THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in West ern Canada, including that part of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, MARCH 16, 1901.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

WHOLESALE SPRING MILLINERY OPENING.

The regular spring millinery opening at the Winnipeg warerooms of The D McCall Company, Limited, was held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of this week. The usual profusion of trimmed hats, shapes, trimmings and millinery novelties was shown and the large number of buyers in attendance was evidence of the importance which is attached by the trade throughout the west, to this event. Buyers were present from all important points in the west covering the country from Edmonton to Port Arthur. In addition to those who came in specially for the purpose of attending this opening there were a number of milliners present who were returning from the eastern openings. Manager White says the sales during the opening were in advance of previous years.

As regards the styles shown in trimmed goods it may be said that toques were again largely shown. There is but little alteration in shape as compared with last season, the low flat style of trimming being much in evidence and will no doubt be very popular. Hats were shown in large variety, the preference being for larger hats than last spring. The variety of materials used is greater than ever, and includes chiffons, mousseline de soie, malines, all-over straw nets, in plain and tinsel, laces, etc. The combinations include black and gold, black and silver and cream and particularly roses and foliage. Lilies, lilacs and chrysanthemums are also popular. Feathers retain their popularity. Straw trimmings are extensively shown in shot effects covered with chiffon, also plain soft chip. Long buckles are again to be a feature, some of the effects being Rhinestone, steel, gold, steel and gold and black. In ribbons, taffetas, satin liberty, tinsel stripes, etc., are used. The principal combination colors have already been mentioned. The plain shades are white, cream, tuscan, turquoise, beige and old rose.

JAPANESE COTTON MILLS.

Japanese cotton mills are run twenty-two hours a day with double shifts, so that the fixed charges of manufacture are reduced to their lowest terms, and wages, though much higher than a few years ago, are ridiculously small compared with those in this country. Under these conditions persons who observe economic facts only on the surface would expect the industry to be enormously profitable, and it is not six years since we were warned by alleged statesmen in this country and in England that Japanese industries were going to ruin the western world. Japanese watches at $2, bicycles at $12 and pianos at $100 were going to throw an army of English and American workers out of employment according to predictions in the House of Commons and Congress. But in reviewing the cotton industry the Kobe Chronicle says that last year only one cotton mill earned dividends, thirty-three just made both ends meet and thirty-seven lost money. This leads the Journal of Commerce to remark that "more is involved in industrial competition than a comparison of wage tables."

DRY GOODS TRADE NOTES.

In velvets the outlook for the fall season is very good. Paris fashions promise to support velvets unusually well, but at this time there is little future business being booked, and the immediate delivery orders for velvets and velveteens are only fairly good.

Advices from old country firms on the linen markets are stronger than ever. A firm writing from Dunfermline on Feb. 11 says: "We have to report that every ton of flax is being eagerly bought up by spinners at top prices, and yarns, which fell considerably in price three months ago, are now beyond the highest point formerly touched. We are face to face with what looks like being little short of a flax famine, and there is not the slightest doubt that all kinds of linen goods will be very much higher in price."

There is more enquiry for dress goods, says the Toronto Globe. Among the best sellers at present are light, smooth-faced goods, such as cashmeres, velours and Sedans. Box cloths are selling well. Venetians and printed delaines in black and purple and black and red are selling freely. There has been quite a feeling for plaids both in the fancies and in shepherd's plaids for blouses. Some very sightly goods are shown in plaids here which would brighten up even the best assorted stock. Some homespuns are selling for the early spring trade, but buyers appear to be somewhat conservative in selecting such goods at the moment. They are certainly good for the early spring, and it is not difficult to find up-to-date merchants who have every confidence in such lines. Canadian venetians now being shown are very stylish, and should meet with a ready sale.

Grocery Trade Notes.

Advices from England note a strong currant market there as stocks are rapidly decreasing. In Greece the situation is also regarded as being strong and prices have an upward ter[illegible].

Cable advices reporting on almonds state that the prospects of the coming crop have been severely injured by frost, especially in France and Spain, and prices abroad for some sorts have sharply advanced.

Private mail advices from Patras, under date of February 2, report that there has been more buying of currants there, and that during the month of January the outgo was considerable, prices being advanced in the market from 5s to 6s per cwt. in a few days. "The market," the advices continue, "is strong at the enhanced value, but the advance in the rate of exchange has in some way made easier the last offers to the consuming markets."

Regarding currants the London, England, Grocer says: "With only a moderate business doing in currants there has been a little weakness in provincial growths, and sales have been again made at 30s for the lowest quality parcels. Really good quality siftings have been sold at from 36s to 37s, and in view of the large demand for this style of fruit which usually prevails about Easter time, these purchases may prove advantageous. In fine Gulf and Vostizza there is but little doing, but the few transactions have been at slightly easier prices, and it is doubtful if over 40s could be obtained for the finest fruit on the market, though merchants will not at present part with exceptionally fine lots at this figure. Clearances so far for this month have been satisfactory."

In reference to the tea situation abroad Gow, Wilson & Stanton, London, Feb. 22, writes. "The India and Ceylon associations have issued a circular urging upon planters the necessity for reducing the output of tea, and suggesting various methods for accomplishing this object, such as restricting the plucking area, finer plucking, the manufacture of green tea, or the appropriation of tea for the exploitation of the native markets of India and Burmah. It adds a form of undertaking for proprietors to sign, agreeing to reduce their output by one of the above mentioned methods or by other practicable means. Unless the output be in some way restricted the prospects of the tea producing industry appear to be very gloomy indeed."

Gow, Wilson & Stanton, London, under date of February 8, write: "The details of the scheme for restricting the output of Indian and Ceylon tea are now being worked out by the special committee of the India and Ceylon Tea Associations. It is probable a circular will soon be issued inviting proprietors to give their formal assent to the proposal. The manufacture of green tea would materially relieve the gloom of the present situation and might lead to a large expansion in the market for British grown tea, not only in North America, but also in Asia, Africa and South America.

THE HARDWARE TRADE.

THE IRON SITUATION.

Aside from the speculative view point, the new steel combination may be expected to have a very marked effect on general business and industrial conditions. Recently business has been done at constantly advancing prices in iron and steel. Pig iron in the states has advanced $2, and steel billets $2.25 a ton during the last two weeks. This is due to the largely increased consumptive demand, and the reason is not far to seek. The new steel combination comes into existence to prevent what has been called by its promoters a threatened industrial chaos. That is to say, the makers of raw products needed for the various finished articles threatened to build mills and go into the manufacturing business to relieve their own over supply. This meant retaliation and a possible industrial war. With such a contingency in prospect it was quite natural that the trade generally should lead a hand-to-mouth existence, and that the buyers of iron and steel products of every description should supply only their most pressing needs. A threatened cut in price was provocative of the postponement of every enterprise demanding iron and steel that could be postponed. The quick response of the trade to the new consolidation of steel interests shows very plainly, to say the least, that it is expected that stable prices will be maintained in the immediate future, with the chances in favor of higher quotations in various steel lines. There is a keen demand for both the raw and finished iron. The steel billet situation shows an urgent demand, and although there is a premium to secure billets for prompt delivery, only a small tonnage is being secured. Altogether everything promises activity in that barometer of business, the steel trade.—Montreal Gazette.

HARDWARE TRADE NOTES.

Eastern hardware jobbers have been cutting the price of Mrs. Pott's sad irons and as a consequence a general reduction has been brought about. The prices named now at Toronto are 62½c per set for No. 55 polished and 67½c per set for No. 50 nickle plated.

Canadian iron makers have withdrawn their prices on bar iron and are holding out for higher figures. Wrought iron pipe manufacturers have also withdrawn their prices with a view to an advance. Iron manufacturers are firmer in sympathy with this state of affairs.

Toronto jobbers have reduced their prices for oiled and annealed wire 10 to 15c per 100 pounds, making the net selling price for Nos. 6 to 8 gauge $2.90 per 100 pounds, No. 9 guage is now worth $2.80; No. 10, $2.87; No. 11, $2.90; No. 12, $2.95, No. 13, $3.15; No. 14, $3.37; No. 15, $3.50, and No. 16, $3.65.

Consumers of glass in the United States are kicking pretty hard against what they regard as the rapacity of the glass manufacturers of that country. The glass making industry is now in the hands of two combinations of factories which are practically one so far as prices go and recently the factory quotations have been advanced 55 per cent. over prices in force at the first of the year. Still another advance is expected in May. Consumers are not able to protect themselves against the extortion as they are unable to secure supplies elsewhere. The Belgium strike is still on and the foreign glass market holds remarkably firm.

Implement Trade Notes.

Twine prices have been advanced ¼c at Chicago by manufacturers and jobbers, making the quotation there now 8c for sisal and standard 9¾c for 600-foot manila and 11c for pure manila. Another advance is expected at an early date, as hemp prices are higher in proportion and very firm.

R. Harmer, of the Massey-Harris Company, Toronto, is on a short visit to Winnipeg and to Mr. Agur, manager of their Winnipeg branch, who has been in ill-health for some time. It has been arranged that Mr. Agur will take a vacation abroad during the spring months, as he has been a very close applicant to business for many years and all are glad that he is to take this well earned rest, hoping that he will return in a few months fully restored to his former health and vigor. Several of the general agents have been called in to arrange for the care of the work in their respective districts during his absence and to bid him bon voyage.

Boot and Shoe Trade Notes.

A good many people in Canada believe that to get an up to date boot they must buy imported goods. The Commercial learned this week of a case which rather reverses this order of things. A Winnipeg gentleman who had been on a trip south, returned with an order for a pair of Canadian made boots. A party whom he met while south became so infatuated with the boots worn by the Winnipeg man, that he requested him to have a pair sent to him on his return to Winnipeg. The boots—a well known make which retail here at $6—were duly forwarded to the southerner, on the arrival home of the Winnipeg man.

Grain and Milling Notes.

The members of the Winnipeg grain exchange who have been interesting themselves in the formation of an option market at Winnipeg, have decided to formulate a constitution and apply to the provincial government for letters patent of incorporation.

A big delegation of Canadian oatmeal men waited on the Dominion government this week to ask that the present inequality between the duty on oats and oatmeal be removed. What success will follow the effort remains to be seen.

Montreal Trade Bulletin: A. G. Thompson, freight and grain broker, has received two samples of new winter wheat from Argentina, which were shown on 'Change a few days ago, and pronounced very fine hard winter wheat. In fact, one sample resembled hard Manitoba spring wheat, the berries being small, hard and of that bright dark brown color which is so characteristic of the Manitoba product. It brings more money in the English market that our Ontario red winter wheat, as it sells there at 6s 1d to 6s 1½d against 5s 8d per cental for the Ontario product.

British Live Stock Markets.

London, March 4.—The trade in cattle was slow, and the tone of the market was weaker, prices showing a decline of ½c since this day week, with sales of choice States at 12½c. American sheep sold at 14c.

Liverpool, March 4.—Supplies of cattle and sheep were heavy, in consequence the market was weak, and prices declined ½c. Choice Canadian cattle sold at 11c, and sheep at 13c.

London, March 11.—The supply of States cattle was only moderate; in consequence the demand was better than a week ago, and prices show no change. States cattle selling at 12¼c.

Liverpool, March 11.—The trade in cattle was fair and choice Canadians sold at 11c. There were no sheep on the market.

A private cable from Liverpool quoted Canadian cattle at 11c; American at 11¼c; sheep at 14c; Canadian sheep at 13c, and lambs at 16c.

Another cable from Liverpool quoted American cattle at 11¼c; Canadian cattle at 11c, and sheep at 14½c.

A report from Toronto on Saturday last said: The soap manufacturers of Canada generally are discontinuing the premium methods of advertising. They agree that it does not pay, and their conclusion to do away with the system is meeting, it is claimed, with the support of the storekeepers, who are put to a large amount of trouble and inconvenience by the present conditions.