

ore beds, whereas the same could at that time have been carted at one shilling and sixpence per ton to the furnace. There alone was sunk sufficient capital to have maintained an ordinary business. There, too, the use of what is proved to have been three times the quantity of fuel requisite for smelting purposes, the most extravagant management, and finally the low price of the then finished product, Scotch iron during the time the Hull furnaces were in blast having reached a lower price than it ever had before reached, and nearly one hundred per cent. lower than to-day's quotations, are noteworthy facts. I have the authority of the relations of the manager for the assertion that the management was scandalous, if not guilty.

Second.—The St. Francis River Company, put in a fair amount of capital, on the representation of a management that proved unfortunate, and as their furnace was erected a long distance from their sources of supply, both of fuel, labor, and iron ore, the company relinquished their business and have, within the past few days, sold their plant to one who will probably make it, in spite of all its difficulties, a success.

Third.—The Radnor commenced without capital, and the late owners of which, as lumber merchants of Quebec, have, even with capital, shown themselves incapable of successfully conducting the business.

On the other side we have the St. Maurice works, which have been in operation nearly two hundred years, and from which the Hon. Matthew Bell and Jas. Ferrier retired with fortunes. These works, smelting the bog ores of the vicinity, are at present owned by the Messrs. Dougall Bros., who are busily employed both in extending their furnaces and in the acquisition of ore lands, knowing full well that at present it is the lull that precedes the storm, and that ere long a rush of capital will come that will sweep every thing before it. There are also the Mosie works of the Messrs. Molson, using the titaniferous magnetic sand ores of the St. Lawrence, which are converted into axles, and shipped to Europe for steel making. These are all the establishments I know of in the Province of Quebec. Seeing then that there was a demand led me further to investigate the other sources of supply, especially the iron manufactured from the St. Maurice bog ores. I found that the whole of that manufacture was taken up in advance by one firm in Montreal (at the price of *forty-eight dollars per ton*) of the same name as the producers, but not connected by relationship, for railroad purposes, and that for car wheels it is considered superior to any other iron. Learning, then, that the same parties were importing largely of American made pig iron from Connecticut, I visited the furnaces of that section during last September and found that our Montreal car wheel maker was paying sixty dollars, American currency, at the Canaan forges, Connecticut, for iron required to complete the quantities contracted for here. On further investigation I found that although the greater cost of charcoal made the production of pig cost more, without calculating capital invested, which would be more in the United States, there was the following difference in the cost of production:

| | Connecticut. | Three Rivers. |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Charcoal per bushel. | 18 to 20 cents. | 5 to 7 cents. |
| Iron ore delivered at furnace | \$6.50 to 7.50 ton. | \$1.50 to 2.00 ton. |
| Labor | \$2.50 to 5.00 day. | 90c to \$1.50 day. |

As it takes from one hundred to one hundred and fifty bushels of charcoal, and from two to two and a half tons of ore to each ton of pig iron, it can readily be seen why Canadian iron, even without protection, can take care of itself were capital judiciously embarked, as unlike most other products of manufacturing industry its bulk and weight for value would prevent undue foreign competition. I made some efforts to

induce American iron men to investigate, but their invariable reply was, we can employ all our available capital at home, where we are protected, without going to a foreign country, and if it is as you represent, surely you have wealth enough in Montreal to embark in the business.

Now, it is not pretended here in Canada that there is not sufficient inducement, but it is the axiom of "Shoemaker, stick to your last," or as one wealthy merchant told me, "the legitimate drama," that prevents our merchant princes, dry goods, lumber, and shipping merchants, looking beyond their own immediate pursuits. Bank stocks offer, too, it is commonly thought, a sure and certain medium for accumulated resources, almost free from taxation, while when reference is especially made to the hardware trade they say, we are free traders, and the encouragement of native industries might for a time paralyze their business. While the successful furnace men are content to plead poverty, as it prevents competition as well as allows them to acquire at nominal prices properties that ere long, when the revolution that must come takes place, may make them millionaires in a day, as Canadian charcoal made iron is only equalled by Norway and Swedish products. A reciprocity treaty would be of far more benefit than a protective tariff, but will the Americans legislate for our benefit? Past history tells us not, with our cheaper labor and facilities they are not readily going to surrender to us one advantage. Let us ask our Government to guard our interests better than has been done in the past. Free trade, pure and simple, were we sufficiently prepared for direct taxation, (which we are not as yet) would be far less injurious to the iron interests than the policy by which our raw materials are abstracted to furnish dear labour for our outgoing population. Let us give our neighbors no more casual advantages. Do not let us have a repetition of the oil industry bungling. Crude and refined oil, Canadian product, are excluded from the United States by a tariff of fifty per cent. over its there market value. The consequences are petty combinations exist to rob our own poor by fictitious values. I must apologise for the length of this, and with your permission will at a future date address you on other industries, to which some of the foregoing remarks are equally applicable.

HENRY BENJAMIN.

Montreal, 6th Feb., 1874.

Commercial.

MONTREAL MARKET.

From our own Reporter.

MONTREAL, February 10, 1874.

We have very little change to report in the state of the wholesale market since this day week. Breadstuffs have been dull of sale. Groceries on the whole are firm and in some lines there has been an improved demand. Hardware quiet and perhaps a shade easier than at the date of our last report. Fish is very firm and outside quotations readily obtained. Drugs and chemicals quiet but firm. Dry goods quiet. Provisions firm with upward tendency. Ashes steady.

Since Tuesday last the weather has not been so cold as during the previous week, although the thermometer almost every morning has been down in the neighborhood of zero. Yesterday afternoon the temperature moderated very considerably and to-day the sky is cloudy with indications of a snow-storm.

ASHES.—*Pots*—A very fair business for the season has been done in the first sort at prices rather over the closing quotations of last week,

this price has been steadily maintained, the market closing at \$5.84 to 5.85. In second sort very little has been done, any sales reported were at \$5.10; and thirds at \$4.60. *Pearls*—The receipts this week of pearls have been very light, and business in consequence has been very small, a few bills of fresh were sold at \$7.30 to 7.35; seconds \$6.26. The stocks at present in the inspection stores are pots 2,009 brls.; pearls 529 brls.

BOOTS AND SHOES.—Business still continues lively and orders are coming in freely, although from present indications, the present season's business will be rather lighter than usual:—Men's thick boots, \$2.25 to 2.75; ditto kip do., \$2.50 to 3.50; boys' thick boots, \$1.75 to 2.00; ditto kip do., \$2 to 2.20; women's buff boots, \$1.15 to 1.25; do. split do., 90c to \$1.10; do. pebbled buff bals., \$1.25 to 1.50; Misses do. \$1 to 1.25; do. buff boots, 90c to \$1; do. split do. 50 to 60c; beefboots \$11 to 12 per doz.; men's mocasins \$10 to 15 per doz.

CATTLE.—Supply fair, demand moderately active; 1st quality, \$7 to 7.50; 2nd do., \$5 to 6.00; 3rd do., \$5 to 5.50. *Sheep*—Scarce and in demand at \$4 to 6.00; *Lambs*—\$2.50 to 3.75; *Hogs*—No live hogs in the market; *Dressed hogs*, \$7.20 to 7.30, according to quality.

DRY GOODS.—This trade has been very quiet, but wholesale houses are kept very busy receiving goods, stocks are getting pretty well assorted, as a number of travellers are now on the road we will be better able to judge next week of the prospects of business. Stocks held by the retail merchants both in city and country are said to be large, which will possibly restrict the usual spring demand. Clothing active, manufacturing houses being kept very busy. Remittances are about the average for this season.

DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.—This market has been quiet as a whole, but for some articles there has been an active demand and prices firm. *Bi Carb* is rather active and moves at \$5.87½ to 6.00, chiefly at our outside quotation. *Caustic Soda*—\$4.87½ to 5.00; *Sal Soda* is steady at \$2.50; *Epsom Salts* easier, at \$1.75 to 2.00; *Bleaching Powder*, 2½ to 3c; *Saltpetre*, \$9.75 to 10.50; *Cream Tartar Crystals*, 27 to 28c; *Cream Tartar*, ground, 30 to 33c; *Alum* \$2.50 to 2.62½; *Copperas*, \$1.25 to \$1.50.

FURS.—Trade here at present is dull: a great deal of uncertainty exists as to what the returns from the March sales will be, and collectors, anticipating an advance, are holding back supplies. Our quotations show some little alteration downwards since our last:—Beaver, \$1.50 to 1.75 per lb; black bear large \$8 to 10 ditto small \$6 to 8; fisher \$6 to 7.50; silver fox \$25 to 50; cross fox \$5.00; red fox \$1.50; lynx \$2 to 2.50; marten, dark Labrador, \$7 to 8; pale marten \$1.50 to 1.75; prime dark mink \$3 to 3.50; mink dark 2nds \$1.50 to 2; otter \$9 to 10; fall muskrat 12c; winter muskrat 15c; spring muskrat 22c; racoon 25 to 50c; skunk 20c.

FISH.—The market is very firm owing to the lightness of stocks, and full prices are readily obtained. *Dry cod*.—Small lots are selling at \$5. *Green cod*.—In barrels \$5.75; drafts \$5.75 to 6. *Salmon* \$14.50 to 15. Labrador herrings nominal, none to be had.

FLOUR.—Receipts for the past week 9,300 brls; total receipts from 1st January to date 40,500 brls, being an increase of 8,102 brls on the receipts for the corresponding period of 1873. There is very little animation in this trade and beyond the supply of the wants of local dealers there is nothing doing, and prices generally have depreciated. Market closing quiet but steady at the following quotations:—Superior extra \$6.50 to 6.60; Extra superfine \$6.20 to 6.30; Spring extra \$5.65 to 5.80; Superfine \$5.25 to 5.50; Strong Bakers flour \$5.90 to