

Messrs S. R. Foster & Son, St. John, N. B., manufacturers of tacks, shoe nails, cut nails, etc., claim that they were the first manufacturers in Canada to introduce polishing machines into their works. Their works are embraced in a four-story high brick building 100x88 feet, in which are employed an average of fifty hands. Their products cover a range of over 300 varieties of goods, and their annual consumption of iron, brass, zinc, copper, etc., is about 1200 tons.

PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW.

DOMINION.—The people's representatives in Parliament cannot be accused of lethargy, at least we might reasonably come to that conclusion judging from the torrent of questions now being poured upon the Ministry, to say nothing of the information being asked for upon innumerable topics, and the notices of motion which have already appeared. By the way, a notice of motion is a suggestive term, a horse gives a notice of motion when he lays back his ears, and the bull when he roars and lowers his head. Motion is just now the order of the day in the House of Commons, and few members find time to snatch a coveted five minute nap.

Coming down to business, it is pleasing to note that those who have charge of stationary engines will hereafter have to be certificated engineers. It is more prudent to turn out incompetent men than for us to run the risk of being blown up sky-high through their ignorance. A measure has been submitted dealing a death blow at the railway baggage smasher, and making it imperative upon railway authorities to have passengers landed upon the platforms at stations. This measure has our entire sanction; we have had several trunks destroyed by careless baggage men, and we have before now been landed in the mud several hundred feet from the station platform. We didn't like these annoyances and discomforts, but as we were travelling on a pass we felt diffident about making formal protests.

Parliament is to deal with the question of trade combines, and it is not improbable that the Government will be authorized to shut down upon all such offensive and defensive alliances. If our mills and factories do not shut down also, it will be all right, but co-operation is the only cure for the ills of competition, and as competition has palized enterprise, withered dividends, and cut down wages, we should like to see fair co-operation tested before declaring it illegal.

The report of the labor commissioners forshadowes several important reforms which we most gladly support, and of which we will have occasion to speak in future issues, but we note that brain laborers have been overlooked, and no reform is suggested whereby a poor scribe such as we are, can have his hours of thinking labor reduced, or his wages increased, nor is there any provision for the government's insuring our life, as it proposes to do for our fellows who labor with their hands. Why is it that mental muscle is thus slighted?

Sir Richard Cartwright believes that Canada should make her own treaties irrespective of Great Britain. This is a move in the direction of independence, and on several grounds commends itself to our judgment, but there are grave reasons why such a power might prove a great danger to Canada under existing circumstances, and the idea is therefore more fanciful than practical. On this question a party battle will be fought, and the partisan lines are likely to be tightly drawn.

In criticising the recent appointments to the Cabinet, Sir Wilfred Laurier condemned the selection of ex-Governor Dowdne as Minister of the Interior, asserting that the ex-Lieutenant Governor was mainly responsible for the outbreak of the rebellion in the Northwest Territories. The Premier, in replying, defended Mr. Dewdney, and said that the Government had been privately notified by him of the feelings and intentions of the half-breeds. Mr. Laurier, in speaking of the appointment of the Hon. C. H. Tupper, said that he was a young man and decidedly ambitious, but recognized that youth and ambition were not faults.

The Finance Minister, Hon. Mr. Foster, placed the estimates for the ensuing year upon the table. Of the proposed expenditures the following will be more particularly interesting to our readers:—\$60,000 are to be voted for a line of steamers to ply between Halifax or St. John or either to the West Indies and South America. There is increase in the vote for steam communication with the Magdalen Islands of \$2,000, and \$9,000 is to be voted for a daily service during nine months, and a daily or weekly service during three months between St. John, Digby and Annapolis. The subsidies to the French and German lines of \$50,000 and \$30,000 are cut off altogether. The P. E. Island steamship subsidy is reduced by \$5,000 and the St. John and ports in Basin of Minas, by \$1,000, the Canso, Arichat, Port Hood and Mabou by \$1,000; the Grand Manan line by \$500; and the Halifax and St. John subsidy for the line via Yarmouth and Port Medway is reduced. The above reductions have been made, it is understood, because the Government hold these lines should become self-sustaining. There is a decrease of \$42,000 in the expenditures for lights, fog whistles, etc. On the other hand a full account of the \$100,000 for the fishery protection fleet duly appears. The following are the proposed appropriations for public buildings in Nova Scotia:—

Annapolis Post Office, Custom House, etc.....	\$19,500
Halifax, Dominion buildings, repairs.....	1,500
Sydney, south, Post Office, Custom House, etc.....	10,00
Halifax examining warehouse.....	300
Antigonish public building.....	650
New Brunswick.....	31,950
Harbors and rivers:	
Arisaig, completion of pier.....	6,000
Barrington Passage pier.....	1,000
Cheticamp, to complete.....	2,000

Cow Bay repairs.....	2,000
East River, of Pictou.....	500
Eatonville, pier to complete.....	2,100
Mabou.....	1,000
Noel.....	2,000
Partridge Island river.....	2,000
Port Hood, repairs.....	2,500
Sheet Harbor, to complete.....	1,000
Wallace Harbor.....	1,000

COMMERCIAL.

The unseasonable weather that has prevailed throughout the winter has exercised a deterrent influence upon trade, but payments falling due thus far this month have been fairly well met—in fact better than was expected—and the proportion of renewals asked for was considerably less than many of our wholesale establishment's expected. This has, of course, created a feeling of greater confidence, as it was feared that many firms here would find themselves obliged to provide for large deficiencies on maturing country paper. That such has not been the case is a source of much gratification, as it indicates that the country trade is in a better condition than was believed.

The stability and worth of our bank-notes is beginning to attract much attention, not only among the papers such as *The Critic*—who have for months urged the necessity of substituting a circulating medium under a government guarantee for the present unsecured issues of the banks—but also among the general public. Of course some people will oppose any reform that may or can be proposed, and we find that opponents of any change in the Bank Act have arisen who speciously endeavour to show that the inconvenience and losses sustained by the poorer classes of note-holders in the event of bank failures, are so trivial as not to be worthy of notice. These assert that the wages of laboring people are paid chiefly in \$1, \$2 and \$4 Dominion notes. Enquiry, however, shows that this statement is merely an assumption, and is absolutely untrue. Investigation proves that by far the largest portion of working men's—and women's—wages is paid in \$5 bank-bills. The attempt to make it appear that the poor working people do not suffer sufficiently to deserve any attention, when it is well-known that the losses arising from the depreciation of bank-bills in cases of failure are felt very keenly by them, is, to say the least, almost disingenuous argument on the part of those who care not how they distort facts, provided they can induce the government not to touch the present system of bank circulation, which they would make out to be a very ticklish subject. When such institutions as the Bank of Montreal and the Bank of British North America, as well as the great mass of the public, favor a guaranteed currency, we do not believe that the government is likely to pay much heed to agitators who are endeavoring to secure the continuance of the present objectionable system for their exclusive interests and privileges. Not the working classes alone have felt the injustice of the present system. The smaller tradespeople have suffered very heavily by being caught with large amounts of depreciated bills in their possession, and being compelled to use the notes, they have had to submit to the inevitable shave, which in some bank suspensions have been very heavy. The currency of our banks must be as secure to holders as are American bills or Dominion notes.

The following are the Assignments and Business Changes in this Province during the past week:—J. R. Saunders, tobacco, etc., Halifax, assigned to A. Hobrecker; Daniel A. McIsaac, general store, Sydney, N. S., assigned to J. S. McNeil, in trust for benefit of creditors; John A. McDonald, general store, Baddeck, N. S., assigned to Alex. N. McDonald, under indigent debtors act; Shand & Burns, grocers, Windsor, N. S., E. D. Shand & Dimock B. Burns, co-partnership registered Jan. 31, '89; J. E. Morse & Co, wholesale tea and tobacco, Halifax, admitted O. E. Smith partner; Evan Thompson & Co. general store, Elmsdale, N. S., dissolved, Peter M. Fielding, retires, Evan Thompson continues and liquidates.

Bradstreet's report of the week's failures:

	Week Prev.		Weeks corresponding to		Failures for the year to date.			
	Feb. 8.	1889	1888	1887	1886	1889	1888	1887
United States..	265	294	234	237	227	1871	1686	1734
Canada.....	46	53	43	36	32	228	245	161

DRY GOODS.—A fair amount of orders have been received during the past week from country dealers for spring goods, and travellers report that they are meeting with improved success in showing their fall samples. Still the general tone of the dry goods trade has been slow. It appears that traders do not take kindly to the recent advances effected in cotton goods of the various grades by manufacturers. Cottons are, consequently, regarded as extremely slow. While it is conceded that the raw material has become dearer within the past two months than it was before, there seems to be a general feeling on the part of consumers of manufactures of cotton goods, that the increase of the prices of what they want has been more than is warranted under the circumstances.

IRON, HARDWARE AND METALS.—A little more activity is noticeable in the hardware trade, and a number of travellers who are on the road are securing orders more freely than they were. Warrants in Glasgow were hammered down in the early part of the week under consideration to 40s. 6d., but subsequently recovered and at last advices stood at 41s. 6d. No. 3 foundry iron at Middlesborough is quoted at 33s. 10½d. In the United States no real revival of trade is noticeable as yet, but it is too early to expect it. Those interested, however, confidently predict a large business during the coming season, and expect it to set in during the next three or four weeks.

BREADSTUFFS.—The demand for flour continues to be slow. The market has been steady though very quiet, and only a small jobbing trade at unchanged prices was accomplished. Beerbohm's cable says:—"Cargoes