

DRY GOODS ITEMS.

The credit and financial man of a leading house in this line of merchandise who has just returned from a trip down by the sea, reports that retailers in the Maritime Provinces generally had a no better winter trade than their confreres in the central and western provinces, and that a comparatively large quantity of goods will be carried over, causing a considerable degree of conservatism in the placing of new orders.

Suckling & Co. announce that on June 1st and 2nd they will sell by auction at their warerooms in Toronto, 75 bales and cases of worsteds and woolens, valued at about \$20,000. They were imported for the present season's trade by the Wyld-Darling Company, and at the time of the fire were in bond or in transit. The company have now no facilities for manufacturing. The goods comprise tweeds, worsteds, crossbreds, friezes, vicunas, beavers, and cottonades. Messrs. Suckling & Co. have also received instructions from the Underwriters' Salvage Company, of New York, to sell at the same time the woolen salvage stocks of the Robert Darling Co., the W. R. Brock Co., the Wyld-Darling Co., amounting in value to over \$50,000.

The New England cotton manufacturers held a conference recently at which some important and interesting topics were brought forward. One entire session was devoted to a discussion of remedies for the trouble and uncertainty caused by the shortage of cotton. It was conceded that recent high prices were not due wholly to speculative influences, but that the world is to-day calling for more cotton than can be grown in the Southern States. That is, under the conditions which have prevailed up to the present; for owing to the negro element, immigration from the Eastern States and from Europe has not gone to the South. Latterly, it is true, Italians have gone there in increasing numbers, and these make good settlers, and will no doubt prove a factor in the production of cotton. But, failing this, the suggestion was made that Japanese labor should be imported on a large scale, as the only hope for any notable increase in cotton-raising.

The annual meeting of the Canadian Colored Cotton Company took place in Montreal on the 27th ult. The report which was read by the president, Mr. D. Morrice, was not deemed so satisfactory by many of the shareholders as they had hoped. He explained that in his view this was caused by the inadequacy of the protection afforded by the Government, as the mills in the South American States, especially, were enabled, by means of cheap labor and long hours, to invade this market. Besides this, he said, good grades of colored cottons were imported into England from the Continent of Europe, and were there finished and re-exported to Canada under the preferential tariff. The net earnings of the company for the year were \$224,000, from which must be deducted the bond interest, amounting to \$111,000. A dividend of 4 per cent. was declared, leaving a surplus of \$4,000 to be carried forward to profit and loss account. The total sales were about the same as last year. Assets were placed at \$5,215,000, and the stock on hand at \$503,000. Mr. C. D. Owen has retired from the board of directors and his position has not been refilled. The other directors were re-elected as follows: D. Morrice, Hon. George A. Drummond, J. King, E. S. Clouston, and D. Morrice, Jr.

A writer in a recent issue of the Globe backs up Mr. Thomson's suggestion, quoted a week or two ago in these columns, that there should be a Government system of inspection of all woolens, both domestic and imported, requiring a tag stating their composition, to remain on the goods until sold. "Our Government," remarks this correspondent, who, by the way, resides in the woolen centre of Almonte, "is very solicitous for a high standard of development of our farm products. If a man offered adulterated butter for sale as openly as shoddy cloth is sold to our people for all-wool goods, someone would get into trouble. Why, allow our long-protected woolen industry to become

demoralized and degenerated by allowing the indiscriminate dumping of cheap imitations of woolen cloth on our market, without warning to our people or a means of knowing the character of the goods until one is swindled by them? Or why allow our own manufacturers to sell such goods without the character and quality being stamped on them, so there would be no occasion for our people being deceived in the quality? There would then be a clear opportunity to educate our people to buy and use reliable Canadian-made woolens, very much to the advantage of our Canadian woolen industry."

FOR GROCERS AND PROVISION DEALERS.

Canadian sugar refiners have made another advance of 5c. per hundred on all grades. The position of the market is very strong.

Puddy Brothers, Limited, Toronto, have received a Dominion charter authorizing the company to slaughter animals and prepare, pack and cure the same. The capital stock is \$100,000.

Though the state of the market, both here and in the Old Country, is still easy, cheese made some little advance during the week. At the country boards the prices realized were an average of from 7¼ to 7¾c., or fully a cent higher than last week.

Cables from Greece announce a further advance in currants of 1s. 6d. following the late marked rise. This is said to be the result of a decision on the part of the Greek Government to enact further remedial legislation for the benefit of the growers. The stock of old crop is also said to be now very small, only about 10,000 tons, which is barely two months' supplies.

Seventeen or eighteen of the largest broom manufacturing concerns in the United States are to be combined under the name of the National Broom Company, with a capital stock placed at about \$4,000,000. One of the advantages aimed at is said to be uniformity, for, instead of there being ten varieties of brooms to each individual factory, there would be ten standard varieties in the entire country. Brooms will also be shipped from the nearest factory and all settlements be made through a central office.

A report from London dated 6th inst. stated that the quantity of butter shipments into the Old Country from all sources during the previous five weeks had been 93,600 cwts. greater than in the same period of last year. Not much of this excess, however, had come from Canada, the greater part having come from Australia and New Zealand. Cheese, both Canadian and New Zealand, was still continuing its downward movement, prices being about 2s. per cwt. lower than the previous week.

There is a serious decline in the famous Maryland oyster beds. A writer in Collier's Weekly gives statistics showing that the number of raw and steamed oysters marketed in Baltimore has decreased from 7,500,000 to about 2,800,000, and there has been a proportionate reduction in other parts of the State. Many of the oyster packing houses in Baltimore are now closed, and many employees thrown out of employment. Measures are now being brought before the State Legislature to remedy the matter.

The crop of leaf tobacco in Cuba last year was 342,748 bales, a falling off of 56,096 bales, compared with 1902. The exports were 303,116 bales, which were 42,424 bales less than in 1902. It is worth noting that Canada has increased her consumption of Cuban tobacco by 400 per cent., compared with 1902. Of the countries importing Cuban tobacco, the United States stands at the head with 187,745 bales, but with regard to cigars, Great Britain is in the lead with 92,277,137 cigars, though this is a falling off from the previous year of over 5,000,000. The number of cigarettes exported increased by 2,671,290 to 14,341,445 packets, three-fourths being sent to Colombia. Altogether the value of Cuba's shipments of tobacco and its products last year was \$25,127,871.