BUSINESS IS IMPROVING.

Cheering Reports from Every Section of the Country.

The Testimony of the Press Is Unanimous in Behalf of This Fact.

Democratic, Republican, and Independent Papers Testify to Business Improvement.

Even the Calamity Shriekers Are Compelled to Admit a Better Condition.

The following statements, gathered from recent issues of daily and weekly papers in all parts of the country, and representing all political parties, relate to the business condition in the United States. They will repay a careful examination. It will be seen that the editors, who have their hand on the public pulse through their army of reporters, news gatherers and financial students, are unanimous, irrespective of politics, in the statement that business has improved and is improving.

Sales Better than in 1892.

Very much more conclusive evidence of an increased movement of merchandise has been obtained for April by "Dun's Review," which has secured statements from 357 business houses representing all parts of the country east of the Rocky Mountains, and all lines of trade, covering their sales in April, 1897, 1896 and 1892. Some houses reported actual figures and others only percentages, but the groupings of both give very much the same results. Assuming these replies to be indicative of the business of the country, the volume of sales last month was only about 10 per cent less than in April, 1892, a year of more than usual prosperity, and 6 per cent greater than in the same month of 1896. In estimating the value of this statement the decline in prices must be considered. Since 1892 Sauerbeck's index figures show that the decline has been a little under 10 per cent; "Bradstreet's" index figures, confined to this country, make it nearly 13 per cent. In certain lines it has been much heavier; "Dun's" states the decline in iron at 33 per cent, woolens 30, wool 32, and cottons 21 per cent. If the volume of transactions has fallen off only 10 per cent, the actual amount of merchandise handled must have been greater than in 1892.—Journal of Commerce (Dem.).

Improved Demand in the West.

A general survey of the business situation for the past week affords good grounds for encouragement. The water is leaving the Mississippi bottom lands, and it will be possible, after all, to raise crops there. There is an improved demand for goods at most of the great Western distributing centers, in spite of the unseasonable coolness of the weather. There is a better call for iron and steel, but production is still ahead of consumption.—Boston Journal (Rep.).

Great Activity in Railway Building.

If the disposition of railroads to extend their mileage be an indication of a return to prosperity, and if the statements made by the Railway Age, the generally accepted authority in regard to railroad matters, be at all accurate, this desideratum may already be distinctly discerned on the country's horizon.

The Age, in a recent issue, gives in tabulated form statistics of new mileage either already in process of construction, or expected to be constructed during the year 1897. The grand total represented in this table suggests a genuine boom in railroad building all over the country. The total thus given reaches the startling figure of 17,500 miles of new track as the probable record for the present year.—Memphis Scimitar (Dem.).

Good Crop Prospects and Good Prices.

The prospect is highly encouraging to the Northwest. Of course, the crop is not yet harvested, and will be subject to the usual contingencies which sometimes blast the hopes of the husbandman; but the fact remains that a crop well started, with favorable soil and climatic conditions, almost invariably turns out well. The Northwest this year faces the pleasing probability of a good crop and good prices; for it is hardly possible that even a phenomenal yield of spring wheat in this section can force prices down to the old low plane, with available supplies so nearly exhausted and the probability of a less than average crop in the rest of the world.—Minneapolis Tribune (Rep.).

Farmers Feeling the Improvement.

In all of the different classes of industry in the United States, then, the person who has the stick-to-it-iveness to hang on till a change for the better comes is sure to be the one to first regain his lost resources. This change has set in and as it develops the farmer who has not closed out his business will be the beneficiary of the improvement in the financial and industrial condition.—Albany Journal.

Better Times at Least in Sight.

The report made by R. G. Dun & Co.'s trade review, showing an activity in legitimate business transactions during the past month, little short of that during April, 1892, the year of the largest business, emphasizes the cheerfulness of the present business outlook and points to the conclusion that the good times which have been predicted through many weary months of waiting are at least in sight.—Memphis Scimitar (Dem.).

Brightening on the Pacific Coast.

In spite of the occasional sneer of Popocratic philosophers that the dawn of prosperity is being strangely delayed, it cannot be denied that the trade situation is brightening and that business is better than in 1896. The exports of produce from the United States thus far this year show an increase of $144,000,000 over the same period in 1896, which is a gain large enough to satisfy the most exacting grumbler. If we look below the surface and study the custom house exhibits we will see that the balance of trade has been in favor of the United States for a year, taking this period as a whole. Under a proper tariff we would not only enjoy the profits arising from this large balance, but those derived from a greatly stimulated internal commerce as well. This fact is well understood by business men, hence their anxiety for the passage of a suitable tariff bill.—San Francisco Call (Rep.).

Hopeful Feeling Among Merchants.

The feeling of optimism is most noticeable in domestic merchandising. It is a fact that the actual sales in April by leading houses in each line of business in the principal cities east of the Rocky Mountains averaged only about 10 per cent less than in April, 1892, the year of the largest business in our country's history. Returns of failures for April show a decrease in number, amount and average of liabilities in almost every branch of trade and in nearly all branches of manufacture. The only clouds on the business horizon are the dilatory national Senate and the various State Legislatures that persist in remaining in session and which operate as a serious disturbance to trade interests.—Chicago Times-Herald (Ind.).

Even Bryan's Organ Admits It.

Every Democratic newspaper in the land admits that business is improving, and rejoices that it is so. Only organs that support Republican administrations rejoice when American business is prostrate. This statement is backed up by the proof. If the Star doubts it, let it search the editorial pages of its Republican contemporaries, beginning about Jan. 1, 1893, and ending promptly on Nov. 4, 1896.—Omaha World-Herald (Bryan Dem.).

Merchants Buying Goods.

The Tribune, in its last week's business article, gave a hint of the improved commercial conditions by quoting from a New York paper a statement to the effect that the city was filled with buyers from all over the country. The summary of Dun's reports indicates that the buyers were not there merely to see the sights, but that they actually bought, which is a good proof that they had gauged the buying ability of their respective constituencies and were satisfied that they were fairly prosperous. Such facts as these speak louder than the most elaborate theorizing on the part of calamity howlers.—Minneapolis Tribune (Rep.).

"Beyond All Question."

Beyond all question, general business is improving. We have this week more decided indications of the progress made. Yet it is true that one can easily draw too broad a conclusion from the more manifest evidences. Buyers, for instance, are seen to have increased in number in all our markets, but their purchases still show great conservatism, supplying only immediate wants. Current production in the dry goods trade is believed to be fully absorbed now, but the old accumulations have not been drawn down much yet. Probably the best trade outlook, and by far the most promising conditions, prevail in the iron industry. Prices of steel and iron in all their forms are now so low that they could hardly be expected to go lower, while the demand for export of rails, billets and pig helps the home market. The Iron Age says that the hopeful feeling in the iron trade is spreading, and in those departments which are close to the raw material moderate advances are being recorded. It adds that the total tonnage placed thus far must be heavy when it is considered "that very large orders were booked during the halcyon days of the billet pool, and that now this has been swelled by the volume of business done in track material."—Financial Chronicle (Ind.).

The South Responds with Good Cheer.

The Chronicle's statements bear out the facts presented to our readers yesterday in an interview in our local department with Mr. W. L. Douglas, manager of Dun's agency in Macon. "The return of prosperity," he says, "is visible on all sides. Wholesale dealers in nearly all lines are all reporting an increase of business over last year. * * * All houses dealing direct with the farmer will tell you that collections were better last fall than for a long time prior to that. Right here in Macon business appears more substantial and in healthier condition than could seriously have been expected some months ago."

In view of the deliberate and determined efforts being made to discourage the people; and worse, to involve the country in war with more than one foreign power, these reports, from the highest authorities, are exceedingly hopeful and encouraging. — Macon (Ga.) Telegraph (Dem.).

The East Feels It, Too.

In spite of the disturbing effects of the 10-cent decision in the Trans-Missouri Traffic Association case, there are many encouraging features in the business situation. Business failures are steadily decreasing in number, while the advices of the mercantile agencies disclose a notable increase in the number of industrial plants now in active operation. Over 100,000 more men, according to the Pennsylvania labor bureau, are at work in that State to-day than there were six months ago, and a corresponding improvement in the demand for labor has undoubtedly taken place in New England and other manufacturing communities.—New York Commercial Advertiser (Rep.).

Return of "McKinley Times."

The week just closed witnessed a steady continuance of the favorable trade conditions which were noted last week. The break in the steel rail pool seems to have been the signal for a general awakening in all lines of productive activity. The optimistic feeling in trade is not based on mere rumors of promised resumptions of business, but is founded on actual bookings of large orders.—Times-Herald (Ind.).

Railroad Building Significant.

During 1896 the total number of miles of new tracks laid by railroads in the United States was but 1,802 miles, the lowest figure known for twenty years. The record for the year 1895 was practically the same, bringing to mind the situation in 1875, when the country was just recovering from a great panic, and the unprecedentedly low figure of 1,711 miles of new track was the record. Afterward came a period of expansion, culminating in 1887 with the unprecedentedly high figure of 12,983 miles of new track constructed during that year, which was one of great prosperity all over the country, a prosperity which continued for several successive years. And now comes the Railway Age and predicts an immense increase in railway building in 1897 over the banner year in the history of railway construction in this country.—Memphis Scimitar (Dem.).

Prosperity Stealing Upon the Country.

Is it possible that prosperity, has been stealing upon the country unawares? For many weeks past the reports of the commercial agencies, though at times hopeful, have been on the whole pervaded by a lugubrious tone; but in their last week's review Dun & Co. break into the following joyous strain: "Nearly all will be astonished to learn that actual sales in April by leading business houses in the principal cities east of the Rocky Mountains average only about 10 per cent less than in April, 1892, the year of the largest business hitherto, and were 6 per cent more than in the same month last year." This fact, the Review goes on to say, is especially encouraging in view of the great fall of prices within the past five years.—Memphis Tribune (Rep.).

More Work and More Wages.

The daily announcements of the resumption of operations at mills and factories tell the story of a steadily expanding volume of trade. The movement is progressing and more workmen were employed last week and the amount paid out in wages was larger than at any time since the election. It is undeniable that the situation is steadily improving and it is satisfactory to note that the underlying conditions which must sustain this improvement give promise of continuing. One of the main causes of the protracted prostration we have endured has been the low price of wheat. In no month of 1894 did the Chicago price exceed 65 cents and during most of the year it sold around 55 cents; in 1895 the price was a little better and in 1896 a little better still, but nevertheless wheat has averaged fully 15 cents a bushel below the average price of the five years previous to 1894. Now, however, we seem entering upon an era of higher grain prices.—Philadelphia Inquirer (Rep.).

Visible on Every Hand.

Reviving prosperity is on every hand. To be sure it is not coming with a rush and in the nature of things could not be. But there are reasons for believing that the American people are gathering fresh strength and that confidence so sorely tried of late years. The many mills and industries of all kinds that have so severely felt the shocks of incompetent tariffs and vociferous demands for besmirching the national honor, have taken fresh heart since the memorable verdict of the people of last November. There were those who in view of the campaign talk had the idea that after election business would boom at once and industries that had been keeping house with closed doors for long periods would at once resume with full force. This could hardly be, but within a brief time after the election was over there had been such a noticeable revival and so many men had found employment that campaign pledges were fully kept in every sense of the word. Business is gathering strength with every passing week. —Racine Journal.

More Testimony from the South.

Augusta people have very little reason to complain of a lack of prosperity just at this juncture. The advance agent has surely been here and left his card. As we understand prosperity, it is when there is sufficient employment to keep everybody making a few dollars in order that they can purchase the good things of life. In another month or so there should not be a workingman in the city out of employment, providing, of course, that the individual does not belong to the "sons of rest." There is a vast amount of work on hand, which must benefit all classes and conditions of people. When the laboring man has employment he gets money to spend and that money circulates through the different channels of trade until everybody has been benefited in some way or other. Treat the advance agent hospitably that he may decide to locate old General Prosperity in this neighborhood. — Augusta (Ga.) News (Dem.).

The Silver Press Admits It.

The Kansas City Star says that the "Bryanite newspapers persist in reiterating the statement that business is not improving, and that idleness is increasing." Perhaps the Star means Democratic newspapers. If it does, it makes a misstatement when it says that they are reiterating the statement that business is not improving. They know that business is improving. It always does in the spring. That is historic. When you hear an administration organ whining about the Democratic newspapers pulling back in the shafts you are listening to a siren song to distract your attention from conditions. Of course business is improving. —Omaha World-Herald (Silver Dem.).

Reports Very Encouraging.

Reports of the commercial situation made up to the close of last week are very encouraging. "No genuine or lasting improvement," says "Dun's Review," could come otherwise than slowly and step by step, after such a depression as the past four years have witnessed, and the most hopeful feature of the situation is that the gain is so nearly devoid of elements which involve unsoundness and probable reaction." These reports show a large increase in sales of wool, an advance in the price of cotton, and the resumption of more mills which use cotton and wool. Additional boot and shoe factories have resumed operations, though taking orders at very low prices. The tone of the commercial reports from nearly every department of business is reassuring. There is need of patience, however, better times are coming, but by easy marches. — Brooklyn Standard-Union (Rep.).

Bradstreet's Reports Favorable.

In spite of the fact that the pendency of a tariff bill always unsettles trade and manufacturing, the reports from the various parts of the country are very encouraging. Advices from all sections, especially the Mississippi valley and the Eastern States, show improved business conditions. Reports to Bradstreet's on May 1 state that in Seattle "trade is good and shows an improvement over April of last year;" in San Francisco "the retail trade is reported as fairly good;" in Nashville "the local retail trade is somewhat improved;" in Augusta "the retail trade is reported good;" in St. Paul "trade continues good in all lines in which the busy season is not over, and collections are also good;" in Duluth, since the opening of navigation, there has been some improvement in general business;" in Milwaukee "the amount of business transacted is reported of fair proportions, with prospects better and collections slightly easier;" in St. Louis "general trade shows a slight improvement, and collections are good;" in Louisville "a steady seasonable trade is reported by jobbers in nearly all lines, and collections are fairly good;" in Chicago "general trade situation is improved slightly;" in Baltimore "the outlook for the fall is encouraging;" in Pittsburg "there has been a steady increase in the volume of business;" in Providence, R. I., "cotton manufacturers who recently reduced their output have again started on full time and capacity."

Southern Democratic Confidence.

Week before last the Times-Union made a comparison, for the preceding week of 1897 and the corresponding week of 1896, of the bank clearances of the eighty-seven principal commercial cities of the country, and this comparison showed that the volume of bank clearances of the Southern cities had increased 4.9 per cent, while that of the Northern cities had decreased 2.9 per cent. Saturday's number of Dun's Review published the bank clearances of the fourteen leading commercial cities. The bank clearances of the Southern cities show a decrease in volume of only $548,407, or less than 1 per cent, from those of the prosperous year 1892. The volume of bank clearances of the Northern cities, however, shows a loss of $252,130,821, or more than 25 per cent. This is the record of only one week, and only fourteen cities. It is but a straw, but when all straws point in one direction they show positively how the wind is blowing. Every indication shows well for the South. If we may judge by bank clearances, the Southern cities referred to have practically recovered from the panic.—Florida Times-Union (Dem.).

Industrial Conditions Sound.

The New York Commercial Advertiser, in its review of the markets, contends that "the industrial conditions of the country are sound," for everywhere production is restricted to an amount commensurate with the demands for consumption, and with few exceptions stocks are not being increased. On the contrary, in many cases consumption appears to be gaining on production. Another favorable sign is the absence of any great trade combinations, such, for instance, as those which until recently honeycombed the iron and steel trade from top to bottom. These have gone, and trusts in other lines must go out of business under the Supreme Court's decision in the Trans-Missouri case, leaving all markets free and open. The consumer is getting, and will continue to get, the benefit of cheap iron ore, cheap transportation and cheap raw materials of all kinds. These changes place the manufacturer in a position to supply a cheap product and still realize a profit. —Minneapolis Tribune (Rep.).

The "Heart of Georgia" Responds.

The figures which we herewith publish are of the greatest importance, as showing the vastly improved conditions in the heart of Georgia. We are quite sure that the southern belt of counties can make quite as good a showing. Mr. Douglas does "not care to pose as an optimist, but," he says, "figures speak for themselves, and the conditions surrounding us cannot be denied and should not be misunderstood." He is free to confess that we are not in the midst of a business boom, nor do we want anything of that kind, "but unless all indications under my observation are misleading, we are once more on a level with a slow but steady improvement." Nothing stands so much in the way of business just now as the calamity howling press, and the war cry of the Senate.—Macon (Ga.) Telegraph (Dem.).

Business Barometers All Favorable.

The return of prosperity is what everybody is now looking for, and there are few better indications of this return from a local standpoint than the appearance from day to day of the hotel registers. The wholesale houses in the larger cities never send out their commercial travelers until they are satisfied that the retail dealers want goods, and in stringent times retail merchants do not purchase more goods than they are hopeful of selling. For several weeks past a member of The Leader staff who calls at each of the local hotels daily has noticed a perceptible increase in the arrivals. Hotel registers, while a good criterion in the matter of business prosperity, are not the only indications. It is noticeable that railroad travel to Lexington is daily increasing.—Lexington (Ky.) Leader.

More Democratic Testimony.

The Washington Post (Dem.) certifies to a marked business improvement already. It says: "It is an undeniable fact that there has been a great improvement in business since the election," and adds that the people who expect complete revival of business before the tariff rates and schedules are settled are "insanely optimistic." Doubt as to tariff schedules, it says, "is always demoralizing to manufacturers." People who are complaining that business does not revive as rapidly as expected since the inauguration of McKinley should remember that a tariff bill cannot be framed and passed in a day, or a month, and that nothing so unsettles the business of the country as pending tariff legislation. The pendency of a measure affecting imports and duties upon many thousands of articles, must lead manufacturers to delay production and dealers to delay their orders until the new rates are known.

Cheering News for Farmers.

The Department of Agriculture is receiving very gratifying reports from the farming community. The continuation of high prices for wheat, the unusual foreign demand for corn and the activity among farmers in preparing to make an earnest experiment in the production of sugar beets, combine to make the condition among that class of population unusually healthful and encouraging. "Dollar wheat," for which farmers had scarcely dared to hope, was coincident with the incoming of McKinley, while the extraordinary demand for their corn adds to their general encouragement. Coupled with this comes the activity and interest felt in the experiments which are to be made in all parts of the country in the production of our own sugar, and it is apparent that the farming community is not only feeling the return of prosperity, but is occupying its mind with cheerful thoughts.

Good News from the "Shoe Towns."

Most of the shoe factories are now fairly well employed, and manufacturers evidently have confidence that the improvement in business is to increase, as they are buying supplies more freely. The prices of footwear show little change, but the advance asked is more cheerfully paid by the jobbers. The sales of leather show an increase, and values are maintained. The local manufacturers of morocco report an increased trade, and on some grades the demand is lively. Shoe shipments hold up well. The forwardings from Boston the past week, according to the footings of the Shoe and Leather Reporter, were 79,087 cases, against 83,254 cases last week, and 65,127 cases for the corresponding week last year. Since Jan. 1, the shipments have been 866,826 cases, against 702,799 last year; an increase of 164,027 cases for the business of 1897.—Lynn (Mass.) Item (Ind.).

The Capital City Feels It.

A reading of The Star's weekly review of the real estate situation, printed today, indicates how steadily progressive is the return of prosperity to this city. There has been no sudden and unstable "boom" in values or in building operations and hence what has been accomplished has been with a greater guarantee of permanence. The shiftings of capital have all been inspired, it would seem, by a feeling of faith in the ultimate recovery of not only the city but the entire country from the depression that has been so marked for nearly four years. In confirmation of this view of the general situation it is to be noted that the commercial agencies are this week reporting business to be improving all over the country. —Washington Star (Ind.).

The Western Farmer Prospering.

For the past several days The Call has been publishing a series of exclusive fruit crop reports, both from the East and California. They tell the story. They show that the home crop will be scanty. Good prices will follow as a natural result, and millions of Eastern money will probably flow into California pockets later on. And as prices for wheat bid fair to keep up to a profitable plane it is safe to say that the California farmer will do better this year than for some years back. When the farmer prospers the rest of the community flourishes; hence if present indications are realized we ought to enjoy increased mercantile activity during the rest of the year.—San Francisco Call (Rep.).

Climbing Slowly but Perceptibly.

It is the old story of slowly climbing a very steep hill. "Though steadily increasing," says Dun's Review, "business still is much below its volume in former years of prosperity." In 1892 we were upon a pinnacle whence we surveyed the world and counted the greater part as tributary to our prosperity. We made one stupendous blunder, and almost instantly fell into a slough of despondency and adversity. It will take time and labor and favorable circumstance to regain our former position of supremacy. But we are climbing upward, slowly, it is true, but nevertheless perceptibly.—Inter Ocean.

The Workmen Are Co-operating.

More men are employed about Pittsburg at present than have been the past year. Despite the depression in prices, owing to the dissolution of manufacturers and jobbers' organizations, each seems to bend more earnestly to the task of doing its share to improve conditions. Never in the history of labor have the workmen been so reasonable. The iron and steel industry have had their share of prosperity and gloom. Investors and manufacturers are confident that times will improve.—Pittsburg Gazette (Ind.).

Improvement Slow but Gradual.

From the commercial point of view the State is evidently working into better shape. This does not appear so much on the surface as in the undercurrent. It is too gradual to be observed by the general run of people. But that there is a real improvement in the situation is apparent to those whose business interests lead them closest to the center of trade activity.—San Francisco Call (Rep.).

Factories and Railroads Busy.

The news which comes of the reopening of factories in different parts of the country is a certain sign of the approach of better times. It is evident that the number of wage earners is steadily increasing. Sales of stocks are growing, and prices are firmly maintained. At last there is a sign that railroad earnings, which have been down to low figures for the past twelve months, are on the upward turn.—Globe-Democrat (Rep.).

A Steady Improvement.

The business situation as shown by current reports is certainly encouraging. As an exchange remarks, though circumstances were against any decided improvements in general business last week, still there was a noticeable continuation of the slow and steady growth that has been characteristic of business ever since the November election.—Scranton (Pa.) Tribune (Rep.).

Business Moves Forward.

The evidences of improvement in trade prospects are undeniable, notwithstanding the popular uncertainty as to what the markets will demand after the tariff rates have been established. The export trade last week showed an increase of nearly half a million dollars over that of the previous week.—Times-Herald (Ind.).

FACTS FOR FARMERS.

WHAT UNCLE SAM IS DOING IN THEIR BEHALF.

Showings as to What the Agriculturists Are Receiving and Paying for What They Raise and Consume—Importations Flood the Country.

Crisp Washington Chat.

Special Washington correspondence:

THE last summary of Finance and Commerce, issued by the Treasury Department, contains statistics and figures some of which will prove of much interest to farmers and those connected with farm pursuits. It shows the imports and exports of farm products and the amount of such commodities that are being brought into the country. Following are some of the things shown in its pages:

The March importations of wool in 1897 were 58,085,339 pounds, against 17,781,547 pounds in March, 1896, and against only 3,488,415 pounds in the last March of the McKinley law. The importation of rags, noils, etc., in March, 1897, was 5,466,461 pounds, against 1,504 pounds the last March of the McKinley law. These quantities of free wool and shoddy now in stock here are not particularly cheering to the growers of good American wool, for it will be some months before they can be absorbed by the country and a place made for the home product. The number of cattle imported in March, 1897, under the Wilson law was 56,860, while in March, 1894, under the McKinley law the number imported was 311. The number of pounds of hides imported in March, 1897, in view of the prospective duty on hides, was two and a half times as much as in March of the last year of the McKinley law, amounting to nearly three million dollars in value. The hay imported in March, 1895, 1896 and 1897, under the Wilson law was over 70,000 tons, averaging about three times as much as was imported in the last March of the McKinley law. The world, according to this official report, is being raked over to find wool to be brought to this country before the new tariff law goes into effect. The importations of wool during March, 1897, came from Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Roumania, Baltic Russia, Spain, England, Scotland, Ireland, Nova Scotia, the Black Sea ports, Dutch West Indies, Argentine, Brazil, Chili, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, China, British East Indies, Asiatic Russia, Turkey in Asia, British Australia, British Africa, Egypt. This is a pretty fair showing.

Among other things this summary presents a table of especial interest to agriculturists. It shows the monthly average prices of the principal articles of merchandise imported and exported during the past year. Extracts from the table are given below, the exports representing their market value at the date of exportation, while the imported articles represent their values in foreign markets. This latter fact should be born in mind constantly in examining the comparitive figures as the prices of imported articles appear low, until it is remembered that the values given relate to the prices in foreign markets, and do not include the mounts added, for freight, tariff, handling and dealers' profits, before they reach the consumer in this country.

Comparative Tables.

Table showing average values of commodities of farm export in April, 1896, and in March, 1897:

	April, 1896.	April, 1897.
Wheat	70.7	8.2
Wheat flour, per bbl.	$3.60	$4.12
Hops	7.5 cents	18 cents
Pickled pork, per lb.	5.8 cents	14 cents
Cheese, per lb.	9.2 cents	10.6 cents
Leaf tobacco	7.4 cents	9 cents

Table showing average prices in foreign markets of commodities which farmers consume, in April, 1896, and March, 1897:

	April, 1896. Cents.	April, 1897. Cents.
Coffee	14.8	11.2
Cotton cloth, per yd.	9.1	8.2
Pickled herrings, lb.	3.9	2.3
Mackerel, per lb.	7.2	6.
Beet sugar	2.4	1.7
Dress goods, per yd.	8.0.7	7.5

It will be seen from the above that the selling price of practically everything which the farmer has had to put upon the market has increased during the year and that the buying price of things which he consumes has decreased.

The State Department is in receipt of a communication from the United States consul at Odessa, Russia, to the effect that large quantities of Russian wool of inferior quality are being shipped to this country and the manufacturers of the country are cautioned accordingly.

The proposed duty on the quantity of rawhide which would be used in the manufacture of a pair of shoes is estimated at about 5 cents. Only about one-fifth, however, of the hides used in this country are imported, so that the increased cost of a pair of shoes by reason of the duty would probably not be more than one or two cents. The average man probably uses about three pairs of shoes per year. Does anybody particularly object to paying from three to six cents toward the support of the Government in its present extremity, especially in view of the great advantage accruing to the farmer?

One Reason Gold Is Exported.

It is but reasonable, with the importations of foreign goods increasing so enormously in anticipation of the repeal of the Wilson low tariff rates and the enactment of a protective tariff, that gold exports have increased. The foreign goods brought into the country must be paid for in gold, and if such importations increase from ten to twenty millions a month, it goes without saying that gold exports must increase somewhat. Several other reasons, notably the desire for accumulations of gold in Europe by reason of war possibilities, show that there is nothing alarming in the exports of that metal, and no cause for the note of alarm being sounded by the silver advocates. The quantity of gold money in 1873 was $1,200,800,000, while in 1896 it was $3,698,700,000, being in 1896 50 per cent greater than the gold and silver money combined in 1873.

Secretary Wilson's latest move is in making a practical investigation to determine sections of the country most adapted to the production of the best quality of beet sugar.

GEORGE MELVILLE.