

double—restrucions were more likely to affect them injuriously than their neighbours, who only sold half as much as they bought in return.

We do not wish to be considered as holding the opinion that international trade has not been injured at all by the change in our commercial relations. We are of opinion that every barrier which nations create—every restriction placed upon the free commercial intercourse of one nation with another—must, to some extent, impede their commerce with each other. Holding these views, we are favourable to a new Reciprocity Treaty, if one can be obtained on a fair and equitable basis; but, at the same time, we have no hesitation in saying, that neither Canada nor the Maritime Provinces have so far experienced any serious evil from the retrograde step taken by the Americans last year. Whatever injury has occurred, has fallen mainly upon themselves, and as it is entirely the result of their own action, they have themselves alone to blame.

### FOREIGN COMPETITION WITH BRITISH MANUFACTURES.

**M**ESSRS. Creed and Williams, jun., in summing up the results of their inquiries in the Belgian coal and iron districts, say they have satisfied themselves on two points. "Firstly, we are satisfied that the Belgian, as compared with the English producer, does not possess many substantial and exceptional advantages, the operation and influence of which place our own people in the position of meeting him on very unequal terms, not only in the markets of other countries, but in our own. Secondly, we are convinced that all the disadvantages under which the English manufacturer is labouring are artificial, and almost all, if not all of them, capable of removal without inflicting injury or injustice upon any class."

Comparing the natural advantages of England and Belgium, they unhesitatingly decide in favour of England, but state that the latter country has a compensation for its disadvantages, a "dense and concentrated population, singularly industrious, and who are contented to be what they are, do not regard labour as a degradation, or as a thing to be escaped from." They next take into consideration the disadvantages under which the English ironmasters labour, from the obstructions cast in their way by over legislation in the one direction, and the want of legislation in the other. They complain that the parliamentary interference which restricts the employment of boys under eighteen years of age to certain hours and prevents altogether the employment of young women and girls, tends greatly to increase the rate of wages, and making it unprofitable for masters to employ boys, thus restricted in their hours of work, diminishes the regular supply of skilled labour. They also complain that the mining interests are very seriously interfered with by the constant litigation going on between parties on and below the surface; that this might to a great extent be modified many collisions be warded off, and law suits be averted, if the laws were codified and something like a uniform interpretation made possible both for judges and suitors. At present, it is so common for the decision of the lower courts to be reversed in the upper ones, that no case is considered settled till tried a second if not a third time. Much tardiness is undoubtedly attributable to a class of producers, the pupils of the old régime, in that they have been slow to apprehend the changes daily presenting themselves in the circumstances and requirements of trade; but attention must also be given to the fact that there is still great difficulty in introducing new machinery or any new mode of working in the face of unionism, the main object of which is the prevention of economy and the discouragement of augmentation in produce, together with the establishment of a uniform rule of work. But the question of the obstruction presented by the policy and conduct of the working men in England and of their strikes, and also the comparison of the cost and facilities of communication and carriage in Belgium and England, Messrs. Creed & Williams reserve for another letter, which will probably be their last on this subject.

Their conclusions have not been allowed to go altogether uncombated, and these alleged facts have been denied, and in one or two instances disproved. Official statements have been adduced to show that the export from England of iron, of merchant bars and even rails, to Russia, instead of diminishing has been increasing year by year, and that any progress the Belgians are making is very trifling compared

with the gross produce of the British mine, furnace and workshop. The discussion, however it may result, will at all events have the good effect of attracting public attention to the various causes which interfere to check the progress of this great interest, of removing them wherever in the nature of things they are capable of being swept away, and of ameliorating where there is no hope of entirely obviating the difficulty. Touching the labour question, the co-operative system, which blots out the antagonism now existing between masters and men, will doubtless be widely introduced, and remove one of the most pressing troubles that interfere with production. The general introduction of this system will also facilitate the use of labour saving machinery, bring down the cost of manufacture, and secure to Britain the foreign markets which may now be partially taken from her, and from which hereafter she might be shut out altogether.

### FIVE YEAR'S SHIPMENTS.

**U**NDER the auspices of the secretary of the Chicago Board of Trade, a statement was recently prepared, showing the amount of shipments from that port during the past five years. The amount of trade during that time has been immense, but if we are to believe leading Westerners, large as this amount is, it would soon be doubled, provided the cost of transportation could be cheapened. The cereals sent from Chicago in five years average over fifty millions of bushels per annum! When we consider that these are Chicago shipments alone, and that Milwaukee and other Western cities and towns also do an immense trade in cereals, some idea may be formed of the extent of production at the West. That they could easily double their present yield, admits of no question. Did not the expense of sending their cereals to Eastern markets eat up the greater portion of their value, the farmers would get better prices, and they would undoubtedly be induced thereby to sow a greater breadth of land. In fact, it is impossible to form any correct estimate of the immense extent to which the fertile plains of the great West could be made to turn out food for man and beast, were the circumstances such as to stimulate production. The following table of the shipments from Chicago during the past five years is well worthy of attentive consideration:—

SHIPMENTS FROM CHICAGO EASTWARD FOR FIVE YEARS.

	By Lake.	By Rail.	Total.	Average for each year.
Flour, bbls. ....	4,489,224	2,412,691	7,291,923	1,458,384
Wheat, bush. ....	55,610,464	1,861,293	57,471,757	11,494,351
Barley, bush. ....	1,400,872	9,572,460	10,973,332	2,194,666
Oats, bush. ....	3,945,814	6,371,271	10,317,085	2,063,417
Rye, bush. ....	319,183	458,863	778,046	155,609
Barley malt, bush. ....	10,729,310	28,870,968	39,600,278	7,920,055
Seeds, bush. ....	28,972,225	12,721,317	41,693,542	8,338,708
Lard, lbs. ....	13,323,220	21,457,289	34,780,509	6,956,102
Cured meats, lbs. ....	2,407,220	20,738,722	23,145,942	4,629,188
Beef, bbls. ....	229,683	300,423	530,106	106,021
Lard, bbls. ....	491,703	645,749	1,137,452	227,490
Tallow, bbls. ....	29,732,105	183,487,114	213,219,219	42,643,839
Butter, lbs. ....	4,773,550	20,338,114	25,111,664	5,022,333
Live Hogs, No. ....	2,916,600	6,088,791	8,995,391	1,799,078
Cattle, No. ....	1,967	8,12,449	8,014,146	1,602,829
Hides, lbs. ....	3,714	96,817	96,817	19,363
High wheels, bbls. ....	28,716,296	67,324,847	96,041,143	19,208,227
Wool, lbs. ....	127,101	239,758	366,859	73,371

The *Tilsonburg Observer* says that a salt basin underlies that village, and was recently struck while boring for oil at a depth of nine hundred feet, the samples of brine showing a strength varying from 33 to 55 per cent four quarts of which yielded one pound of pure white salt. An expert who has spent a number of years among the well known salt wells of Saginaw, declared that the Tilsonburg brine is stronger and better, and the proprietors, Messrs. Hebbard & Avery, intend to form a joint stock company with a capital of \$20,000 with which to work the well.

### LETTER FROM ENGLAND.

#### COMMERCIAL REVIEW.

(Special Correspondence of the Trade Review.)

[PER CUBA.]

**A** VERY remarkable trial which has just been concluded in London, is worthy of special note. I refer to that of J. J. Wilkinson, Managing Director of the Joint Stock Discount Company. Mr. Wilkinson has been at one time an extensive bill broker in London, and the Joint Stock Discount Company was formed a few years ago to take over his business. Its capital was £80,000, and it failed early last year with very large liabilities, and a very serious deficiency. Mr. Wilkinson, as Managing Director, had almost complete and unchecked control over its affairs, and to use an old illustration, it seems to have been his duty to manage the directors, and to direct the manager. The failure at all events is to be attributed to his mismanagement, and the circumstances under which the action was brought, were as follow:

Mr. Wilkinson had been in the habit of having private transactions with a firm of Stock-holders, the Messrs. Capper, and in August 1885, they bought for him 520 shares in the Joint Stock Discount Company, and these shares were transferred to a Mr. J. S. Meyan, of the Merchant Bank, as nominee, for a person called Klemm, who has since completely failed, and is now an absconding bankrupt. Wilkinson had some difficulty in paying for these shares, but after some little pressure he gave a check for £4,000 on the Joint Stock, and debited the amount as a loan to Messrs. Capper. A few days afterwards he credited them with £4,000, and debited this sum to Klemm. There was still however a balance due to Messrs. Capper, and to pay this, he again gave a cheque for £860 of the Discount Company, and this was debited to Messrs. Capper as a loan. These transactions were in August last, and a few months later, and prior to the failure of the Joint Stock. Messrs. Capper who had been furnished with an account of the interest on the £860 loan, repudiated all knowledge of the transaction, and so it remained over till the failure and till the transaction was brought to light by the official liquidator. The Messrs. Capper there can be no doubt conclusively found that there was no loan transactions as far as they were concerned, that Mr. Wilkinson simply paid up the balance he was due them, that they repudiated all knowledge of the transaction as soon as they were informed of it, and they also showed that in all their transactions with the Joint Stock Discount, they had always as is usual, given security for their loans, whilst in this case it was not even alleged that any security had been given. There could also be no doubt that Klemm had large transactions with both Mr. Wilkinson in his private account, and with the Joint Stock Discount, and that whilst Mr. Wilkinson refused to tell how his private transactions stood with Klemm, the result of those with the Joint Stock was most disastrous, and that the amount of Klemm's balance increased very much from the date of this alleged loan transaction, up to the failure of the Company early in 1886.

The defence set up by Mr. Wilkinson was no defence at all. It was admitted that Messrs. Capper had bought these shares for him, and it was also admitted that it was at his request they were transferred into Meyan's name, and this was alleged as the reason for the entries relative to the £4,000. It was not however explained how it was that Messrs. Capper had not been furnished with a note of the £4,000, debited and then credited to them, nor was any explanation given as to why they had not charged interest. It was indeed attempted to be alleged that Mr. Wilkinson might have known nothing about the loan, and that it might have been made by the assistant manager. As the whole transaction however was admittedly his, and as his knowledge of it was positively sworn to by several witnesses, this explanation is quite absurd. As to the £860 loan, there seems to have been really no attempt to account for it. The Jury therefore unhesitatingly found the prisoner guilty, and the Judge expressed his complete concurrence in the verdict.

There is at least one valuable lesson to be derived from this unhappy trial. The persons at the head of a large money business should direct themselves exclusively to it. They have no right to engage in outside speculations, or to undertake anything which might interfere with the discharge of their duties. Their only safety is in total abstinence, money is to use a phrase of Bushe's "so subtle a thing," its ramifications are so numerous, and the interests which it affects are so varied, that no man can be at the head