

THE HARDWARE TRADE.

SACRIFICING THEIR PROFITS.

The way retail dealers throughout the country have sacrificed their profits on barb wire this season seems the height of folly. The farmers are now buying their spring requirements in this line at about 1-2c less than Winnipeg jobbers can buy for in car lots laid down here. Retailers who bought before the recent big advances, have gone on selling their barb wire at about bare cost, regardless of the fair profits which they should be able to make on this article. Jobbers here have even offered to buy back lots of wire from country dealers at the price which these dealers have been quoting to farmers. With barb wire worth \$3.25 in Winnipeg, wholesale, retailers at country points have been selling out to farmers at from \$2.40 upward, and probably making some bad credit accounts at the same time. The habitual custom of selling any line of goods at less than a fair profit seems foolish. The way barb wire is being sacrificed here seems utterly beyond reason. If, instead of fighting each other, retailers would get together and agree to take a reasonable profit on their goods, they would show good common sense and business instinct.

CAUGHT NAPPING.

Quite a number of retailers throughout the country have been caught napping and are now without their spring supplies of bluestone. Stocks of this article in Winnipeg have been completely exhausted, and if new supplies were brought in now it could only be sold at an enormous advance on prices recently quoted here. The last quotation received by a Winnipeg jobber was 61-4c at Chicago, equal to about 63-4c for car lots on track in Winnipeg. Manufacturers of bluestone are oversold, and cannot accept orders for early delivery at any price.

Some of the country merchants who have got left are now writing sharp letters to the jobbers here, taking them to task for not as they say "protecting" their customers. Jobbers, however, usually have all they can do to protect themselves, and the shifting of the blame to the jobber will not help the retailer who neglected to keep himself posted as to the condition of the market. When bluestone was selling at 4c here, and even as low as 31-2c in barrel lots, The Commercial pointed out that these prices were away below a parity with the cost in first hands, and that if new supplies had to be brought in the price would have to be greatly advanced. We several times quoted prices at New York to show how the situation stood. Retailers either did not credit or did not heed these reports now very much to their sorrow. The last sales of bluestone here were made at 61-2c. At the present high prices jobbers, of course, do not care to bring any more in.

HARDWARE TRADE NOTES.

The sharp advance in the United States on iron and steel may lead to larger importations again of British iron manufactures. A Winnipeg jobber received a quotation this week on British barb wire equal to \$2.90 Winnipeg and is just 25c per 100 lbs under the quotation of the American Steel Wire Co., for delivery in Winnipeg.

Conservative estimates place the production of Bessemer steel ingots in the United States in 1898 at 6,609,000 tons, an increase of 20 per cent over 1897. Of the total, Pennsylvania produced 3,402,265 tons, Illinois 1,105,040 tons, Ohio 1,489,115 tons, other states 612,608 tons. The production of all kinds of Bessemer steel rails by the producers of Bessemer steel ingots in 1898 was 1,955,427 gross tons, against a similar production of 1897 of 1,614,395 tons, and 1,102,892 tons in 1896. The maximum production of Bessemer steel rails by the producers of Bessemer steel ingots was reached in 1887 when 2,044,719 tons were made, Pennsylvania producing 1,052,771 tons and other states 902,656 gross tons.

Some interesting comparisons are furnished by the prices of Bessemer pig iron, steel billets, etc., to-day, as against those of a year ago, which illustrate the extent to which these commodities have advanced in value. A year ago Bessemer pig iron was quoted at Pittsburgh at \$10.35 per ton, whereas to-day it is worth \$15.65 per ton. Steel billets were then quoted at \$15.25 per ton, while to-day they are worth \$25.50. Steel rails were quoted at \$17.50 ton and to-day they are worth \$26.00, a gain of almost 50 per cent. Copper has advanced from \$12.00 a year ago to \$17.75, and lead from \$3.75 a year ago to \$4.45 now at New York.

The pig-iron production of the world in 1898 is estimated by the Hamburg firm of S. Elkan & Co. in its annual circular at 34,908,000 tons, against a yearly average of 26,750,000 tons for the five years 1891-95. For 1898 the United States leads with 11,506,000 tons, followed by Great Britain with 8,850,000 Germany with 7,470,000, France with 2,250,000 and all other countries with 4,900,000. Since 1871 the world's production has increased by 143 per cent; that of Germany has increased four-fold and that of the United States fivefold. England's has increased only 35 per cent.

The organ of the tinplate industry, Tin and Terne, of Pittsburgh, says that the demand for tinplate is considered phenomenal for this time of year, but is probably not out of proportion to the demand in other iron and steel lines. The price seems to have nothing to do with the volume of business, and large consumers at least are well satisfied that in this line there has at last come a decidedly upward tendency, since it affords an opportunity for advances in finished lines, in all of which the lines of cost and selling price have closely approached in the past few years. With the advance in tin plates, can and tinware manufacturers have an opportunity to advance prices to cover the advanced cost of their raw material and provide some profit for themselves as well, and full advantage is being taken of the occasion. The advance in tin plates as compared with the early part of last December is between 20 and 25 per cent, while steel bars have advanced about 35 per cent, tank plate fully 25 per cent, steel billets about 35 per cent, and other lines in the same proportion.

Glander—"It is said that paper can be used effectively in keeping a person warm." Gazlay—"That is very true. I remember a thirty day note of mine once kept me in a sweat for a month."

GARDEN, FIELD AND FLOWER

SEEDS

Perkins' is the place for everything in this line. Large stock, good quality. Prices right. Send for wholesale catalogue.

J. M. PERKINS, 221 Market Square
WINNIPEG

SADLER & HAWORTH

Formerly Robin, Sadler & Haworth

MANUFACTURERS OF

LEATHER BELTING

MONTREAL AND TORONTO

SMOKERS

Keep puffing the

ALHAMBRA
T. L.
ROSA LINDA
and GORDON

CIGARS

acknowledged by connoisseurs to be the leading brands of the day. Manufactured only by the

WESTERN CIGAR FACTORY

THOS. LEE, Proprietor

713 to 725 MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG

SEEDS

—AND—

SEED GRAIN

Choice Selected and

Carefully Re-cleaned Stocks

FULL LINES OF . .

- ◆ Clovers Early Red, Mammoth Alsike, White, Lucerne
- ◆ Timothy and Grasses
- ◆ Field and Garden Seeds

The Steele, Briggs Seed Co.

LIMITED

TORONTO, ONT.