

### PROMOTING NEW BUSINESS.

While a lack of business capacity or enterprise cannot truthfully be attributed to Canadian commercial men, one would be straying far from the truth were he to say that they display anything like the aptitude of their brethren across the line in promoting new business. With Canadian commercial men there is far too much of that insular feeling of self-containment which forbids the Englishman to hold converse with anyone to whom he has not been formally introduced. As a rule Canadian commercial men neglect to reply promptly to communications from parties whom they do not know, and in this act upon the old Jew's advice to his son to believe every man a rogue until he found him to be honest. Were the conduct of commercial men in this respect at all times consistent there would be something to admire if it were nothing else than a consistency in being unbusiness-like. But commercial men are not consistent in their conservatism, for they readily execute orders received from travellers and given by unknown men. As an example of what we hold to be a lack of commercial promptness in promoting new business we mention a circumstance related to us by a responsible party in this city. He wrote to an eastern Canadian firm asking for the price of a certain outfit of machinery but received no answer. Then he telegraphed to the Canadian firm and also to three American firms. From the Canadian firm he received no reply, but from each of the three Americans he received telegraphic answers and detailed offers by mail. After delaying for several days, awaiting a reply by mail from the Canadian firm, the order was placed with one of the American firms, and though the order only amounted to five thousand dollars, it will carry with it further orders aggregating twenty times that amount. After the American firm had actually begun to manufacture the machinery, the Canadian firm woke up and wrote saying they hoped to be able to send estimates and specifications soon. The chances are that the American machinery will be erected and in operation before the estimates arrive. Another firm report that they have recently sent out a large number of letters, enclosing in each a stamped envelope for a reply, and that they have hardly received an answer. This spirit of conservatism is not the way to promote business and extend trade.

Courtesy is never thrown away in business, and yet in some commercial establishments courtesy is the highest priced goods on the shelves. Every unknown man who comes along may not be a merchant prince in disguise, but every man, be his appearance what it may, is entitled to have a civil answer to a civil question. By treating respectfully a common looking five-eight American, who came in to ask a question, we know of one firm in this city who will this summer, obtain the investment of a quarter of a million dollars. The American had been coolly shunted by two or three firms, who evidently took exception to his failure to liberally patronise the tailor, and he was just on the point of shaking the dust off his moccasins, when he was civilly treated, and disclosed what was his mission to Winnipeg. That, generally speaking, Winnipeg commercial men are urbane and enterprising, is beyond a doubt, but all are not so, and we fain would see no exception to the rule. Courtesy costs little and is always a paying investment.

### Winnipeg Wholesale Trade.

In the wholesale trade of Winnipeg during the last week a substantial advance was made on the slow recovery hitherto recorded from the stagnation of the holidays. In only two lines of trade was the volume of business reported as showing no improvement, and collections as inclined to be slow. A survey of the whole trade results in the conclusion that the wholesale trade generally was much better during the week than had been anticipated and was really on a far better basis than could reasonably be expected at this season of the year. The break in the cold spell, abnormally long and severe, caused quiet a quickening up and had it not been interrupted by another sharp spell very considerable activity would have been manifested all over. The slightly easier feeling in the Eastern Money Market combined with the partial revival of business in the Provinces has resulted in a marked improvement in collections, in most of the lines of business. Spring orders generally have been good, though travellers on the road report their movements much hampered by heavy and slow travel. The week's business has shown the first signs of buoyancy to be recorded since the new year began and should the weather henceforth in what remains of the winter be what is usually the average range of temperature in Manitoba, there is little doubt that business all round would pick up and the first quarter of the year show a better result than has yet been obtained in that quarter of a normal year's business. The prospects for spring trade are very much improved and while not at all inclined to relax the conservative policy which they have followed for months back merchants are more cheerful, hopeful and confident.

### AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY SLEIGHS ETC.

Sales during the week were, not worth recording and deliveries were light owing to the blockade of the Manitoba railways by snow. Receipts were five cars principally seeders and harrows. A few cars were shipped to agencies and on the way there are over a dozen cars of wagons, mowers, binders, seeders and harrows. Collections are reported fairly satisfactory.

### BOOTS AND SHOES.

Spring goods are being received and orders from the country are good for such goods. Small orders for sorting are also being received. Collections have hardly maintained a satisfactory basis during the week, but they are yet far from being positively bad.

### CLOTHING.

In the clothing trade a decidedly healthy tone prevails, business done being good and spring orders better than was expected. Spring goods are being placed in stock and collections are reported to be satisfactory.

### CROCKERY & GLASSWARE.

A small but steady business was done in crockery and glassware during the week, business being divided between supplying city and provincial demands. Collections are fair, though leaving something to be desired. The tone is healthy and hopeful.

### DRY GOODS.

The trade during the past week was by no means a marked improvement upon the preceding week, and this is the trade above all others which has been slowest to experience the improved feeling all round. The country orders have been fairly good, but collections have not improved and must be considerably better before they can be called quite satisfactory. A slight improvement was noticed during the brief open spell, but a relapse occurred immediately the hard weather again set in. The outlook for the spring trade is considered satisfactory, but that trade can hardly be said to have opened yet.

### DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.

The business done in drugs and chemicals last week was again a marked improvement on that of last week, a steady improvement having to be recorded from the beginning of the year. The country trade has shown more vitality than that of the city, and the collections in both are also improving, being now on a fairly satisfactory basis.

### FANCY GOODS AND SMALLWARES.

In the fancy goods and smallware trade a steady improvement was experienced during the week, quite a few country orders having come in. The wholesale houses are doing a conservative business and report collections fully up to their expectations.

### FISH, POULTRY AND GAME.

The market for fish, poultry and game was inactive during the past week, supplies of the better quality being very scarce. Whitefish are held firm at 8c; the stock being small. River jackfish can be bought easily at 4c, the supply being large. Dried fish, poultry and game are so scarce that quotations, which are not liable to daily fluctuations, cannot be given.