adversely.

And now that the law has been passed, and it is still a recognized fact that there are abuses affecting trade unfavorably, there is no concerted endeavor to secure such benefits from the law as there lies in its power to confer. In fact, it must be concluded that every business man ought to be a politician to some extent; that is business for him to be so. He need not be an office seeker, and he need not waste time on such matters, but a moderate amount of attention to such matters will serve as a wholesome foil to the grinding application to the details of business which belittle a man's mind and weaken his body. The time will come when questions of a political nature will get very near to all engaged in trade; it would be

better if they did not wait to be forced into politics by such an emergency, but take an interest of their own will.—*Leather Gazette.*

**Lake Disasters in 1887.**

During the season of lake navigation, in 1887, 73 vessels of an aggregate tonnage of 20,637 tons register were a total loss, against 57 vessels of 17,070 tons in 1886. The value of the property destroyed was about \$2,500,000. The total number of vessels on the lakes, American and Canadian, is between 3,000 and 4,000. There were in addition, partial losses in \$396,600 on hulls and \$238,700 on cargoes. This makes an aggregate loss, total and partial, of \$1,835,000, with estimates of minor losses, swelling the aggregate to about \$2,500,000. The insurance companies have suffered severely. Since the opening of navigation in 1887, 47 steamers, 4 tow barges, and 2 tug boats have been launched and completed, of an aggregate tonnage register of 52,254 tons. The aggregate value of this new addition to the lake fleet is \$5,525,000. There are besides, on the stocks in the various stages of construction an almost equal amount of new tonnage. The 20,637 tons lost will be replaced in the spring of 1888, on the opening of navigation, by upwards of 100,000 tons of new tonnage, most of which is steam while most of the old was sail tonnage. This will give a working increase of three or four tons to one lost. This means, in the season of 1888, cheap carrying charges on the lakes, as the tonnage will be so much increased, with less grain to be carried, especially corn—very considerably less than in 1887.—*Coal Trade Journal.*

The *Mail* this morning, commenting on a cablegram, says. A special cablegram to the *Mail* repeats the rumor that there is a project on foot on the part of the Canadian Pacific to get the Dominion Government to purchase their monopoly. This rumor has received a denial more or less explicit, but it is hard to believe the statement made in the *Financial News* and other London papers can be wholly without foundation. The exact terms of the proposal made may not be accurately given, but there can be little doubt the railway company have some scheme which will involve a large expenditure on the part of the Dominion Government for their behalf.

The Overhead Conductor Electric Railway Company, of which George Westinghouse, Jr., is president, have issued an illustrated work on the subject of propelling cars by electricity. In their introduction they say: "The results of a comparatively short experience in the use of electricity as a motor for surface railway cars, they have been such as to demonstrate beyond question its immense superiority for this purpose over any other known method of applying power. Every consideration of efficiency, convenience and economy, not to speak of humanity, urges the substitution of mechanical for animal power upon the numerous street railway lines of this country, at the earliest practical moment, and in the contest for superiority in the various more or less successful methods of applying mechanical power to this purpose, such as the steam locomotive, the traction cable, and the electric motor, the last named is at the present moment generally admitted by those most competent to judge to be distinctly in advance of its competitors."

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