

real, they have been hampered by strikes, and, still more, by rumors of strikes.

In the hardware trade, though for the past week or so no special activity has characterized it, a generally good season has been enjoyed by the wholesale houses. The same remarks which we made in speaking of the dry goods business, as to sending in orders in the lump, apply to this as well. Retailers throughout the country since the beginning of the year have not sent in rush orders for large amounts, but have been content to buy a wide variety of goods just as they found they needed them. Last year, the trade was in a ferment, so to speak, and orders came in in spurts, a week of practical stagnation being followed by one of rush and worry. Now, however, dealers would appear to have become more settled in mind, and to have become imbued with the idea that the present prices, broadly speaking, are here to stay. The same may be said of the heavy metal market. Conditions across the line have caused an increased firmness, but prices are hardly likely to vary to any considerable extent one way or the other for some time to come.

To come now to provisions and foodstuffs. Groceries have not manifested any active movement for some time past, though the opening of navigation is likely to prove a fillip in this respect. Taking the past three or four months, however, as a whole, not much complaint can be made. Grain and breadstuffs are somewhat depressed, as they have been for some time past; but the new freight rates will no doubt bring about a revival of business even if they do not materially help to raise the present prices. The feature of the provision market is the scarcity and consequent high price of hogs; seeing that the present value of hog products is, even yet, hardly in due keeping with that of the live animals, there is a possibility of a continued advancing tendency in the former. The cheese and butter markets are somewhat dull; and the price of the former is likely to be adversely affected by reports to hand of the possibility of considerable quantities of fodder cheese being made.

Probably the interest which presents the most unsatisfactory aspect is that of the holders of Canadian wool. The accumulation of stocks and the utter absence of demand for export, have, sometimes during the past few months, caused almost a feeling of despair. Every now and then a gleam of light penetrates the darkness, but the trade is still living on hope. Hides and skins are another line which has shown some depression during the present year. Apart from this and the wool business, however, Canadian traders, taken as a whole, should feel satisfied both with what has been accomplished and with the prospects.

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THE DOMINION.

British Columbia enumerates no less than sixteen subjects, on which she thinks readjustment between herself and the Dominion is called for. During the past winter, Premier Dunsmuir, having sent forward notice of his intended visit, went to Ottawa to try to arrange a settlement of these questions. It was a busy season at the Capital, before the meeting of Parliament, and little or no progress could be made in the matters brought in question. The British Columbia

Government does not exactly raise a question of better terms, but gives notice that local opinion is moving in that direction, and asks to have it headed off before it becomes formidable. The ground of the claim of British Columbia is in brief that she pays more to the political partnership than she gets out of it; that her contribution to the general revenue is disproportionately large, and that she is entitled to some compensation. We have only the case of the province against the Dominion. The latter has not been heard in reply; Sir Wilfrid Laurier has merely hinted that with every disposition to meet the wishes of the province, he sees very serious difficulty in handling some of the subjects enumerated.

Though the subjects on which the claim is founded are numerous, the remedy sought is in a narrow compass. The province asks aid to British Columbian railways on a systematic plan; if the subsidy plan be adopted, the proposal is that of \$12,000 per mile, the Dominion should furnish eight and the province four thousand. The government partnership proposed for this purpose would contain an unlimited liability clause. The Dominion would pay two-thirds of the subsidy, and the province one-third, but neither of them would own the roads. These would become the property of persons having the enterprise to accept the subsidies and build the roads. This system is practically worn out; and Mr. Dunsmuir might have thought of something better to replace it. The other partner ought to raise objection to this feature of the proposed arrangement. To begin with, three railways are proposed to be built by the government partnership in question. The first road on the list would start at a place called Midway, N. lat., 49 deg. W. long., 119 deg. and go to the coast, at some point south of the Fraser river, and be connected by a ferry with Vancouver Island, the whole length of which the second proposed road would cover. The third road proposed is to start at "some point on the British Columbia sea-board, say at Kitimat, to some point on the northern boundary of the province, to form an all-Canadian route to the Yukon." Of the three lines, it is obvious that only the last would have a special interest for the Dominion; the other two would be local roads, pure and simple; the first-mentioned would run so near the American frontier that for purposes of local developments it would practically serve only one side. The Vancouver road, Mr. Dunsmuir points out, would be an important factor in the northern trade of the mainland; but the advantage of substituting a railway, on an island with deep sea all round it for navigation, must be nearly, if not absolutely, *nil*. In an all-Canadian line to the Yukon, the whole country is interested; but even for this a more equal partnership, than the two to one proposed, would seem to be called for. British Columbia would, from proximity to the Yukon, enjoy the benefit in a larger measure than any other province of the Dominion, while it would enjoy the chief advantages of local development along the line.

If British Columbia continuously contributes more in proportion than any other province to the revenue of the Dominion that is a fact that may deserve to be taken into account in any adjustment between her and the Dominion; but it would be dangerous to admit her claim to all the difference between the expense of