

for 1897 in the three principal markets of the United States amounted to 527,055,574 pounds. So that the sales for 1897 were nearly 71 per cent. larger than for the next heaviest year, namely, 1892. Among other facts we notice that in normal years the sales of wool in the three principal markets amount to between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 pounds per week, whereas the average for 1897 has been over 10,000,000 pounds. Much of the buying was speculative, but it has been estimated that fully two thirds of the wool passed into manufacturers' hands. The Canadian market has reflected United States conditions and the trade of the year has been highly satisfactory. We give below the ruling prices during the year of the leading classes of wools:

	Jan.	Feb.	March.	April.	May.	June.
Fleece (combing) ..	22 to 24c.	22c.	22c.	22c.	22c.	.....
Pulled (super)	21 " 21½	20 to 21	20 to 21	20 to 21	20 to 21	.....
Capas (greasy)	14 " 16	14 " 16	14 " 16	14 " 16½	14 " 16½	14 " 16
B.A.	26½ " 35	26 " 33	26 " 33	26 " 33	.....	28 " 30

	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Fleece (combing) ...	20 to 21c.	20 to 21c.	20 to 21c.	22 to 23c.	21c.	20 to 21c.
Pulled (super) .....	.....	.....	.....	21 " 22	21 to 22	20 " 21
Capas (greasy) ...	15 to 17	15 to 17½	15 to 16½	.....	.....	14½ " 16½
B.A.	25 " 35	29 " 35	30 " 35	29 to 36	29 to 36	25 " 35

There is a tendency at present among the manufacturers of the United States to employ the profits made in the recent boom in the wool market to keep their mills running. That is, the profits made on the raw material are considered a justification for selling the finished product at prices below what present market conditions would justify the trade in demanding. Every manufacturer should make the most determined effort to secure the best prices possible on the market. The time for keeping mills running, no matter what it costs, is passed. The man who is selling goods for less than they cost is making a serious mistake somewhere, and the sooner he looks around and finds out which of his employees is incompetent, or how much he does not know about the business himself, so much the better.

A Combine in Knit Goods. A short time ago a Montreal paper stated that the knit goods manufacturers were looking about for means to form a combine. This is even a more difficult task than would be the formation of a trust by the tweed manufacturers. The formation of the cotton combination was a comparatively easy matter when once the owners of the mills decided to combine. Their product was largely uniform, and such variety as characterized it was easily systematized. Everyone will recognize at once, however, the complex nature of the problem when it is proposed to systematize the output of our knitting mills. Wool and cotton, each of many kinds and qualities, is combined in an infinite variety of proportions, mixed with the waste of both or either variously prepared. The resulting yarns, of varied fineness, are worked up upon machines of all styles and dates. It would be impossible to make a classification which would be either fair or workable. But even if a combine were perfected, it would last only so long as might be necessary for some enterprising capitalist to rent space and power in a woolen mill, buy a few machines and some yarn, and enter the market as a free lance.

FAILURES OF THE PAST YEAR.

The mercantile failures in Canada in the past year have, we are pleased to note, been considerably fewer and the aggregate liabilities much less than in the previous year. The failures of 1895, according to *Bradstreet*, namely, 1,876, owing \$15,347,000, had increased in 1896 to 2,179, owing \$16,208,000. But last year the number of failures was 1,907, with liabilities of \$13,147,929. An allotment of them into provinces for two years gives the following comparison:

Province.	1897		1896.	
	No.	Liabilities.	No.	Liabilities
Ontario ..	866	\$5,201,159	930	\$5,024,476
Quebec	699	5,999,743	870	8,158,426
New Brunswick	62	389,667	81	597,311
Nova Scotia	181	976,729	155	782,520
Prince Edward Island ..	10	84,292	23	125,737
Manitoba	43	470,397	29	323,599
North-West Territory ..	10	88,342	19	104,085
British Columbia	66	356,600	72	1,092,306
Totals, Canada ..	1,907	\$13,147,929	2,179	\$16,208,460

Ontario shows a reduction in number of failures, but no decrease in liabilities, while Quebec is able to show a decided reduction in both. New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia all exhibit an improvement in the list, inasmuch as they have fewer failures and smaller liabilities than in 1896, but Nova Scotia and Manitoba reverse these conditions. There is no improvement, but a slight decline in the proportion of assets to liabilities. It was over 40 per cent. in the previous year; it is slightly under 40 per cent. this year. Both wholesale and retail merchants may find some comfort for the future in the fact of a lessening in failures during 1897.

WOOL IN THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

The following article, written by the Hon. William I. Buchanan, United States Minister at Buenos Ayres, is extracted from the United States Consular report.

The general interest manifested both here and in the United States on the subject of sheep husbandry and wool, leads me to transmit the following data and impressions regarding the industry in this republic.

In the beginning, let me say that I am inclined to believe, although I realize fully the risk of criticism I run in making the conjecture, that a probable maximum production of wool has been nearly reached here. In making this statement, I in no sense wish to be understood as believing that the development of the country will be either slow or small in the future. I am a firm believer that this country will show a remarkable development during the next ten or twenty years. My reasons for this belief regarding wool production here are: the great increase which has taken place, and which continues, in the exportation to Europe of live sheep and of frozen mutton; the marked and profitable attention being given the production of fat cattle for export and the consequent neglect of sheep husbandry by such estancieros; the reasonable proba-