

NORTH OF ENGLAND LETTER.

The trade reviewers have nothing very positive to say about the course of 1904. In the words of one of the most respectable writers, "He would be a bold man who would venture to say that 1904 leaves the industrial, commercial, and financial position of this country better than it found it; or that the outlook presents any very tangible assurance of improvement." There is room for improvement in profit margins no less than in volumes. Dear raw materials are conflicting in some lines with cheap manufactured goods. As credit is good despite misfortune, it would need only a little additional impetus to restore a fairly general satisfaction. It is for this addition that all eyes are straining. Canada is looked to for a little, South Africa and Australia are looked to for more. But greater than these is the huge home market which is too little considered by writers because no statistics are tabulated telling of its progress, or retrogression. It seems odd in a way that our internal business should be the one of which fewest concrete data are obtainable. A matter on which manufacturers on this side are growing uneasy is the inequitable incidence of patent law and the registration of industrial designs. English firms get no valid and lasting protection in foreign countries, and some colonies without manufacturing in these places. Whereas persons domiciled abroad are free to enjoy all the protection available to British firms without any stipulation as to manufacturing in this country. In many ways this has been a hardship of real moment. Witness the coal-tar dye industry hampered by foreign-owned patent letters, and the lace trade whose designs are filched as soon as invented and put upon the markets by Germans. Feeling is strong enough on the points to justify an opinion that some official steps will be taken within measurable time. Even from authorities wont to frown on any legislative interference with trading matters there are no arguments forthcoming to show what advantages—if any—the United Kingdom reaps from the present state of affairs.

Wool values are the cause of some distrust among handlers of woolen goods. As usual there is a section which protests that wool must go down. Those with wool to sell insist that wool must go up further, and there is much to be said in favor of the latter theory. If merino wools were to advance and put a normal distance between their prices and those of crossbreds, there could scarcely be a doubt of a continuation of present levels. But merinos are obstinate, and they are perhaps not so short in supply, relatively, as coarser grades. The present proximity of prices constitutes a temptation to consumers to select fine rather than coarse wools where fashion allows. Bulls repose faith in the statistical position and the alleged contraction of flocks everywhere. Bears point to the paucity of home demand for goods, and the difficulty of recouping the cost of wool out of the available prices for cloths. But wool is governed by no one set of local conditions, and English consumers are ready to admit that their conservatism and scepticism during the two past years have brought them the worst of the market. Yet in Bradford men are asking whether the frantic buying of good parcels for the United States is entirely sane.

Mention of Bradford provokes a note as to certain electrical dangers recently revealed there. Nobody was hurt, happily, but some sensation was caused by an upheaval of its busiest roadway, accompanied by a roar of flames. The street was honeycombed by cables, drains, and mains, and for a time the cause could not be deciphered. At length it was made out that a powerful cable laid some years ago had fused at every box, and had ignited a leaky gas main. It is apparent now that gas has a disintegrating effect upon some insulating materials, and that the near presence of the very high-pressure wires used for driving trolley-tramcars may also be prejudicial to cables in the vicinity. Electrolysis is a technical subject that the rapid onmarch of electrification is soon to make us painfully familiar with. To report all damage and provide a new system of transmission secure against accidents is likely to cost the city

of Bradford some \$250,000, or, say, one dollar per head of population.

A word has been published on this side concerning the projected establishment of tin-plate and pressed-steel works at Morrisburg, (Ont.). As one recently paid a visit to a factory of the same kind in South Wales it is perhaps opportune to indicate roughly how the business is done on this side. Of course, at Llanelly the Welsh company has immense natural advantages, being on the sea, and immediately above the minerals used in manufacture. The machinery employed for drawing or stamping is English, American, and German, each being used according to its special adaptability. Local workpeople are adepts in the arts of tinning and galvanizing and japanning, but for certain parts of the enamelling processes, German and Italian workmen are engaged. The export market for seamless hollow-ware is very large and wide-spread, and about four-fifths of the Welsh company's production is sold over sea. Perfection of finish is an important item, and it must be related to cheapness.

NORTH COUNTRY.

Halifax, Yorks, January 7th, 1905.

TRUST AND LOAN COMPANY OF CANADA.

Editor, Monetary Times,—

Sir,—In your issue of 13th inst. appears a letter from "Another Shareholder," referring to what he calls the "manifest unfairness" of my criticism of that unfortunate remark made by the chairman of the company named, some weeks ago in London, owing to my having omitted part of the sentence in which the remark occurred. As, however, the remainder of the sentence simply stated that the Trust and Loan Company was loaning elsewhere the money withdrawn from Ontario, and as no one had suggested that the company was going out of business entirely, and therefore withdrawing their funds from circulation, for the sake of brevity I did not quote the rest of the sentence, knowing that any one with ordinary intelligence would understand the sequence of it.

With regard to the relative remunerativeness of loaning money in Ontario and in the newer provinces of our Dominion of Canada, those who understand how to conduct properly the business of a mortgage loan company know well that it is the *net* return or profit which is the all-important consideration, secondary only to the security of the capital invested. Therefore the bald statement that 7 per cent. in the North-West is far better than 5½ per cent. in Ontario is most misleading, when one considers the great expense of procuring and retaining business there, and of frequently inspecting the properties under mortgage in that region of great distances, which is the only safe way to do business, and is the rule, I hope, with the Trust and Loan Company.

"Another Shareholder" should bear in mind also, and I hope the Winnipeg commissioner of the company has not forgotten, the wise old adage about the higher the rate the greater the risk, as well as the indubitable fact that no newly settled district has or can have that stability of value, which a long settled district possesses; and that to pursue business in the outlying parts of this vast country for the sake of a nominal one or two per cent. higher rate of interest is simply borrowing trouble for any corporation or individual that does so. Another truism occurs to me as appropriate in this connection, namely, that it is a mistake to put all your eggs in one basket, and as a shareholder I commend it to the careful consideration of the chairman of the Trust and Loan Company.

As one who is financially interested in several Canadian mortgage companies, I can assure "Another Shareholder" that it is the exception rather than the rule for the working expenses of a loan company to exceed 1 per cent., and if those of the Trust and Loan Company do so, then their eagerness to secure the highest rates of interest is easily explained, though the prudence and discretion of their directors are not so apparent.

"Another Shareholder" concludes his letter by saying that the "offensive language" employed in your issue of 13th