

and manufacturing, and home dealers feel that they are at a disadvantage in consequence. No one who has taken the trouble to consult the wholesale merchants of Halifax, can deny the existence of a deep-seated belief that confederation has operated against the interests of the city. As compared with last year, the improvement is marked, and wholesome fall trade is expected.

Crops in the western and central counties are fair, if not positively poor; east of Halifax—in Nova Scotia proper—they are good, while in Cape Breton no such abundant crops have been known for years. A great deal of wheat has been grown in the Province, and the importation of flour will be lessened by probably 30 to 40 p c., causing a gain of no small value. Fishermen have got large returns but prices are very low, consequently the results to those who furnish supplies are not so satisfactory as the yield would indicate. The "boom" in timber has been hailed with satisfaction to the manufacturers and shippers of that important product, and the recent increase of price in the English market insures activity in the woods during next winter and a larger consumption of staples.

Unfortunately, shipping, the largest interest in the Province, does not share in the general improvement; freights are low and although some ship owners get good returns from some of their larger vessels, the shipping interest as a whole is depressed, and shipbuilding has ceased to be the most important industry in Nova Scotia. This operates severely against the wholesale trade of Halifax.

There is great activity in gold mining, and prospecting is going on in every part of the province known or supposed to produce the precious metal. A number of properties has been sold to American capitalists at prices ranging from \$20,000 to \$60,000. Whether this will result in the permanent employment of a much greater number of men, remains to be seen.

Altogether, commercial men in Halifax have reason to—and do feel thankful for the improved condition of affairs, though they are by no means jubilant over the situation, but rather disposed to think of what might have been.

Halifax, September 20th.

LIABILITY OF GUARANTEE COMPANIES.—The case of the Grand Trunk R. R., against the Citizens Insurance Company, being an action upon a policy guaranteeing the faithful and diligent service of one Faulkner, the Company's paymaster has just been decided in the Court of Queen's Bench, in a full court, appeal side, adversely to the insurance company. The guarantee of \$25,000 in one policy by this company would seem a very large amount and not in accordance with the strictest principles of careful underwriting. The Company, by their policy of guarantee, assume the legal liability of the employee towards the Railway, in all matters connected with his duties, and the fact of the paymaster having deposited his money in a hand-bag, placed it under a desk in his office,

situated in the Railway Company's building, and locked the door during twenty minutes absence at his lunch, is treated as negligence in the handling of his employer's property, it being shown that a receptacle of sufficient strength was in the office at the time, and from motives of prudence should have been brought into use on the occasion.

We have recently had to record several losses of greater or less amounts sustained by officials entrusted with the carriage of funds beyond the confines of the office counter, owing to the sharpness of thieves who are constantly prepared to make the most of any unwatchfulness on the part of their intended victims. From this cause, the position of a person entrusted with the handling of large sums of money for purposes of banking, making payments, &c., assumes a serious character so far as his personal liability to his employer is concerned. Frequency of performance in any one line of routine is only too apt to beget a certain recklessness that may become subject to without consideration, and we think that employers, while using all practicable means to protect their servants from risk of loss, should occasionally impress upon them the necessity of a uniform exercise of all their faculties in taking precautions against robbery. We would, too, in giving a word of advice to the officials, remark that in their own interests alone they should never lose sight of the fact that the skilfully laid plans of professional experts will invariably be brought into play at every available opportunity, and that these can only be guarded against by the closest caution in every detail of the daily work.

—The Canadian Mutual Aid Association is the name of a new co-operative society organized by the Grangers. The great difficulty our Grange friends experienced while shop keeping in retaining their customers ought to deter them from attempting to transact the business of life insurance, especially when they have no means of enforcing the collection of assessments. The genuine Granger is a selfish animal. In his character, one leading feature is regard for his own interest. He may, probably will, for a time, pay the one dollar fee at the death of each member, provided that they do not die too fast. But in the event of an epidemic appearing amongst the community, or when old age begins to prey on the membership, it will be found that the number of dollars received to pay with will decrease in about a like ratio with the increase in the deaths. Such has been the experience of all similar organizations. Over five hundred have failed in the United States during the last ten years.

—It is reported that the Quebec Government has received through the Bank of Montreal, half the proceeds of the \$4,000,000 loan recently effected in Paris, and that the recent advances made by the Banque du Peuple and Jacques Cartier Bank, of \$300,000 and \$250,000 respectively, have been discharged.

—Another fishery difficulty, in Newfoundland, is reported. Two Gloucester, U. S., fishing schooners are said to be the sufferers, though it is not easy, from American journals, to make out what the precise nature of the difficulty is. The question was one of procuring bait, for which squids are used, in Conception Bay. There is a struggle to obtain this bait, near the shores; and it seems that American fishermen are not willing to respect the local laws of the colony; but whether these laws are new or old is not stated. If anything very serious had occurred, it is reasonable to suppose that the complaint would have taken a more definite shape.

—This last week or so has witnessed some slight falling off in the shipments of cattle and sheep from Montreal to Britain, but still the aggregate of shipments for the season thus far is large, the number of cattle sent over to date exceeding the total shipments of last season by 9,174 head. The figures for this season are 35,350 cattle, and 64,075 sheep, against 26,176 cattle, and 78,780 sheep, for the whole season of 1879. The British markets continue firm, there being active demand for cattle, and it is expected that from six to eight thousand head will yet be shipped before the close of navigation.

—The Equitable Life Association has 453 policies in force in Europe, covering insurance to the amount of \$1,249,534. For the benefit of its policy-holders there, this Company has deposited in London and Hamburg \$200,000.

—What is known as the "Winney Trouble" occasioned a breeze among Montreal importers last week. There are winneys imported into Canada which are used for shirtings, and other winneys intended for dress goods, but it is the former alone which are made here and which are designed to be protected by the tariff, while the latter are intended to bear only a revenue duty. Hence, as we find it stated in the *Witness*. Checked winneys over twenty seven inches wide wholly of cotton, were, in the interests of the cotton manufacturers, charged two cents per sq. yard and twenty per cent *ad valorem*, and those with a small intermixture of wool; a union were in the interests of flannel manufacturers, charged as woollens, viz 7½c. per lb. and 20 per cent. But there were exceptions made in even these cases where the pattern of the check was of such a fancy nature as to make it very unlikely to be used for shirtings. Plain cotton winneys which are not used for shirtings in any case were allowed to come in under the ordinary 20 per cent *ad val.* duty. Plain union winneys with a regular intermixture of wool were charged the regular woollen duty of 7½c. lb. extra. The regulations at Ottawa upon the subject of entries of these goods had been changed half a dozen times, and recently merchants here were astonished to find that the regulations had been changed once more, and the plain winneys were, regardless of their texture, to be charged 7½c. per lb. and 20 per cent *ad valorem*. The other day, a Montreal house which had entered some winneys at twenty per cent some months ago, bringing in a repeat-order, entering it as before, and paying the duty. Only half the goods had been removed when the house was informed that it must