

satisfactory. The high prices in staple lines of textiles have perhaps kept orders in small compass, but, against this, turn-overs have been quick. In some cases, referring to woollens, even when orders have been of fair size, deliveries have been small, owing to the desire of manufacturers to distribute their output as widely as possible among their customers. This has had the effect of keeping up a quick circulation of trade, and renders the prospects bright for a continuation of the present healthy position of the market.

IMPROVING THE ST. LAWRENCE.

The deepening and safeguarding of the St. Lawrence River are a subject of such far-reaching and national importance that it is interesting to learn any details as to the progress being made. A channel 30 feet deep and 350 feet wide at the narrowest part of the river between Quebec and Montreal will, it is stated, be completed as far as Batiscan this year, leaving some twenty miles to be dealt with next year. Attention is also being devoted to the channel below Quebec, so that the largest steamships may come in from and go out to sea from that port at any hour of the twenty-four without being hampered by the state of the tide. Every year sees an increase in the size of steamships, and serves to show more conclusively that the larger the vessel the cheaper the freight, because such vessels, so long as their space is not limited and cramped in order to accommodate the machinery necessary to obtain record speeds, can be more economically run. It must be remembered that even now New York is accommodating vessels nearly 200 feet longer than anything coming up the St. Lawrence, and the facilities of Montreal to retain and increase its importance as a shipping port must be made sufficient to meet this constant tendency to enlarge the size of vessels. During the last few years great improvements have been made in the navigation channel of the St. Lawrence, many additional light-houses have been built, more powerful lights and sirens, gas buoys, and other aids established, and the result has been greater size and greater speed in the vessels plying to our "national" port, while disasters have been fewer. Much remains to be done, however.

TRADE WITH AUSTRALIA.

From the February report of Mr. J. S. Larke, Canadian commercial agent for New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand, we gain some suggestive reasons for the lack of growth of Canadian trade with Australia. Often, he says, where business offered by Australians has been declined, there has been a failure to advise the would-be buyer, causing unpleasant losses to the latter. In anticipation that his order will be filled he does not order from his old sources of supply. His stock has become exhausted and those from whom he formerly bought have perhaps arranged with other houses. There are sometimes sound reasons for not entertaining offers, but there can be no reason for failure to notify the offerer of the fact. And he mentions firms in Sydney who have had unpleasant experiences of Canadian neglect in this direction.

Some Canadian manufacturers are applying to be put in a position to secure trade with the Australian Commonwealth, but it is very rare to find one paying

any attention to the conditions necessary to bring this about. They generally ask to be placed in correspondence with some one dealing in their lines. This, Mr. Larke says, is generally useless. Australians will not buy new lines without full information and samples. Catalogues, in addition to the description of the goods, should state how they are packed, how many or how much in a package, and its size in cubic feet. The price-list should give cost f.o.b. at New York and, if possible, at Sydney via Vancouver. There has been a decided improvement among Canadians in this respect, but still the great majority of inquirers fail in these requirements. There are a few lines of merchandise which selling houses have undertaken to handle. Now, says the Canadian agent, such firms ask for at least a first small consignment. "Consignment business is a bad one, though it is being done in increasing volume, and, as a rule, a proposition of trade on this basis should not be entertained. But there is reason for the request of a first consignment. The goods are unknown, and this market is well supplied with goods that have been made well known. The merchant has no guarantee that should he make the goods known that he will retain the sale and reap the benefit, but the manufacturer would have a trade. It is but reasonable, therefore, that the latter should bear a share of the expenses, he sending the goods, the Australian merchant paying freight and duty."

With the present volume of trade and its one-sided character, Mr. Larke gives it as his opinion that it is impossible to arrange direct exchange between Australia and Canada. The settling place must be London. "There is an improvement much needed in the matter of giving to Canadians coming here drafts on London. They are usually drawn in duplicate, the visitor bringing the original and the duplicate remains in Canada, often retained by the issuer. No bank here can do more than send the original for collection, involving a delay of nearly three months, and, as is generally the case, the holder needs the cash, and is in a very awkward position unless he should have friends who can help him."

BUSINESS DOWN EAST.

Replying to an enquiry as to the state of business generally in Nova Scotia, our Halifax correspondent replies: "The general concord of opinion in the province seems to be that under ordinary conditions, this would be one of the best spring seasons we have had for years; and this conclusion is arrived at by the somewhat negative process of reasoning that, considering the conditions which have existed during most of this winter, we find ourselves no worse off than we are at the opening of spring." The winter just past has undoubtedly been one of the worst experienced in the Maritime Provinces for many years, as our previous advices and editorials have shown. It appears to have affected every industry injuriously. The crews which went into the woods in the autumn to get out lumber were smaller than usual, in anticipation of smaller requirements; and even these had to be withdrawn early on account of the extraordinary depth of the snow. The cold weather and the storms have interfered very seriously with the lobster and smelt fishing. Mining has suffered from the same cause. Cash is scarce, and particularly so in the Eastern Counties as well as in Prince Edward Island,