



The rains through the country have materially improved the condition of crops, and with the brightening of prospects, trade has shown decided indications of improvement. But withal it is at present really only a question of prospect. Trade has shown no permanent increase in volume for the last few weeks, and indeed there is no reason why it should

Wheat and oats will be almost a total failure in most parts of this state and Kansas, and fruits and vegetables suffered irreparable damage from the late frosts. While corn is admittedly the main product of this region, the partial failure of the minor crops means a loss at a time when every favorable condition is necessary to the improvement of trade, and every loss tends to increase depression. Add to this the fact that the tariff question seems as unsettled now as ever, labor troubles show no sign of decreasing, and it becomes plain that an improvement can hardly be expected at this time. The corn crop is a mere prospect, and there is nothing tangible that would tend to increase the volume of trade until this prospect becomes a reality. Then and then only will the business of Nebraska show a decided increase. In speaking of the future of trade early in the spring of this year, I made the prediction, that with a settlement of the tariff question, followed by a cessation of strikes, with favorable weather and the prospect of a large crop, business would show a gradual improvement from week to week until affairs once more assumed a normal condition. The tariff is apparently no nearer a settlement than ever, labor troubles continue, with violence unabated, a partial failure of small grain, fruit and vegetables in this state, is the situation which confronts us now.

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The tariff question seems to be progressing a little faster of late. There is no telling how long the debate on the woolen schedule will last. That it will be prolonged and bitter seems to be tacitly admitted by the leaders of both parties. With the removal of the five minute rule, long speeches will once more become the order of the day, and there is little doubt that many concessions will have to be made on both sides before this schedule is acted upon. It is one of the most important items of the bill and will have a more decided effect on the industries of the country than any other, with the possible exception of the sugar schedule. Its progress will be closely watched, not only by manufacturers, but by merchants and business men throughout the country, and the senators on both sides fully appreciate the responsibility that rests with them. It is to be hoped that the republican senators will stand their ground firmly and exact the most favorable conditions possible in the interest of American manufacturers.

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The labor troubles continue throughout the country, and strikes seem to be the order of the day. The fact that they are not confined to any particular section bears testimony to the general dissatisfaction which seems to prevail. The destruction of thousands of dollars worth of property only adds to the general depression. The settlement of the tariff question, on such a basis as to encourage the resumption of manufacturing in the east, would have a very perceptible influence on the wage question. The increased demand for fuel would influence the operators to accede to some of the demands of the men and facilitate the work of the arbitrators. The resumption of work at the mills would give work to thousands of operatives and the feeling of unrest give way to satisfaction. The way of the agitator is lined with thorns in good times.

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The floods have inundated great stretches of land and destroyed millions of dollars worth of property and seem to be in league with

the powers that are doing their utmost to bring ruin and disaster to all parts of the country, and make this year a memorable one, for the loss of life, limb and property.

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Confession is good for the soul at all times, and this is a time when the truth will do no harm. Having looked on the dark side it is only fair that the other have its turn. Notwithstanding the unfavorable situation as described, business for some time has shown a decided improvement, and to-day the general tone is firmer than it has been for some time. Every merchant is aware of the importance of the growing crop and confidently looks forward to a better trade in the fall. The partial failure of small grain has not been without its advantages. The price has gone up, and the probability is that it will continue to rise; consequently farmers will receive an increased price for the grain that has been saved. The wheat and oat fields that have suffered the most have been put into corn, and the result is a greater acreage of that cereal than ever before. As matters now stand, there will probably be little change in the tone of trade during the summer months, with a decided improvement in the fall, dependent, of course, on the corn crop. Carefully considering the above conditions, favorable and unfavorable, leads to the conclusion that Nebraska and its wholesale centers rest on a firmer foundation than eastern communities. While settlement of the tariff question and the resumption of activity in the east will no doubt have a very perceptible effect on general business in this state, the trade of this region is more directly and entirely dependent upon its own agricultural resources.

"A good crop this fall means improved trade, tariff or no tariff."

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The Steele, Walker failure at St. Joseph is the second large assignment at that place within a few weeks, and calls to mind the fact that there have been no failures in mercantile circles in this state, of any magnitude, within the past year. Steele, Smith Grocery Co., at Omaha is in no way involved in the St. Joe failure, owing to the fact that it is entirely independent of the parent house and is incorporated under the laws of this state. St. Joseph has for years borne a reputation for wealth and solidity, second to no jobbing center in the west, and its houses have been reputed for their wealth and conservatism. Notwithstanding this, it has placed itself on record with two of the largest failures of the year, and its younger and apparently weaker sisters, Lincoln and Omaha, have withstood the pressure and their jobbers show no signs of weakness. In this connection it is interesting to note that the St. Joe houses have made frantic efforts to maintain their footing in this territory. Sample rooms have been opened at Omaha, and their representatives have used every means to hold trade in Nebraska. That this has been an expensive experiment and that the extra inducements offered by these houses have cost them dearly hardly admits of a doubt. In contrast to this, the local jobbers have continued to do business on conservative lines, have curtailed their expenses, bought closely and sold carefully, and only to the best trade. They have placed more accounts on their books than in any previous season, and are to-day in a better position to stand a continued siege of hard times, than ever before.

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The Platte River Canal project so much discussed at Omaha, has finally been submitted to the county commissioners with the request for a special election to vote bonds. The stock-holders have subscribed \$250,000 toward the fund and now call upon Douglas county for a bond issue of \$1,000,000. It is the purpose, if possible, to call a special election at once and if the proposition carries, work will be commenced early in October.

ALBERT ANDRIANO.

FAMILIAR.

A friend of mine has just had a most unpleasant experience. He has married a widow, and by some coincidence took her to the same hotel where she stopped with her first spouse. At the table she said to Charles, the bridegroom: "Will you kindly pass the butter, John?" A vision of John flitted before the bridegroom, who indignantly replied: "My name is not John, it is Charles." Excuse my mistake, Charles," she said; and then tasting the butter, added, effectively, "but it's the same butter."