

CANADIAN GROCER

& GENERAL STOREKEEPER

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SPECIAL TO OUR READERS.

The design of THE CANADIAN GROCER
benefit mutually all interested in the busi-
ness would request all parties ordering goods
making purchases of any description from
advertising with us to mention in their
that such advertisement was noticed in
THE CANADIAN GROCER.

Father Time has punched the last
pages on the calendar of 1891, and that
year's ticket will carry none of us any
farther. To-day the sun rises on a new year.
May the lease of opportunity which we all
buy this day turn out profitably! To all
our readers we wish A Happy New Year.

* * * *

We begin with a fair legacy from the old
year. In its actual possessions Eighteen
Ninety-two gives better earnest at its outset
that it will be a prosperous year than many
of its predecessors ever gave. No former
year ever succeeded in this country to so
full a store of natural products as falls to
1892. The grain yield of the country has
been enormous, and most of it is yet in the
hands of the growers. This is not a bad
place for it to be, if the grain market develops
it has all along been expected to develop
during the winter. It is at all events better
that we should be able to turn our eyes
lovingly to a large balance from the crop of
the old year than be obliged to turn our
eyes fully towards the crop of the new
year. The actual is always better than the
expected. As a consequence of our large fruit
crop we have been able to do already a large
business in apples than we have done in
several years past, and we are but

midway in the season of the outside demand.
Last summer and early fall our butter ship-
ments were surprisingly large, there is reason
to believe that English consumers are
recovering confidence in our butter, prices
have been steadily on the side of fair value,
and we turn the year with none of that huge
accumulation that has heretofore been a
familiar resource of the domestic market at
Christmas. Our cheese holds its own abroad,
the full season's make is out of the hands of
the manufacturers, and prices are good.
With the exception of a dull spell in the
summer, eggs had a good year of it during
1891, despite the fact that that year was the
first one throughout which we shipped to the
British market. We have clearly lost nothing
for our eggs as a result of the compulsion
the McKinley Act placed us under to abandon
the United States market. The tariff protection
afforded to hog-raising, while it has led to
an increase in the number of hogs fed—the
number raised in 1891 exceeding that of 1890
by about one-sixth of the latter—has been
prevented from giving undue benefit to a few
packers by the increase it has caused in the
number of persons who are in that industry.
The benefit has accrued mainly to the producer,
and therefore acts upon trade very directly.
The action of several European countries—
Germany, Austria, Italy, and in a less degree
France—in removing the prohibition upon
United States pork has reduced the strain of
United States competition upon this market.
The increased duty which the McKinley Act
placed on wool and hides has had a depressing
effect upon these products. But, taken all in
all, the basis of trade is far more substantial
and the atmosphere of business more bracing
than it was this time last year.

* * *

Industrially there has been perhaps no
very appreciable advance, if any. But the
crops of 1891 have scarcely begun to tell yet

upon the output of our manufactories and
upon the volume of money the wage-earning
class keep afloat in trade. The first of Janu-
ary is an arbitrary breaking point in the
trade year. Speaking roughly, the motive
power of whatever trade is transacted lies on
one side of that date, and the trade itself on
the other. There have been no strikes, at
all events, and this is an evidence of content
among the working classes that points to
fairly satisfactory conditions of employment.
Labor generally commanded good pay, and
even at the dullest period hands were scarce
for harvest work.

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In grocery lines the most important event
of the year was the removal of the duty upon
raw sugar. That, and the uncommonly large
crop of summer fruits, were the causes of the
great trade in sugar during July and August,
during which the volume sold far exceeded
that of any former summer. The British
Columbia salmon pack has been but an average
one, while the lobster pack was short. The
extent of the canned vegetable pack was for
a considerable time a perplexing factor in the
situation for buyers, but it is evidently now
a settled conviction that it is not excessive.
The year is remarkable for the bareness of the
market at the time of natural renewal, and
consequently for its very large consumption of
canned goods. The dried fruit crop of the year
was large, and prices ruled low. The large
yield of California raisins caused a vast shrinkage
in the United States demand for Valencias, and
this, together with the large crop in Spain, the
surplus of old stock carried from 1890, and the
large proportion of inferior fruit, caused a
remarkable weakness in prices. The prices of
tea have been on the easy side, mainly on
account of the competition among importers.
Lower freights since we have begun to receive
direct by the Pacific and C. P. R. route have
something to do with this. There has