

THE NEW PRESIDENT OF TORONTO BOARD OF TRADE.

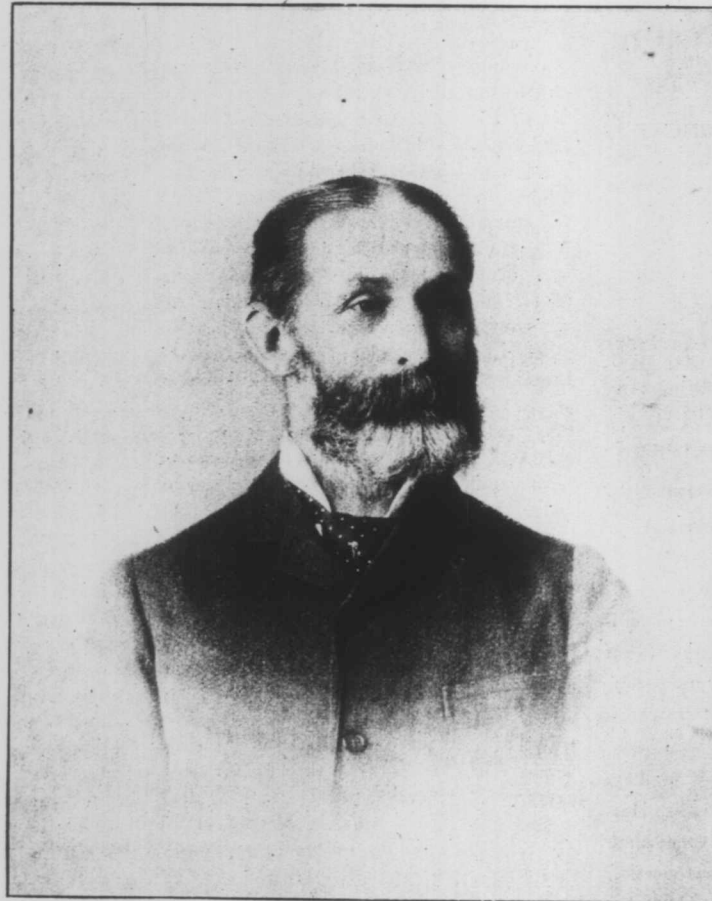
MR. H. N. BAIRD.

"Nothing ventured nothing won."

The immense wealth which measures the value of the grain grown in the fields of our Canadian farms every year passes on its way from consumer to producer through the hands of a comparatively small number of leading distributors. These men, standing on the very watershed of the market, have to keep the supply of money running one way and the supply of grain the other. To preserve the due balance of these two contrary currents has proved too hard a problem for many a clear head, and failure to do it has made financial wreck of many a fair fortune. The mechanic usually can rely on getting his barrel of flour, and the farmer seldom fails to get the market price of the moment for his wheat, but the big grain merchant very often does not get back all the money he used to bring the material one step in the series of exchanges in the transfer from farmers' granaries to consumers' tables. The grain merchant who does business on any scale of magnitude has to be very wary that he does not get caught, but the large operator has to show the courage of his convictions by putting up, and often keeping up, very costly pledges. Wide and correct information, insight into the market, foresight, nerve and venture, are the chief attributes, which, backed up by capital, are the requisite foundation for a successful experience in grain-buying.

Mr. Hugh N. Baird, the new President of the Toronto Board of Trade, is one of the best known grain merchants in Canada, the length of time he has been in the business and the extent of his operations combining to give him a place among the foremost of those who deal in that class of merchandise. Though but slightly past middle age Mr. Baird has had a continuous experience of twenty-five years in the grain and flour trade. During that quarter of a century he has seen a big expansion in the grain production of the country, and perhaps no man has taken sharper note of the influences that have helped to foster this increase, and has been readier at all

times to help them along. The part played by railway extension in enlarging the area of production, the experiments which determined the selections best adapted to special soils and climates, the opening up of markets, the protection of native growers and millers—in all these he took an interest, often a very active part. In such ways and by the use of his own capital year after year, Mr. Baird illustrates how much public good a man can do who follows up sagaciously and conscientiously his own private commercial interests. Such services would not be rendered by individuals under a system such as the Patrons of Industry contemplate—a



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system which, carried to its legitimate issues, would extinguish all distributors that were not specially retained brokers of consumers.

The firm of which Mr. Baird is a member—Messrs. Crane & Baird—do business in grain and flour both in this city and in Montreal. Mr. Baird himself has operated very largely at all the leading grain marketing centres in the United States, and did last year an enormous business in corn, shipped in bond from the Western States to Montreal and thence exported abroad. He is interested in several manufacturing industries in Paris, Ont., notably in woollen mills, carpet factory and grist mills. All these are

very successful works. He is on the board of several financial, railway and insurance companies, holding that office in the following particularly:—The Midland Division of the Grand Trunk Railway Co., The Western Assurance Co., The Millers' and Manufacturers' Insurance Co. For two years he was second Vice-President of the Toronto Board of Trade, for one year he was first Vice-President, and at the last annual meeting was elected President. He was Vice-President of the old Corn Exchange.

Mr. Baird is a Canadian, having been born in the town of Cobourg. His education he received at a private school in Montreal.

His public record is one that might be expected of his Canadian birth and education, and although he has never taken any part in politics he was always to be found on what he deemed to be the right side of every movement for the welfare of this country. Notably his attitude on the National Policy was one of strong advocacy before it was obtained, and has been of staunch support since its inception. He took a very prominent part in the campaign which resulted in the adoption of a protective tariff. Particularly was he identified with the agitation which led to an increase of duty on flour, thus enabling Canadian millers to compete with the cheap stuff of the Western States. He at present strongly favors closer trade relations among the parts of the British Empire.

Mr. Baird enters upon his duties as President of the Board of Trade at the head of a very good administration. In Mr. Hugh Blain he has a very capable first Vice-President, who has given thoughtful attention to the chief problems that are likely to come before the Board; Mr. S. F. McKinnon will undoubtedly fill the office of second Vice-President acceptably; a strong Council is in office; and Mr. Baird is an able and experienced man himself. It is well that a man of his views upon the trade question should be the successor of Mr. John I. Davidson, who strongly advocated such internal commercial union as is practicable among the parts of the British Empire. This theory of the best way to solve the problem of trade that is engaging the attention of Britain and the colonies just now, finds an equally strong supporter in Mr. Baird. It is probable that delegates to the Congress of the Chambers of Commerce that is to meet in London this year will be appointed to represent the Toronto Board of Trade. Many other matters besides that of closer union will be considered at that Congress.