

were sent to the colonies, their duties would, owing to the relations between parent State and offspring, be different from those of consuls, and might well approach to those mentioned in the resolution. Whether the British Government would consent to pay such agents, when the colonies send agents to England on their own account, must not be taken for granted in advance. In such communications, it is natural for each side to desire to hear from its own officers whatever it is desirable to learn on a given subject. Such agents as those suggested could scarcely fail to prove a value line between the large colonies and the parent state.

American commerce is now using, in South America, an agency similar to that which the London Chamber of Commerce desires to utilize in the larger colonies of the empire. The delegates from the American merchants and manufacturers are charged to enquire what advantages closer trade relations between the United States and the countries below the equator would be likely to bring. In relation to this trade, Americans find themselves under several disadvantages, among which are the want of swift lines of steamers, banks and extensive investments in those countries. The South Americans are reported as holding this language to citizens of the republic at Washington: "It is all very well to talk reciprocity and 'America for the Americans,' but where are your representatives and your ships to accommodate our trade? Where are your investments in our countries, your banks, trading companies and other corporations, such as English, German, Italian and French capitalists and traders have established?" One answer would be that the United States is not a lending but a borrowing country. Another is that it costs much more to get from New York to Rio Janeiro, Montevideo or Buenos Ayres than from Liverpool or Southampton, and for this defect the American navigation laws are largely responsible.

IRRESPONSIBLE TRADERS.

Among the causes of the present commercial depression in Canada is the rise of a class of weak, although venturesome, merchants. The banks and wholesale houses, through force of competition, have freely given credit to these traders and made easy their work of destruction. Having little to lose, these "irresponsibles" are unrestrained by fears of bankruptcy, and are ready to take desperate chances in the attempt to crowd out their better established rivals. The margin of profit is cut away from prices, and merchants must either follow their reckless lead or lose their trade. If they refuse to leave the field to the usurper, they find pitted against them the capital of powerful banks and wealthy wholesale houses. Bankruptcy ends the struggle; but too often its termination is only the signal for another to begin.

The source of the wrong lies in the indiscriminate credit given by the banks and wholesale houses, and upon them falls no small share of the losses brought about by their own ill-judged action. Mr. Thomas Fyshe, of the Bank of Nova Scotia, in delivering the annual president's address at the convention of Canadian bankers in Ottawa last week, spoke boldly upon this question. He said, after having referred to the large proportion of failures in Canada as compared with the United States:

Our difficulties are certainly not growing less, and our greatest difficulty is to cope with these increasing failures and losses largely produced by our own excessive and unwise credits. If the losses of our banks were published, the country would not be a little surprised, perhaps shocked at their magnitude, and we should have little reason to plume ourselves on our record. We all feel this, yet we seem to drift along in the same old way, driven by the stream of competition, and as if confessing ourselves impotent to bring about any real reform. When

questionable business is offered us or questionable privileges demanded, the decision, instead of being determined wholly by a consideration of what is reasonable and right, is too often determined by our idea of what some competitor would be likely to do. I believe that there is a very large amount of business done by all of our banks on conditions that would have caused its rejection if the managers in deciding about it had felt themselves able to follow implicitly their own unbiased judgment.

The stability of Canadian commerce is being undermined by loose credit methods, and the good name Canadian importers have hitherto had abroad may be lost. The banks, in order to cover the losses made through unwise loans, have been unable to reduce the rate of interest to correspond with the almost general depreciation in prices and profits. Borrowers who seek loans for the legitimate purposes of commerce are compelled to pay for the follies of "irresponsibles." Prompt action by the banks and wholesale houses is necessary to rescue Canadian commerce from imminent disaster. Are Canadian financiers equal to the emergency?

GREATER ONTARIO.

The Province of Ontario has an approximate area of 200,000 miles. The settled portion of the Province lies south of the French River, Lake Nipissing and the River Mattawa, while to the north stretches a vast territory containing in area almost 140,000 square miles. The Hinterland of Ontario extends from lakes Huron and Superior on the south to the Albany River and James Bay on the north; the eastern limit is the boundary line between Ontario and Quebec, and the western, Rainy River and the Lake of the Woods. Lying south of latitude 52° north, the climate should not be severe. The central portions are in the same latitude as the settlements of Manitoba and British Columbia, while all the territory is south of the wheat fields of the Saskatchewan. Although the climate of western Canada is milder than that of the east, the difference is not so great as was formerly assumed.

Many thousand square miles of this country remain as yet unexplored, but Government surveyors have traveled over a part and report that much of it is adapted to agriculture, sheep ranching and stock raising. In the region north and northwest of Lake Temiscaming the Ontario Government have surveyed twenty-five townships and sufficient settlement has been made to place the colonization of this district, at least, beyond the stage of experiment. Here there is a continuous block of more than half a million acres of fertile land. The rivers flowing into James Bay are much larger and more serviceable for irrigation than those on the southern slope. The river Abitibi is 216 miles long, and with its numerous tributaries increases the fertility of the soil and renders this district peculiarly suited to profitable stock raising. The country is well wooded with spruce, hemlock, whitewood, oak, birch, elm and maple. Although no adequate geological survey has yet been made, this district is believed by experts who have visited it, to be very rich in mineral deposits.

As compared with our markets the Canadian urban population is unduly large. The competition among wage earners is each year growing keener and the chances of steady employment more uncertain. The prospect of independence and a comfortable living should attract many people to North Ontario, if it were made accessible by railway. The distance from the Lake Temiscaming settlement to Toronto is scarcely more than 275 miles, and farm products could with advantage be sent to the Ontario cities, although it is likely a more profitable market would for many years be found nearer home in the lumber districts. The merchants and manufacturers of Ontario should be