

modest price level at the beginning of the year. We append a table of the average prices of No. 1 green hides and Toronto cured and inspected hides during the months of 1895:—

	Green.	Cured and inspected.		Green.	Cured and inspected.
January.....	4c.	5c.	July.....	8c.	9½c.
February....	4c.	5c.	August..	8c.	9½c.
March.....	4½c.	5½c.	September	8c.	8½c.
April.....	5½c.	6½c.	October..	7½c.	8c.
May.....	6½c.	8c.	November	7c.	7½c.
June.....	8c.	9½c.	December	5½c.	6½c.

A HOLIDAY COMMISSION.

An importing firm sends us an exhibit of the recent liquidation of an estate by an assignee, respecting which they write:—

"The enclosed exhibit deserves your special attention. Many examples of this nature would almost drive us into the ranks of those who advocate the abolishing of the laws of collecting debts, for in such event character and capacity would be more closely looked after than pretensions to credit as they are now understood to exist, and credits so frequently allowed."

The estate is that of Daniel M. Calder, insolvent, Medicine Hat, Assiniboia, whose assignee sends to creditors a statement of receipts and disbursements showing a balance of (\$5.22) five dollars and twenty-two cents to the credit of the estate. There is little wonder that the righteous anger of this importing firm impelled them to write a stinging letter to the assignee after this wise:—

"The statement received from you regarding this estate is a surprise to us, the surprise consisting most largely in the fact that there should be even \$5.22 remaining for the creditors. In the wild and woolly West there is, no doubt, ample room for the use of capital; so we cheerfully and freely give you authority to invest our portion of the surplus in any enterprise that commends itself to you. If this commission should occasion any undue anxiety, we respectfully suggest that during the approaching festive season our proportion may be applied by Mr. J. P. Mitchell to drinking our good health."

The total amount of liabilities, being claims proven and filed, was \$2,055.42.

ASSETS.—Proceeds sale of stock to Poyntz & Co.....\$1,100 00
Book debts collected.....133 50
Sale of uncollected book debts.....25 00

\$1,255 8

Preferred claims paid:
Rent, J. P. Mitchell.....\$210 00
On account chattel mortgage and insurance, Martin
B. & W. Co. (full amount of which was \$925.30).....890 00
Solicitor's bill re assignment.....11 50
Postage, etc.....2 40
Paid for taking stock.....30 00
Solicitor's bill, re bill of sale of stock to
Poyntz & Co.....10 00
Re bill of sale of book debts.....5 00
Assignee's commission, 7½ per cent. on \$1,258.50 ..94 38
—\$1,253 28

Balance to credit of estate.....\$5 22

BRITISH COLUMBIA MATTERS.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Customs and inland revenue returns, the growing volume of banking transactions in the cities of the Province, all attest a gradual improvement in general trade. Collections, however, continue to be made with slowness, and it will take time to bring about an all-round renewal of prosperity on the coast. Farm produce prices have, in particular, fallen in a number of cases below the level of a remunerative return for growers at any distance from a market, this being notably the case with large crops, as, for instance, potatoes. Hence agriculturists of the lower mainland of the Province still take a gloomy view of things. They are now organizing, in their various districts, with a view to combined shipments and sales in bulk—a wise purpose, which is, however, in the case of many of the Lower Fraser farmers, stated to be combined with Patrons of Industry associations!—the doubtful element in their resolve, since however advisable a political movement may be *per se*, it is generally hazardous to connect business with politics.

The Vancouver City Council is taking over the public market from a lessee who has failed to attract agricultural producers thereto. It is now hoped, by establishing a weekly market day and granting other facilities, to make the town more of a farm market centre than it has hitherto been. The attraction, week by week, of large numbers of neighboring agriculturists to Victoria, would doubtless add perceptibly to the general business activity of the city.

The municipal elections in New Westminster have resulted in the return of a mayor and council absolutely pledged to have nothing to do with proposals—such as were lately mooted, but vetoed—to sell the

civic waterworks and electric light systems to a joint stock company. There is no great change in general business at New Westminster, save that a more hopeful feeling prevails, as a result, amongst other things, of proposals to enlarge the scope of the local fish freezing and cold storage industry and establish two new salmon canneries, either within or hard by the city, ere the beginning of the season of 1896. The extension to February of the fishery season for steelhead salmon gave local satisfaction, but the takes have hitherto been rather light. The Fraser River salmon canners report themselves fairly satisfied with the immediate prospects before the trade, as they learn that the British Columbia brands are now regarded with special favor in the great markets of the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, it is learnt that British *gourmets* speak very highly of the delicate and well preserved flavor of Fraser River frozen salmon, of which large consignments are reaching the London market.

Provincial lumbermen are confident that the Pacific Coast combine, now in course of formation, will succeed in raising prices on lumber sold within Canada and the States to a more remunerative level. Those behind this international trade combination are stated to be succeeding well in the face of the very considerable difficulties which confront the formation of so large and complicated a union of manufacturing producers, large and small.

A new colliery at West Wellington, Vancouver Island, is beginning to make shipments and add to the output of the Province. Meanwhile, the sarcastic proverb, "carry coals to Newcastle," is being verified at Vancouver, whither, for household purposes, large consignments of coal are being imported from Gilman, Washington. Notwithstanding payment of duty, this imported coal is being freely sold at prices which have caused a home combination to reduce its rates by \$1 a ton. The imported product, nevertheless, sells in Vancouver at about 25 cents a ton less than the Vancouver Island coal. It is of hardly so good a quality as the home-raised fuel; but local consumers largely support the importers, with a view, as they declare, to break down a combine of the Vancouver retailers of British Columbia coal. As the Province already imports a vast abundance of commodities, capable of home production, it is to be hoped that this abnormal coal import may ere long be ended by successful home competition. Meanwhile, for manufacturing and general industrial purposes, British Columbia coal holds its own as before against the Washington output, with which it competes successfully, despite duty in the California market.

The long retarded development of East Kootenay mining is at last proceeding, and gold-bearing quartz working, silver and lead mining, and gold hydraulicizing ventures are all being prosecuted energetically in the district of which Fort Steele is the centre. Assays of exceptionally rich ore, got out at the North Star Mine, are said to have assayed at 265 ounces of silver to the ton, whilst the Moyea group at St. Eugene is revealing ore bearing 54 ounces of silver, with 65 per cent. of lead to the ton. On the Wild Horse Creek, hydraulicizing effort is the while being prosecuted by the aid of three large monitors connected with several miles of ditching. Here a renewal on a greater and scientific scale of efforts, which in past years resulted in a moderate aggregate yield of gold—estimated at \$50,000—is expected in the early future to yield much greater returns. Meanwhile, during the winter months, 3,000 tons of ore from the North Star mine will, it is stated, be conveyed by wagon to Golden, where the smelter is to start work, after years of idleness. If, as reported, the C.P.R. next year connects East and West Kootenay, there should be tapped almost inexhaustible supplies of excellent coking coal in the Crow's Nest district of East Kootenay, where some say extensive deposits of petroleum should also be worked. These various signs of revival in a district which has suffered most severely from "hard times," continuing for years, are satisfactory all round, and should prove especially so to the agriculturists of the Columbia River valley, where land excellently adapted for general farming has long yielded its discouraged cultivators but meagre returns.

Trade in Victoria, as elsewhere, is improving gradually, and the increasing promise of the Alberni mine country—naturally tributary to the provincial capital—is encouraging large hopes amongst the traders of Victoria. Meanwhile one of the two largest printing and publishing businesses of that city—that of the Province Co., Ltd.—is about to be transferred—in large part—to Vancouver, where the stockholders are about to erect large and substantial business premises. The promise thus made of keen and increasing competition is somewhat disquieting to several of the general printing establishments now doing business in Vancouver.

Vancouver, 18th Dec., 1895.

—A dividend at the rate of six per cent. per annum has been declared by the Trusts Corporation of Ontario, payable on the 2nd January next.