

creating permanent improvements within the country which will in other years increase the exporting power of the country. If political economists would look as often into the workman's dinner-pail as they do into tables of statistics they would arrive at sounder conclusions concerning in what the prosperity of a country consists.

### LAKE NAVIGATION.

"In time of peace prepare for war," is an old proverb which may be adapted to lake navigation by saying when the vessels are in harbor have a load line painted upon them. The disasters which during the past few years have invariably marked the close of navigation, have been in each succeeding winter forgotten. A Canadian Plimsoll is sadly needed, for upon the lakes there are many vessels plying which are simply floating coffins. When the "Asia," went down, causing the death of over twenty persons, a great outcry was made and assurances were given that the government would act a paternal part and see that stringent regulations were made at the next session of parliament. Since then all that the public is aware of having been done is the holding of a farcical investigation. Unless some private member have made it his business to frame a shipping act, it is more than probable that these floating coffins will get what the Scotch call "a lick" of paint and throw out their gangways for the reception of victims. It is time that the agitation for the inspection of hulls, equipment, engines, and boilers were renewed. In a few months more the stream of immigrants will be again pouring upon the shores of Canada and as it is the intention this year to utilize the upper lake and Thunder Bay route as much as possible, the government will be nothing short of criminal if it permit passenger vessels to ply without being previously inspected. And this inspection must be done thoroughly and not in the perfunctory farcical manner that has hitherto prevailed in inspecting steamships' boilers. The loss of the lives of twenty immigrants upon Lake Superior would be a calamity almost as great as a visit from the grasshoppers. The navigation of Lake Superior is as dangerous as that of the German Ocean, and the vessels plying upon the great inland sea ought to be built up to the highest class. There are some good vessels on the sta-

tions, but most of them should not be permitted to have a passenger list. The daily press throughout the country would do well to take up this theme and ding it into the ears of the government until assurances are given that a thorough system of steamship inspection will be provided.

### BRITISH TRADE.

The trade statistics of Great Britain for the first ten months of 1882 show some startling figures. The imports amounted to \$1,622,120,000, showing an increase of nearly \$68,000,000 over 1881. The imports of Great Britain, during this period, exceeded the imports and exports combined of the United States for the same period by no less a sum than \$126,000,000. The value of British produce and manufactures exported during these ten months was \$986,580,000, in addition to which British firms exported probably in the neighborhood of \$200,000,000 of foreign produce and manufactures. This leaves an excess of \$480,570,000 over the imports. In these figures the statistician who contends that an adverse balance of trade means ruin has a hard nut to crack. This task is all the more difficult, when it is borne in mind that during the last eleven years the balance of trade against Great Britain has been a sum no less stupendous than \$5,350,000,000. Yet it is questionable if Great Britain pays out annually one dollar on behalf of her imports over her exports. Great Britain still does the bulk of the carrying trade of the world, and she is still the money market of the world. But it will not always be so, for her manufacturing ascendancy cannot be long maintained, unless new markets be found. Year by year shows this great manufacturing power being slowly expelled from foreign markets by domestic labor. The ascendancy of Great Britain in the money market is also declining, for the allied forces of New York, Paris, Amsterdam and Hamburg are now equal to the task of holding their own against London. On the seas alone is British supremacy becoming more assured every day. The subsidies paid by France have failed in their objects, and German commerce is largely owned by the British, who in their facilities for the cheap construction of steel and iron ships hold the key of the seas. Until some other power can command the cheap labor and cheap material requisite to construct the vessels of the modern commercial

navy Great Britain's rule over the seas will remain unchallenged, and her commercial ascendancy will consequently be maintained, let the domestic progress in other countries be what it may.

### ADULTERATION AND FALSE WEIGHT.

There can be no question in the mind of the average householder that in the city of Winnipeg, not only is adulteration extensively practised but that the conscience of many retailers are singularly elastic in what they consider full weight. For much of the adulteration which takes place in articles of food neither the retailer nor the wholesale dealer can fairly be held accountable, and as it is impossible in most cases to reach the manufacturer the prosecution of middle-men and retailers would be nothing less than persecution. But there are many articles which are adulterated immediately before reaching the consumer, and the vendors of such articles should be remorselessly dealt with. To supply the demand for nervous force in these days is a task which tries the strength of the most serviceable of stomachs, and often finds them wanting. To surreptitiously handicap the stomach with the digestion of poisons and delirious matters is criminal, and ought to be rigorously punished. Another class of frauds, which is an invasion of the pocket instead of an outrage upon the human system, is short weight. Some retail dealers in this city are notorious offenders in this matter, and without the slightest compunction rob the consumer in weight. Lazy housewives, who are too dignified to carry home a pound of tea, deserve little pity if they be mulcted by short weight in the cost of delivery; still right is right, and honesty should prevail. Profits are good on most articles which the shopman sells, and he ought to deal at all times squarely with his customer. The federal government provides for the examination of all weights and measures, and we suppose at one time or another such an official must have been appointed for Winnipeg. But who he was, or what has become of him is not known even to that voracious individual "the oldest inhabitant." Very possibly the official is wintering in Bermuda, or has been lost in a blizzard. If there be such an official, and he be not hibernating, THE COMMERCIAL believes the public would be gratified to receive a report from him upon the weights and measures used in the city.