

CROP CONDITIONS.

The week has been characterized by generally cool weather and showers or heavy rains over Ontario generally. And in Quebec there have been here and there rains which were welcome. In Ontario the crops look well as a rule; in Quebec, the hay and oats, which were suffering long from drought, have benefited by this month's rains.

In Manitoba and the Territories the prospect continues good. Wiring from Winnipeg at noon yesterday our correspondent says: "The weather during the first half of the week ending to-day was very cool, with showers in many localities. The last few days have been very warm and dry. While there has been plenty of rain generally, yet some points would like more moisture, though it is nowhere very badly needed. The plant all over is strong and healthy—in many cases standing 18 to 24 inches high."

CANADIAN AGENTS ABROAD.

A discussion of decided interest to people in Canada took place among the council of the Chamber of Commerce in Birmingham the other day. It concerned the business relations of manufacturers in that city in particular and of British exporters in general with the Canadian Dominion. And it was practical to a degree. To Mr. P. B. Ball, who went to Birmingham in April as one of the commercial agents for Canada, belongs the credit of having aroused not only the attention but apparently the real interest of an influential gathering of merchants and manufacturers. Mr. Ball is a business man with business methods, has bought goods as well as sold them, in Canada, and shows his fitness for the position he fills by the attention he commanded, on behalf of this country, among a group of English business men who do not spend their time over trifles.

He instanced (we quote from the Birmingham Post of June 11th) "the absolute indifference or ignorance which prevailed as to the preferential tariff" giving British goods entry to Canada at one-third less customs duty than those of any other country. And then he gave instances of the enormous disproportion in the quantity of goods made largely in Birmingham and sold to Canada as compared with similar goods sold to Canada by makers in other countries. Of guns, for example, Canada imported \$257,000 worth in 1902. Only \$24,000 worth of these were from Great Britain, while \$55,000 worth came from Belgium and \$153,000 worth from the United States. Of pocket knives, so largely made in Sheffield, and which that town used to supply the Canadian market with entirely, Canada bought last year more from Germany than she did from Great Britain. And of brass goods, which Canada imported to the value of \$506,000 in 1902, the United States supplied \$426,000 worth and Great Britain only \$89,000 worth.

This state of things, Mr. Ball said, and he is not far wrong, for it applies to many other lines than metal goods—is entirely the British manufacturers' own fault. The Briton will not take the pains to make goods to suit the market, as the German and the American will. Half a dozen gentlemen present at the meeting gave explanations throwing the blame upon freights, upon the nearness of the States, or upon the action of our Government in protecting our own manufacturers; but at least two of them, Mr. Hills and Mr. Mitchell, admitted that the instances given by Mr. Ball were typical and that there had been apathy among British export makers. Prof. Ashley, formerly of

Toronto University, blamed the mutual ignorance of the Mother Country and the daughter country of each other.

An interesting feature of the meeting was the announcement by the Chairman, Mr. H. C. Field, that the Chamber had appointed 21 of its members to serve on a committee to discuss the report upon recent suggestions of Mr. Chamberlain as to the adoption of a system of preferential trade with the colonies. Mr. Ball has succeeded in overcoming the indifference of at least some of the Birmingham merchants with respect to trade with Canada. While modestly saying that he had not been sent to England to teach them anything, and that he had not been sent merely to assist the sale of Canadian products, he still thought there was something wrong in the disproportionately small quantity of British goods that came to Canada. And he added that "the British manufacturer is the best manufacturer in the world, but he is a very bad trader."

SENSIBLE, NOT INDISCRIMINATE, CHARITY.

This city of Toronto has perhaps more benevolent societies, homes, committees, institutions, to the acre than any city in America. This seems—it certainly sounds—at first like a good thing; but to many thoughtful people it is an undesirable thing, for the reasons that it results in the overlapping of charities, the consuming of much noble self-sacrifice to no purpose, and the waste of money without due result. Business men are solicited, month after month, to give money or merchandise to so many different philanthropic projects that it is little wonder if they rebel, after a certain number of contributions, and say: "We cannot give to everything"; and although they may not always say it, we are convinced that they think something like this: "There is waste and bad management going on, and the so-called unfortunate poor are being coddled." Still the fact remains that there are people in our midst who really need to be helped, people whose misfortunes are not all their own fault, people who with timely help may turn out to be producers and good citizens. An effort was made a year or two ago by means of what was called the Associated Charities to systematize the giving of charitable relief in such a way as to save both money and effort from being thrown away. But it now appears that the National Societies and other charities said, or thought, that the Associated Charities was competing with them instead of aiming to assist them, and a well-meant effort met with poor response.

Without seeking to depreciate the aims or the work of other bodies operating in a humane direction, we wish to say a good word for the Prisoners' Aid Association, whose aim it is to look after persons, men or women, who are returned to the world with a prison taint upon them. People instinctively suspect such persons and avoid them, and no wonder. But their cases will bear thinking over for a minute or two. Must they be returned to the ranks of the unemployed, the lawbreakers, the vicious? Can they not be made, some of them at least, law-abiding folk by kindness and care? And is not a little sympathy, a little money, well spent in the effort? We have heard with extreme interest of cases where this association has kindly taken hold of men who had gone to gaol for a first offence and has made them valuable citizens, and of many cases where girls and young women have been brought back into ways of decency and truth. It is pleasing to find, in the report of Mrs. Bellamy, who visits the gaol and reformatory twice a week, the following discriminating passage: "We are giving more of our time, energy and strength to help young girls imprisoned for various