

wools, Texas and territory fleeces feel demand mostly. There were 247 failures in the United States during the past week and a half, as compared with 250 in the preceding week, and with 192, 196 and 203 respectively in the corresponding weeks of 1881 and 1882. About 87 per cent. were small traders whose capital was less than \$5,000. Canada had 37, an increase

The Transportation Situation.

ing over the ground very carefully again fully convicted that the railway combination controlling freight rates throughout the country is not the remotest idea of doing justice to the lumbermen of the Northwest during the coming season. The Omaha, North Platte and Milwaukee lines have absolute control of the country north and west of Chicago as far as lumber carrying is concerned. In the Northwest these lines seem to be supreme and seldom interfered with that the Chicago lines are a mere nothing within the Northwest. During the last ten years, however, these lines have been extended so as to Nebraska, Kansas, southern Iowa and Missouri, and they are fully able to control carrying in these sections as easily as in the Northwest, but they do not and the lumbermen of the Northwest are the sufferers. They set down and permit the Chicago lines to control millions of tons of lumber at river points and beyond with such a power as to indicate plainly that they are under the control of the Chicago lines or they will become so. Year after year when the Southwest is to be supplied with lumber, the Chicago lines will make a rate and fill the country from Sioux Falls to the Indian territory, full of lumber, and the Northwest from any particular point in the business and all this without even a protest on the part of the Northwest who hold their tariffs and go without. Four years ago the Omaha with a bunch of trumpets entered the field to stand by and protect the lumbermen of Wisconsin, as they (the lumbermen) landed on the river and invest \$100,000, in mills and outfits for making lumber to be sent to the Northwest. Since that time the trade of Chicago has increased in the Northwest, and had it not been for the market development of the Northwest the lumbermen would have been smashed here. A few of them on the lake and a few in sending their staff to be sent thence by rail to Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa, but the majority were reduced to figures so as to sell in the Northwest, until they are now down to bed. All have begged, prayed, pro-argued for relief at the hands of the government without in the least affecting their policy.

Such as the cutting capacity of the mills in the Northwest is being constantly increased, a matter of great moment to consider whether the extreme limit has been reached, without involving the entire Northwest in common ruin or whether there is

a possibility of bringing about such a change in railway management as to secure the trade of the Southwest as against Chicago. We confess that after the vigorous efforts which have been made we are at a loss to figure out what is to be the outcome or what remedy there is at hand. The only solution which occurs to us for the Chippewa, Wisconsin and St. Croix river mills is to resort to rafting down the river. This would throw 600,000,000 feet on to the river markets to be distributed from points between Dubuque and St. Louis, westward over the Chicago lines and at the same time relieve the Northwest of the burden of an overstock of lumber. This plan is possible and would at once solve the whole matter. The only drawback which could not be provided against would be that the Chicago lines might carry cheaper to the west from Chicago than they did from river points, which they have repeatedly done in the past. Such rank injustice would be no more outrageous than the tariff adjustments have been for years, to say nothing of the iniquitous system of rebates, drawbacks and cut rates, which made them still worse.

That this is the main question to be considered in the Northwest there be no doubt, and these suggestions are now thrown out to call up the subject before it is too late to apply the only remedy. We shall hope to hear shortly of a call for a meeting to be held, say at Eau Claire, where the subject can be fully discussed before piling commences. If this is not done somebody is going to be badly hurt before 1886 arrives.—*Mississippi Valley Lumberman and Manufacturer.*

The Dry Goods Trade and the Tariff.

The following memorial has been sent to the Finance Minister by the Dry Goods Merchants of Toronto on the tariff changes:

That it is the opinion of the dry goods trade that the change purposed in section 1, clause 4, relating to costume cloths, serges, and similar fabrics under 25 inches wide, is inadvisable, owing to the difficulties that are likely to arise as to the classification, especially in the smaller ports. This particular class of goods has always been troublesome, and the trade here has good reason to believe that goods are often entered at small ports of entry at irregular and lower rates. Also that now, the classification being well established and known by both importers and appraisers, any change therein is inadvisable, and the Government is earnestly requested to withdraw that clause, and allow the duties on these goods to remain as at present. If, however, for purposes of revenue, the Government determined to maintain the advanced rate of duty of 25 per cent., then it is the opinion of the trade here that they

SHOULD MAKE THE CLASSIFICATION

as clear as possible. The trade would also respectfully request that the increased rate of duty on carpets, umbrellas, parasols, and windeys be not enforced until the first of April, to allow the entry of all orders given for such goods before the proposed change was announced, it being a well-known fact that considerable quantities of these goods are now on the way to fill orders taken by the trade on the

basis of the present rate of duty, and should the increased rate be enforced now the extra five per cent. will be a clear loss to importers, without a chance for them to recoup themselves; that the proposed change in the clauses relating to the costs of inland transportation, etc., are, in the opinion of the dry goods trade, very unnecessary, causing much labor without producing any appreciable result, and would open the door to fraud. As we believe that it has been the experience of the United States Government that it was inevitably impossible to enforce such a clause, with justice to the honest importer, and as far as the interests of our own trade are concerned we would prefer an increase in the rate of duty if such is needed.—*Dominion Dry Goods Report.*

The Business Situation.

The present indications of reviving business are somewhat more numerous and significant, especially at Western trade centers. This may however, be owing to the activity in the speculative markets for the last few weeks, which has put money in circulation and stimulated general trade. The railroad strikes have had a discouraging effect, and it is the general opinion that the outlook would have been considerably better but for this disturbance. Reports continue to be more favorable as regards the general markets, and at most points, with the arrival of better weather, there has been an increased number of sales in all staple lines, although the interior purchasers do not appear to be taking goods in excess of their immediate wants. The commercial demand for funds at Chicago and elsewhere west has increased, and for the above and other reasons traders have been inclined to look with more favor on the prospects for business during the earlier portion of 1885. Some discouraging accounts have been received of the industrial situation of the east, relieved only by a little better feeling in regard to pig iron, not growing out of improved prices, but from the better general appearance of the market. It is reported that orders for 10,000 or 12,000 tons of bridge iron have been placed within the past few weeks, which has given the iron trade a promising aspect. There is an increased demand in the nail trade, tending to show that building operations will be active during the coming season. Iron men declare that the extreme point of shrinkage in their trade has been growing beneath the surface, as stocks have decreased, which will soon manifest itself in an encouraging manner. This pleasant prediction remains to be verified. Iron is almost king, and is an index business. When the iron trade prospers all other trades are prosperous. The recent decline in English consols caused by foreign complications depressed all other classes of English securities. This caused a strong market for American stocks and bonds, in which those who have sold consols on the decline were disposed to invest the proceeds of their sale. New York prices have been well sustained by this cause, in spite of strikes, blockades, competition, reduced dividends and the alarm sounded by croakers. The reassuring declaration of Gladstone and the lull in the war excitement have,