

## SELLING GROCERIES.

To-day in all lines of groceries the standard brands of goods are being cut in price, so it is almost impossible for a grocer to get any profit from them whatever, consequently he has got to handle his own brands and push these rather than push the goods of someone else. It is an easy matter to have his goods packed under his own label, but he must be careful to get the best goods. Get the goods that the people want. Don't hesitate to spend a few more cents for quality, as it is really economy. No one then can come into your store and say: "I can buy these goods at —'s store at a lower price," consequently there is no competition. In pushing your own brands of goods you have an advantage over a cutter, because you shut him out, as he is not handling the goods you handle. If the cutter, though, is selling, say, a certain brand of corn which the people want, you must get it. They may not find anything else in the cutter's store to please them, and it may just be a matter of selling corn to them to catch the rest of their trade.

## LAKE COAL SHIPMENTS DURING 1896.

The Marine Review.

The chief inspector of mines for Ohio, who conducts at Columbus a bureau devoted to this service, includes in his annual report each year a table giving anthracite and bituminous coal shipments from all ports on Lake Erie. This annual summary of the lake coal trade is not absolutely correct, as the inspector is forced to depend upon collectors of customs for a part of the data, and the customs regulations on the lakes are in some respects unsatisfactory when applied to the collection of statistics. The figures are, however, the best that can be secured, and there is little danger of great discrepancies in them. An advance summary of the table is as follows:

"Shipments of anthracite and bituminous coal from all Lake Erie ports, Buffalo to Toledo inclusive, during the season of 1896, amount in the aggregate to 8,941,327 net tons. Of this 3,175,722 tons anthracite and 5,763,605 was bituminous. The latter includes coal taken on for fuel by steamboats trading to the several Lake Erie ports. By a comparison with the preceding year the bituminous shipments are found to represent an increase of 1,543,692 tons. The footings also indicate a gain in the total shipments of 162,093 tons over 1895, and an increase of 2,072,070 tons when compared with 1894. Of the bituminous coal sent to the lake ports during the year, 4,337,815 tons was from mines in Pennsylvania, 1,267,035 from Ohio, 159,117 from West Virginia and 1,638 from Maryland. These shipments from Pennsylvania represent a gain of 1,755,828 tons, which is equal to 75.2 per cent. of the entire year's shipments, as against 61.1 per cent. during 1895, 65.9 per cent. during 1894 and 49.9 per cent. during 1893. The Ohio fields furnished 1,267,035 tons, which is a loss of 99,679 tons as compared with the preceding year, and a loss of 301,877 tons as compared with 1894. It is also a loss of 861,330 tons when compared with 1893. By reviewing a comparison of the percentages of Ohio coal received at the lake ports during recent years, it is found that during the past year it formed 21.9 per cent. of the entire shipments of bituminous coal, as against 32.3 per cent. in 1895, 28.8 in 1894, 46 in 1893 and 25 in 1892, which indicates that during the past three years the percentage of Ohio coal which originated in Ohio mines has decreased 24 per cent., while the quantity from Pennsylvania has increased 25.3 per cent."

## RIVETING WITH COMPRESSED AIR.

In regard to riveting with compressed air, the master mechanic of the Santa Fe road is quoted as saying that by the use in the Santa Fe shops of a stationary riveting machine three men are enabled to drive 2,000 rivets per day of ten hours at a cost of \$4.75, as compared with 200 rivets per day at a cost of \$7 by hand labor; the truck riveters—the machine being operated by two laborers at a total cost of \$3 per day—drive 3,000 rivets, as compared with 175 rivets driven by hand labor by three men in a day at a cost of \$6, while the staybolt breaker makes an average saving of \$8 a day, and the tank riveter an average daily saving of \$10. Further the mud-ring riveters will drive

as many rivets as can be handed to them, and will make a saving of \$12 to \$15 a day for that class of work. Not only is this method credited with the great saving named, but it is declared to insure every rivet hole being filled entirely and insures tight work, while of hand-driven rivets in mud rings a large percentage invariably leak.

## LAKE FREIGHT MATTERS.

The Marine Review.

Although the improvement in lake freights, which has been confidently expected every day for two weeks past, is slow of development, there is not a particle of doubt now of profitable rates during the last three months of the season. Within the past ten days sales of iron ore have been quite heavy. The purchases have, in fact, been largely in excess of the expectations of the ore dealers, and the market has reached a point on some ores where the producers are unwilling to sell at prices that prevailed earlier in the season without first being certain of arrangements regarding lake freights. Sales have been made to furnace men who made extensive purchases early in the year, as well as to those who provided only sparingly for their wants. With assurances of more than an average movement of grain, it would seem that a settlement of the coal strike is now all that is necessary to cause higher freights all along the line, and it is more than probable that the coming week will bring a moderate advance, even under present conditions.

## RUSSIA'S PLATINUM OUTPUT.

The Russian Ministry of Finances has recently issued a report on the production of platinum in Russia, according to which that country stands first in the world for this production, forty times the quantity produced by all other countries together being obtained there. In the year 1880 the quantity produced amounted to 2,946 kg.; in 1895 it reached 4,413 kg. The production had gone on increasing up to last year, when it diminished on account of the wet weather in summer. This rare metal is found exclusively in the Southern Ural. The manner of its being worked up is unknown in Russia; this is done in Germany, to which country the platinum is exported in a crude state. Whatever Russia requires of worked-up platinum it has to buy back from Germany. Of late years the price of this article has run very high; at present it is 900 marks (about £45) for 1 kg. of crude platinum in Russia. On mining for the platinum the still rarer metal iridium is also found, but only in very small quantities. Last year the total quantity of iridium obtained did not amount to more than 4.1 kg., and this was only slightly exceeded in 1894.

## PROSPECTS FOR COTTON.

H. M. Neil has issued a circular on the growing cotton crop, in which he says: "At this moment, for this year, the promise is equal to any previous year in every State but Texas, and on the present acreage, even allowing that Texas should fall short of her maximum production per acre by 1,000,000, the outlook now is for a crop of at least 9,750,000, with 500,000 to 1,000,000 more within the range of possibilities. The figure of 9,750,000 is really very conservative, for a product per acre outside of Texas equal to 1894-95 would give 7,350,000 bales, and a maximum for Texas would be 3,950,000 bales, from which, allowing 1,000,000 off, you would have a crop of 10,300,000 bales. The crop is so far advanced from recent rains and heat that it will reach maturity and be independent of frost at an unusually early date, and should we soon have goods rains in Texas her crop also would be near perfection, and the possibilities for a total crop would then be something enormous."

—A large cotton mill is now in course of erection at Hangkow, Siam, the engines and machinery all being supplied by German manufacturers. The mill buildings are being built by a Chinese contractor, and are expected to be completed shortly.

## RAILWAY OWNERSHIP.

As indicative of the divergent opinions in connection with the State ownership and operation of railways, a recent transaction is of interest. On the first of July the State Council of Switzerland, by a vote of 25 to 17, passed a bill authorizing the repurchase by the Confederation of all the principal railways in the country, including the St. Gothard line. Probably no country in the world can furnish such accurate information concerning the operation of railways as is accessible to Swiss legislators, and yet the sentiment in connection with State control is continually changing. One council passes a resolution to sell and a succeeding council to buy, and this in a country so circumscribed in area as to make it possible to obtain the fullest information on the subject under consideration. It is evident that in Switzerland, as in this country, the question presents a choice of evils, and here at all events it would appear to be the part of wisdom to "rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

## PARAGUAY'S FOREIGN TRADE.

The London *Chamber of Commerce Journal* says: "Referring to the countries of origin of the principal imports into Paraguay, the British Consul at Asuncion states that the greater part of the cotton goods, wire, corrugated iron and a few tools and agricultural implements come from Great Britain. So far as drills and other cotton fabrics for men's wear are concerned, however, as well as Oxfords and other colored woven goods, the supplies are chiefly from Germany and Italy."

—A great dead of capital is being invested in the oil fields of the Islands of Sumatra and Java. Last May the East Indian Exploration Company was organized at Amsterdam, with a capital stock of 300,000 florins, to develop a tract of oil land, comprising 35,000 acres in the residency of Samarang, Java. On an area of 500 acres, which is explored so far, more than 40 natural oil wells were found. Experts entrusted with a preliminary investigation rendered a glowing report as to the productivity of the oil field. The latter is located in the districts of Singendul, Singenlor, and Manegar of the residency named, in the immediate neighborhood of the railway station of Telewa, the railway intersecting the field at several places. The "Petroleum Maatschappij Mokra Enim," which was organized recently at Amsterdam with a capital stock of 10,000,000 florins, is the successor of a syndicate formed in 1895, and composed of the Bank of Paris, Berliner Handels-Gesellschaft of Berlin, and Messrs. Labouchere, Oyen & Co., of Amsterdam. This syndicate has secured concessions on large tracts of land in the residency of Palembang, Sumatra.

—A committee has been appointed by the British Board of Trade to consider the best means of bringing British manufacturers and merchants into touch with the colonial markets. With this end in view it has been suggested that samples of the goods most in demand should be sent to the Old Country. This is a capital idea, and, if adopted earlier, might have saved the Old Country the loss of a lot of trade. In many lines Canada uses United States instead of English goods, because the United States manufacturers give the Canadians what the Canadians want, and the English manufacturers refuse to modify their products to suit the taste of the purchaser.

—There is a very considerable demand for British machinery, locomotives, rolling stock, etc., springing up in Norway. Last year the country's imports rose from 80,500,000 kroner to 101,000,000 kroner, the increase being almost entirely due to the heavy demand for railway material and machinery. According to one correspondent in Norway, this year will show an even greater increase.