

to take chances, as they sometimes do, on a continuation of the present range of values. The main impediment in the way of offerings, however, is the scarcity of supplies in the country. Seldom in the history of the trade has there been so free a movement of grain to the seaboard as during the present year. The market has almost steadily risen since the crop was first marketed and there has been every inducement to sell. Stocks in both farmers' and merchants' hands are consequently light.

The visible supply of wheat in Canada and the United States on April 23 was 25,914,000 bushels, as against 36,201,000 bushels the same date 1897, and 58,030,000 bushels in 1896. The markets are somewhat disorganized at present as a consequence of the belligerent situation, and exporters find it difficult to arrive at shipping terms with Old Country importers. The opening up of navigation to the sea, which was exemplified on Tuesday of this week, by the arrival at Montreal of the steamship "Scotsman" in port, may somewhat simplify matters, and assist the trade movement.

Seeding has been carried on in Ontario under favorable circumstances this spring, and with the present high prices ruling every effort has been made to increase the wheat acreage. This has been done in many instances at the expense of the barley crop, which has not within recent years proved remunerative. It is interesting to note that goose wheat is being largely sown instead of the red and winter varieties. The two latter kinds sprouted last year in districts where the goose wheat was of good quality. Mail advices from Manitoba indicate that seeding is well finished in some parts of that Province, and in others is being carried on with activity. Authorities report that there will be an increase in the acreage of from 20 to 35 per cent. as compared with last year. With moderately favorable weather conditions throughout the season the wheat harvest of 1898 should be in excess of all previous records.

THE FRUIT TRADE.

That the fruit crop of 1898 will prove a banner yield is the confident expectation of authorities in the trade. Frost, rain and drought may yet cause serious injury in different sections of the country, but the increased acreage brought under fruit cultivation within recent years must inevitably lead to a marked expansion in the aggregate yield. In few industries is it so evident, as in the fruit trade, that successful production does not necessarily mean profits. The question of marketing the fruit is equally important with its cultivation. The shipping facilities of the Dominion for such goods were never better than they are at present. In spite of the cold storage arrangements which exist in so many trade centres, despatch continues to be the keynote of success in the fruit business. The general rule of the trade is sale by commission, and in selecting houses for consignment too much care cannot be given to financial position, capacity to handle goods and general reputation for fair dealing of the intended consignee. All the care and skill expended in cultivation can easily be made of no avail by bad marketing.

It is necessary to watch carefully the details of shipment. Cards and labels containing the names of shipper and consignee should be securely attached to each package of fruit. The energetic receivers are prepared to

acknowledge by advice cards the goods as received each day, and once each week will give an account of the sales and forward cash for the amount of fruit sold. Shippers ought to insist upon this being done, because in the past credit business with delay in making returns has caused serious trouble. The fruit ought to be carefully graded according to quality. Messrs. McWilliams & Everist in a circular to the trade remark that, "Good 'goods' well prepared will always outsell the coarser and rougher varieties; and good fruit put up neatly and packed honestly will always sell best." In packing fruit, as in packing anything else, honest methods require to be followed: any attempt at sharp practices will be quickly detected, and cause loss to the forwarder. The influence of all merchants should be directed to the introduction of better methods in the fruit trade, for its development means much to this country, of which fruit is so important a product.

ONTARIO MINERAL PRODUCTION.

Considering that Ontario has a reputation to maintain, we expect her to be up to date and to adopt modern improvements. To the reader of Part I. of the Report for 1897 of the Ontario Bureau of Mines, who will compare it with the reports of former years, it is quite apparent that improvement has been made in the typographical attractiveness of the book. It is printed in double column, which is easier to the eye: the paper and ink are good, and the illustrations are better and more numerous than we have been accustomed to find in a Blue Book. This portion of the Report has been hastened in its issue by direction of the Minister, Hon. Mr. Gibson: and subsequent parts are to contain the reports of Prof. Coleman, Prof. Wilmott, Mr. Miller, of Kingston School of Mining, and Mr. Parks, of Toronto University.

On pages 5 and 6 of this part of the report is some racy reading. One does not ordinarily look for controversial matter or stinging rhetoric in the columns of a Blue Book. But the director of the Bureau of Mines, in the pages cited, pours some tolerably hot shot into Mr. E. P. Rathbone, A.M.I.C.E., M. I. Mech. E., etc., for the temerity of that gentleman in finding fault with mining matters in Ontario which he did not understand. Our readers may remember that a correspondent of THE MONETARY TIMES described the address of this gentleman before a miners' meeting at Rat Portage in January last, and characterized him as very contemptuous of this new country, don't you know.

The very striking statement appears in the front of the book that the number of the mining companies formed in Ontario last year and the amount of their capital authorized exceeded in the aggregate the companies and the capital of the whole of the twenty-six years preceding. That is to say, there were incorporated 140 companies, whose capital amounted to \$101,531,000, against 134 companies, with, say, \$46,000,000 capital incorporated, between 1870 and 1896 inclusive. Locations sold and leased in the year numbered 1,255, covering 115,000 acres. Crown revenues derived were \$144,299, where in the five years previous they were only \$131,518 in all.

We had hoped to summarize and compare with 1896 the thirteen pages of the report which refer to mineral production, but find a difficulty in the fact that statistics of stone quarries, limekilns, brickyards and pottery works are this year omitted because of the slowness or stubbornness of proprietors in answering the enquiries of the Bureau.