

ent advance in prices of sugars has given a more favorable turn to this important article of commerce. Best granulated at the refinery 7 cents, yellow 5 and 5½ cents per pound. Cottons are dull and the mills not working to their full capacity, and until there is a general reduction in manufacturing there is no prospect of any advance of prices. Merchants can buy now, according to the length of their purses. The dry goods and grocery trades are, all things considered, in a satisfactory condition, though some of the houses complain of a dullness, both of sales and collections.

One large retail house informs me that they have done a fair trade and made good collections but this has required a greater effort to accomplish. Out of 800 customers who have credit at this establishment, fully three-fourths have paid promptly after a little pressure. This is about the state of things. Those who put the greatest energy and persistence, other things being equal, succeed best these times.

The boot and shoe making industry of the city is in a dull state, the three manufacturers in that line here report a large falling off from former years' business. The iron and hardware trades appear better, upon the whole, than most other branches, more busy at any rate.

J. Harris & Co., established 58 years, who have the largest foundry and car shop in the province are making, at present, three freight cars a day. The rolling mill of the same firm is making eight to ten tons of iron a day, with a capacity of 25 tons when running full. Geo. Fleming & Sons have only two locomotives on hand at present, and though running six days in the week, have not the same force of hands as formerly, and so with other branches of the iron business. I find that the new railway bridge across the river is nearly completed, and business is expected to receive an impulse in another direction after the completion, some day, of the Short Line Railway to Montreal, a saving of distance of about 800 miles. Here is what Mr. A. L. Light, C. E., has to say about one of the proposed routes in a pamphlet issued by the Quebec Board of Trade:—"This line in connection with a bridge over the St. Lawrence at Quebec, will satisfy, in a marked degree, the traffic requirements of Montreal, Quebec, St. Andrews, St. John, St. Stephen, Fredericton, Halifax, and the ports further east. This Combination Line will run westerly from Canterbury, New Brunswick, to Lake Chesuncook, in the State of Maine, and from Lake Chesuncook, by the valleys of the Famine and Etchemin Rivers, to Chaudiere Junction, opposite Quebec, and from thence through the bridge, and North Shore Railway to Montreal. At Canterbury and Harvey the Combination Line will connect with the railway system of the Maritime Provinces."

TIN PLATES.

Matters are in a peculiar condition amongst the British manufacturers of tin plates. Overproduction is again troubling the trade, it appears, in spite of the severe lesson endured some years ago. The Iron Trades Exchange of recent date says:—"The tin-plate trade is probably the greatest industrial anomaly existing in this country. In the first four months of this year, nearly 100,000 tons were exported, a quantity which exceeds the record for the like period of any preceding year. The tin-plate mills in South Wales and Monmouthshire have been fully employed for many months, and yet the industry is reported to be carried on absolutely without profit. A few years since, after a period of the greatest activity and the lowest possible prices, indeed, impossible prices if profits were to be earned, the trade passed through a

crisis, which closed a very large number of mills whose owners went into liquidation. For many months these mills remained idle, but they have gradually been re-started, and for some months almost the whole of the tin-plate mills in existence have been in operation. The production has been increasing, and the exports have also been advancing, while prices have as steadily been receding." The cost of making tin plates is easily ascertained, and it may be assumed that every tin plate maker knows as well how much each box of plates has cost, as he does how much it has realized. At one works having five mills, £200 is said to be lost weekly at present prices: that is £40 per mil, and if this is so, and this works may be regarded as an average one, then at the (say) 350 mills working, £14,000 would be lost weekly, or something like three-quarters of a million per annum, a sum sufficient to maintain all the tin plate manufacturers in idleness. "It seems," adds the journal we have quoted, "that the trade is once more hurrying on to another crisis, which will bring down the weaker firms and leave the trade again for a short time in the hands of the old and wealthy members of the trade. The prosperity of the tin-plate trade is undermined by a section of the makers who prefer a short life and a merry one, and when one set of this class has arrived at its natural goal, another springs into existence, and history again repeats itself." While combinations among competitors to create monopolies or high prices are to be deprecated, still, if the producers of tin plates could agree not to sell below cost price, the industry might avoid the crises one of which seems again to be approaching.

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