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THE HARDWARE TRADE.

During the course of the present year fears have been expressed on more than one occasion by men in the trade who are conservative, though not pessimistic, that the autumn of this year would show a considerable falling off in hardware activity. The grounds upon which their fears were mainly based, the growing uneasiness in the United States, have to some extent been realized, for there is little doubt that the situation across the line is by no means so promising as was the case a year ago, and the iron trade, which is often looked upon as the commercial barometer of this continent, has for some time past been especially out of gear. Nevertheless so far as Canada is concerned, the prophesied slackness of trade which was to come about October, did not make its appearance. It may be admitted that the quantity of goods sold so far this fall has not been greater than last year; but it is certainly true that it shows no diminution.

Even iron which, as mentioned above, has fallen in value so materially in the States, is holding its own fairly well here, and though prices have little of that

strength and buoyancy which distinguished them not so many months ago, it is believed that the broad-based consumption in this country will be sufficient to keep up with the supply for some time to come. Of course, should the situation across the border become really bad, prices will be affected sympathetically here, especially if the Americans do much of their well-known dumping process in the Dominion: but we think the bridge is still some distance away and the trade need not cross it until it is reached. At any rate, constant talk about coming hard times is liable to do more harm than good, and largely to produce the very evil which is feared. So far, the demand for pig iron has been, for all practical purposes, so nearly equal to the supply, that we would not be surprised in the event of heavy buying ahead, which, however, it must be confessed is an unlikely contingency, to see a difficulty in keeping up with orders. In bar iron, business keeps up pretty well, though some slight cutting in prices has been indulged in this month. Most orders are at \$1.95, though quotations stand for \$2 or even a little higher. In black sheets and Canada plates a good trade is going on, while the demand on the part of the building trades for galvanized sheet iron, may be described as particularly good. As regards tin and copper, it may be said that they have both reached a normal basis of value, and the movement is very fair. Zinc and lead are improving.

As to the trade in ordinary shelf and miscellaneous hardware, certainly no complaint can justly be made. All seasonable goods, such as guns and ammunition, sleigh bells, skates, traps, cutlery, and so forth, are being asked for and shipped out in large quantities. Most lines of nails and other hardware required in building are in good demand. A steady trade is being done in window glass, although in Montreal it is claimed that some reduction in price can sometimes be obtained upon large orders. Plumbing supplies are meeting with good enquiries; and brass goods especially are in request. There have been some pretty heavy importations of cement from the United States lately, indicating activity in construction, and domestic manufacturers are a little easier in their quotations. Screw manufacturers are rushed with orders, while in rivets, nuts and bolts, trade continues steady. One feature worth noting this fall is the almost unprecedented call for stoves and furnaces, the makers of which are almost hopelessly behind in their orders. This is not so much the fault of their methods, as of the labor troubles during the course of last summer. Retailers, too, have put off sending in their orders until the last possible moment, with the present congestion as a result. Now they are indulging in scrimmages to get their own special needs executed before those of others.

THE ONTARIO TOBACCO CROP.

Having seen some days ago a communication on the subject of leaf tobacco in the counties of Essex and Kent, forwarded to the Mail and Empire, stating that the crop of leaf in those counties would not be more than 1,000,000 pounds, instead of 3,000,000 pounds previously estimated, we wrote to different points in those counties, asking about the truth of the