

conservative, fairly well-informed, and often wealthy prospective investors. They do not desire to play the house of nonsense game in the stock market. Neither do they wish to try and evade periodical panics. It resembles too much brick-dodging in a riot. These desirable investors seek for their money a channel in which there is some cleanliness.

All very well is it to say that Wall Street prospers year in and year out despite everything. A good guess might be given that its business could be increased considerably were a few necessary reforms instituted. This may savour of the goody-goody. Sometimes it pays to pause in the racing procession and think awhile.

BY RAIL AND WATER.

The increasing grain shipments from Montreal has considerably exercised United States traders. Their first criticism is aimed at the railroads who have refused any reduction in their rates to the seaboard. It is interesting to consider figures indicating the exact situation. At Port Arthur and Fort William at the opening of navigation the stock of wheat in bushels in the past few years has been as follows:—

1904	9,416,000
1905	7,351,000
1906	8,108,000
1907	10,446,000
1908	10,713,000

Up to June 30th wheat exports from Montreal this year were smaller than last year. On the other hand, they were greater than any year as far back as 1904. These figures show, in bushels, the shipments from that port:—

1908	8,144,000
1907	9,085,000
1906	6,374,000
1905	5,179,000
1904	3,986,000

Exports of wheat at leading Canadian and United States ports for the past six years show that Montreal recorded a considerable increase in its exports last year, while Portland shows a decrease. New York and Philadelphia made the largest increases for last year, while Galveston decreased three million bushels. The following figures show the exports of these ports since 1902:—

	Montreal.	Philadelphia.	Baltimore.	Galveston.
1902 ..	17,302,218	10,667,456	9,801,587	10,412,814
1903 ..	15,871,969	3,509,664	373,689	20,039,633
1904 ..	7,368,945	184,000	345,551	2,856,324
1905 ..	10,093,395	1,129,293	1,132,046	2,586,925
1906 ..	14,289,551	5,942,926	4,816,171	12,381,031
1907 ..	20,949,496	14,372,202	8,221,087	9,339,102

	Portland.	Boston.	New York.
1902	195,114	15,280,333	27,113,505
1903	8,374,600	6,738,533	15,181,840
1904	3,564,000	2,318,651	1,791,555
1905	3,404,954	4,509,913	6,406,393
1906	7,064,818	11,778,746	19,568,284
1907	6,143,192	12,644,466	27,111,717

The shipments from these ports this year to August have been:—

Montreal	10,411,285
New York	9,624,588
Philadelphia	6,864,011
Boston	5,910,236
Portland	4,303,438
Baltimore	2,916,511
Galveston	2,273,186

These statistics naturally lead one to inquire the cause of the changes. Low rates on grain are in operation from Port Arthur and Fort William, and much wheat is stored at these two points. These rates are for water transportation to Montreal. Their reduction has upset the usual trend of grain shipments. The trade has been distributed more widely. The port of Montreal has benefited and the United States carriers are looking for work. The low freight rates by water are probably due primarily to the trade depression. While the carrying business on the Great Lakes may not have been as bad as expected, it has been small compared with other years. Boats loaded with freight at figures which do not make twinkle the eyes of the boat owners, are better than vessels lying entirely idle. Sufficient trade has not been offering to keep the lake boats busy. Therefore, the grain shipments are welcome. Without them the cold douche might be given to the furnace fires and the crews be given leave of absence. Low rates are naturally a magnet for trade. It is no wonder, therefore that millions of bushels have been turned towards Montreal.

The first complaint has come from the United States ports. Those interested have asked the trunk lines to reduce their rates in order that some competition may be entered. The Canadian railroads see that business is turning to Montreal. With the advantage gained they will doubtless do much to maintain these conditions. Grain men in New York have been surprised that the New York Central system, which runs almost any and everything into Boston, has allowed the Canadian roads to give Portland, Maine, the Canadian rate. In other words, grain can be shipped to Portland for export at about two and a half cents per bushel lower than to Boston. While many are suffering a loss of business, it is said the United States roads are treating the matter with complete indifference. One again naturally seeks a reason for this. In reply, the railroads state that should they compete with the tariff in operation on Canadian water routes their business would be wholly unremunerative—which is a good and soft answer, though it may not turn away wrath. The question may be asked, Is it not worth while for the United States roads to operate at a slight loss rather than to lose the business altogether? The reply would seem to be in the negative. While the lake boats are carrying the grain to Montreal, it must be recollected that ice will, in a couple of months, squeeze the vessels out of what was once water. When navigation closes, low freight rates by water will have disappeared from commerce for another season. Then the grain will be compelled to seek the railroads as its carrier. With all the regulations surrounding railroad rates the margin of profit is not very large. There is some excuse for the rail transportation companies refusing to listen to the wail of the grain traders and the ocean carriers, for whom in turn there is sympathy.

LLOYD'S FIRE POLICIES.

It appears quite clear that an increasing amount of fire insurance is being placed at Lloyd's of late years, without warranty as to the amount written by companies or to tariff rates paid. In fact, Lloyd's appear so hungry for fire premiums that nothing is likely to quench their ardor save a succession of unprofitable fire years or a few bad conflagrations.

There are some features of the fire underwriting done by Lloyd's which are not understood by one in ten of the persons insuring. For instance, it is true that if a broker effects a risk at Lloyd's and is paid premium by the assured, and the broker fails before payment of premium is made to the underwriter, the underwriters have no recourse against the assured for payment of premiums a second time, but against the broker only. A different rule applies to losses. When a loss occurs,