

Last year the total export of British iron fell to 2½ million tons, from 3½ million tons in 1891, and the values from £27 million to £12½ million, the decrease being distributed nearly equally over all classes of iron and steel. The production of pig iron also shows a decline from 7½ million tons in 1891 to 6½ million tons in 1892; while the German make has increased from 4½ million tons in 1891 to 4¾ million tons in 1892. The Belgian make during the same period has also increased.

In the production of Basic steel, a similar decrease in Great Britain and increase on the Continent and in the United States is too apparent, the share of Great Britain in 1891 being 436,000 tons out of 2,880,000 tons, or rather more than a seventh, and in 1892 406,000 tons out of 3,262,000, or about an eighth.

For the first two months of this year the exports of iron and steel are about equal in quantity to those of 1892—389,000 tons against 381,000—but the value has still further declined, viz., from £3,430,000 to £3,187,000.

My private advices from all authorities confirm these more or less official statistics, both as to the present dullness, and the absence of encouraging signs in the coal, iron, and steel trades, which have generally been regarded as a good index of the condition and prospects of other branches of industry. In shipbuilding, including marine engineering, everything points to stagnation during the year, a condition which arises from the state of the shipping trade, in which freights are such as to cause an enormous amount of tonnage to be laid up, some of which, however, may be released by the opening of the Baltic, and by the probability of a much larger quantity of grain being available for shipping from Russia during the present year. In the textile trades, the expected modification of the American tariff gives rise, in the west riding, to hopes of improvement; but Lancashire reports 1892 as one of the most unsatisfactory in its history, and this year as worse rather than better, while to the economist the hope of the future is dimmed by the strike in the cotton trade, and by a disposition to fly for aid to fictions and fallacies, instead of always resorting to the best educational, scientific, and mechanical means of making the most of the hereditary skill of our work-people and of the advantages we possess in our climate and cheap water communication—conditions which (others not being neglected) must always tend to keep Great Britain the workshop of the world.

Origin of Fyfe Wheat.

The discussion as to the origin of fyfe wheat does not die. The *Miller* is in receipt of a letter from David Plewes, formerly secretary of the Dominion Miller's Association, and now agent of the Ontario Export Association, in Liverpool, Eng., on the question. He says.—“In your February issue there is an article, ‘Origin of Fyfe Wheat,’ which I personally known is correct. I dare say this wheat was introduced into Manitoba in 1858, and also into Wisconsin in 1856, but long before that it was extensively grown in Ontario around where Fergus and Arthur now stand. In 1832 I was miller in Lawville mills, township of Nelson; there were no railroads in that part of Ontario then, and wheat came to us from the back country, 60 or 80 miles on sleighs, and sometimes these back country farmers brought us a very hard spring wheat called Glasgow wheat, the veritable wheat now known as fyfe wheat. At first I was afraid to put it among the other spring wheats. I did not then know its milling properties. I had only been one year in the country then, and practically knew nothing, and at that time there was no one there to instruct me, as all the rest (so far as milling went) knew less than I did; and it was by the merest accident I found out its milling property. Our flour trade outside of farmers' grist was chiefly to bakers; and at one time having scarcely anything in the mill but the choicest white wheat, I had considerable difficulty in pleasing my bread

baking customers. But having some old flour on hand in the mill, carried over from the former year, that had gone sour and slightly musty, I started to mix in about one-third of this old flour among my bakers' flour and for awhile my baker friends were greatly pleased with the flour I sent them. Soon, however, the old flour stock gave out and experience had taught me there was difficulty ahead—unless something was put in to take the place of the old flour. I risked mixing this hard spring wheat (though I know I was darkening the color) but experience proved the virtue of this then somewhat despised variety of spring wheat. My opinion is, small quantities were grown around Arthur prior to 1851.” James A. Bell, of Brantford, Ont., has this to say on the subject:—“Fyfe wheat is a Russian variety of fall wheat which was introduced into the county of Peterborough by a gentleman named Fyfe. Fyfe had a nephew engaged in the Baltic wheat trade at the time, from whom he obtained a bushel of the wheat. On sowing the grain it did not prove at all satisfactory as a fall wheat and the result was a poor and weakly crop. A little of the seed, however, had accidentally been left in the bag, and Fyfe thought he would try it as a spring sowing. He did, and the result was magnificent heads of plump hard grain. He carefully preserved the seed, and this is the origin in Canada of the famous ‘Fyfe’ wheat. It is certain that the variety is unknown in Scotland, although many attempts have been made to trace it to the Land o' Cakes.”

The Strength of Molasses.

The possibilities and future course of molasses is an interesting problem with importers in Montreal, especially those who made haste to offer for future delivery at the lower prices which ruled earlier in the spring. The market has taken a turn now, however, and the consequence is that the more urgent sellers have, if present indications hold good, overreached themselves. There was a possibility of a regular merry little war also between some of the French wholesale houses in Montreal, but the decided change that the market has taken at the Islands has stopped all thought of this, and now everyone is talking higher prices, while the very strong disposition of the sugar market tends to accentuate this feeling, for when the sugar market is strong or weak it has, to a certain extent, a corresponding influence on molasses.

The most unpalatable fact to some in the trade is the knowledge that they were warned early in March that the market in the Islands looked as though it was shaping itself for a change, but they refused to take the hint, and thereby lost considerable advantage, for those who sold at 30c June delivery regret that they did so, while those who were offered stock at that price and did not close are equally put out.

All later advices from the Islands point to a maintenance of the firm feeling that recent cables have indicated. Prices opened at 12½ first cost about the middle of March, but the very next week they had jumped up to 13½, and now another advance of 1c is cited, the cost at the Islands being 14c, which is equivalent to 31½ to 32c laid down in Montreal, a nice little margin for those who were lucky enough to accept the offers of 30c June delivery made to them. Besides the crop is said to be below the average while, as is well known the spot supply in Montreal has been on a very slim basis for some time, and there is nothing to indicate that the stocks anywhere are heavy. In fact, at Halifax it is well known that the reverse is the case, and the market there has been strong.—*Grocer*.

By a simple rule the length of the day and night, any time of the year, may be ascertained by doubling the time of the sun's rising, which will give the length of the night, and double the time of setting will give the length of the day.

Sugar Still higher.

The raw sugar markets are practically in the hands of speculators, both in Cuba and in Europe, says the *Montreal Gazette* of April 23. These speculators know that the refiners must have sugar and seem determined to make them pay a good price. The fact that the Trust closed yesterday a contract for 10,000 tons of beet sugar at 17s 4½, cost and freight to New York, goes to show that this gigantic concern must be short of raw material, and is a good indication of the strength of the market. The latest cable quotations from London are 18s 6½ for first Java, and 17s for fair refining, while beets are quoted at 17s 1½d for spot f.o.b. Hamburg, and 17s 3½ for next month. Offers have been made of 4s for Cuba centrifugals, cost and freight to New York, in cargo lots, which have been refused. The general impression is that all sugars will be higher, as the statistical position shows a great shortage. Refined is following in the advance in raws. Granulated sold at 5½ 16½ here this morning and one refinery put the price up to 5½ in the afternoon, but no sales were made at this figure. The Lower province refiners are not offering any sugars at all in anticipation of higher prices, and one local refinery is not offering any yellows under 4½. None of the refineries will make large contracts and there is every probability that granulated will reach 5½ and that no yellows will be obtainable under 4½ within a very short time, as there is always a brisk demand during the months of May and June.

Iron Meetings Concluded.

The iron manufacturers have concluded their quarterly session at the Windsor hotel, but no further important change transpired in addition to those already given last week. As intimated then, representatives of the rolling mills in the Maritime Provinces who did not attend at the earlier meetings of the session came up to confer with their colleagues later, but, as far as can be learned, nothing important transpired beyond a readjustment of the price ruling for bar iron in the Maritime Provinces to bring it into proportion with the altered western basis. The price down below is now \$2 05, with drawbacks in the case of quantity as for Ontario and Quebec, but not of so material a kind, as the quantities usually dealt in down below are not as large as in the western sections. The matter of nails, as previously intimated, was also brought up, but it is understood that the reported infractions were satisfactorily explained.

In connection with the gathering, the report referred to exclusively by *Hardware* some time ago about a syndicate being anxious to secure control of the various iron and rolling mills in Canada, was received with all sorts of embellishments, but it was learned on pretty good authority that the matter had not advanced beyond the stage of pure conjecture as yet. The Western ironmasters all disclaimed any knowledge of the matter, but three of the Maritime Province men, J. O. Robertson, of the Portland Rolling Mills Co., St. John, N.B., and Geo. Ketchum and E. J. Moore, of the Coldbrooke Rolling Mills Co., of the same place, said that they had been approached by some United States parties, as had other iron men down below. No definite figure had been mentioned, however, and the matter was not a practical possibility with them as yet.

Another story is to the effect that the parties want the Canadians to name a figure, but if they do the matter is being kept as close as the proverbial bivalve guards his secrets.—*Hardware*.

The railway ticket brokers of Chicago have won their habeas corpus case, which means that the law against ‘scalping’ is unconstitutional.

Advices from New York say that bulls expect that coffee will go back to where they were before the break.