

lessly discredited. The 'new finance' has had a reign as brief as its pretensions were shallow." That its operations did not lead to grave disaster may be placed to the credit of the really prosperous condition of trade, and, as a Wall Street financier puts it, to that of the farmers, who once more, aided by bounteous crops, prove themselves to be the backbone of the country.

It was a feature of the year just past that the dead weight of unmarketable novel or foreign stocks caused good dividend-paying Canadian shares to be in many cases sacrificed. The low prices of these led to their being quietly bought up by shrewd and well-to-do people. The same tendency has prevailed in the United States, where sound securities were sacrificed (by those who were loaded up with swollen industrials) for the benefit of persons who were able to purchase a solid thing at a low price. Where early in the year the United States had a heavy indebtedness in Europe, by reason of excessive speculation, the close of 1903 found the balance all the other way. Labor troubles are playing a large part in the industrial and financial situation. And it is being found out by workingmen, or their leaders, that, as Mr. Gompers puts it, "a reduction in wages to tide over or to offset industrial reaction is as inevitable as the reaction itself." The growing disposition to combat trades-union joint action by means of combination of employers in self-defence is beginning to bring labor to realize that it cannot longer have things its own way.

The shrinkage in value in twelve months of a list of securities, numbering some thirty, on the Montreal Stock Exchange was from \$363,000,000 at the highest market point to \$272,000,000, representing a difference of \$91,000,000, or more than 25 per cent. True, there has been a recovery in aggregate value to \$290,000,000, equal to some 6 per cent.

Happily, the general conditions in Canada to-day, after a good crop and with continued activity in manufacturing and transportation circles, are likely to enable our people to maintain a fair measure of prosperity notwithstanding the undoubted fact that many men, hitherto well-to-do, have been reduced to genteel poverty, and many more, less pecunious, have lost the savings of years in the accursed race of stock speculation.

### THE WOOLLEN INDUSTRY.

One of our subscribers takes exception to a sentence in our Christmas Resume, page 807, where it is said: "Our people are contented. Manufacturers have been busy as never before." This gentleman, who is a woollen manufacturer, is not contented, and declares that the year 1903 has been one of the worst he has known in his line. We must admit that our phrase was too sweeping: for while it is true that manufacturers have as a rule been extremely busy, and that some lines of manufacture have been busier than ever before, the Canadian woollen manufacturing industry has been a noteworthy exception to the general rule. It suffers, and suffers seriously, there is no doubt, from the preference given by our tariff to British woollens, which preference deprives our woollen mills of one-third the protection they would otherwise have in the full duty. This is a disability which has been already brought to

the notice of the Government, and ought to be again. It is precisely one of the difficulties that a revision of the tariff, which we have repeatedly suggested, would abate.

### THE FUTURE FOR CANADIAN WOOL.

The report of the Imperial Commissioners who have been looking into the natural and commercial conditions of the Orange River colony has some interesting features for Canadians. Textile manufacturers in this country have heretofore made considerable use of South African wool. Before the war there were estimated to be some 7,000,000 sheep in the Orange River Colony, whereas now the number is not much greater than 1,000,000, and it will probably take at least half a dozen years for the old standard to be reached. In Australia, too, the herds were largely cut down owing to the drouth, and not only this, but the mutton industry has become of vastly greater importance at the expense of the woollen. In other words, the object of pastoralists has turned wholly or in part from the raising of animals valued primarily for the quality of their wool to that of sheep making good carcasses. Canadian textile manufacturers have found that wool raised in the North-West, more particularly in Alberta, is very similar to the coarser grades grown in Australia and South Africa. Both these sources of supply have, as noted above, become largely curtailed, so that there should be a good field for western sheep ranchers, if they will take the opportunity offered.

### FARM PRODUCE TRADE.

The butter market may be described as easy, owing to the large arrivals which are coming forward, especially of creamery. Prices are consequently lower. Dairy tubs are quoted at 16 to 17c.; prints, 17 to 18c.; creamery, boxes, 18 to 19c.; prints, 20 to 21c. Another thing which has helped to bring about this condition is that the export demand for winter creamery is slow this season, as a result of which the greater portion of the butter made has to be taken care of in the local markets, which means not only larger receipts here, but less firm price quotations. The receipts of dairy butter are not large, though quite sufficient to supply current requirements. Cheese is dull at the moment, though prices would appear for the present, at least, to have touched bottom. Quotations at present range around 11 1-4c. per lb.

The market for eggs continues very strong. There are practically no receipts of new laid, and stocks in hand are very small. Any stocks now held are in very few hands, and with continued cold weather for a few weeks record prices may be looked for. At present pickled are sold at 22 to 23c., while strictly new laid fetch almost anything.

Very little trade is being done in pork products, but prices may be said to be steady. The movement is seldom large at this period of the year. Dressed hogs remain steady at \$6.30 or \$6.40 for running weights as bought from the farmers.

The cattle trade of the country during the past year seems to have increased considerably in importance, and to have become placed on a firmer, more stable basis. The discrepancy of prices between Canadian and