

instead of having to bring them 1,500 miles from Eastern Canada, at the quarantine compelled importers to do.

VERY DISGRACEFUL.

THE COMMERCIAL has on more than one occasion during the past year drawn attention to the necessity for greater activity on the part of the postal department in furnishing mail facilities to the people of western Canada. There have been many complaints coming from all parts of the country, some perhaps unreasonable in their nature, but others founded on good cause. The most glaring and long-standing case of official neglect, however, is in the case of the railway lines in Manitoba operated by the Northern Pacific Company. This company is now operating three distinct lines in Manitoba, with an aggregate mileage of over 300 miles. A portion of this railway mileage has been regularly operated since 1888, and nearly the entire distance has been in operation for over a year, yet this railway system has not been utilized to any extent whatever in carrying the mails.

Reference has heretofore been made in these columns to the advantages which would be derived from a mail service both over the main line of the Northern Pacific between Winnipeg and Emerson, and over the Morris-Brandon branch of the same road. There are several post offices at points along or near the main line of railway, but these offices are supplied by mail carriers, though a daily express train is run over the road. In the case of the important town of Emerson, the mail is carried across the prairie a distance of about twenty miles, when it could be delivered on the spot daily from an express train.

On the Morris-Brandon branch the situation is similar. This road has been in operation about a year, and runs through 160 miles of country as well settled as the average settled portions of Manitoba, but no use has yet been made of the railway to carry the mails. The post offices established in the region before the railway was constructed are still supplied in the old way by mail carriers. Some of these post offices are located quite close to the railway stations which have since been established, while some of the railway stations are six or eight miles from a post office. This is of course a great inconvenience to the merchants and others who have settled at points along the railway. A number of little towns have grown up along the railway, and the common sense way of furnishing mail accommodation to the districts served by the road would be to close up these country post offices, in cases where they are located near the railway, and open new offices at the depots. The farmers drive to the railway stations to market their grain and buy their store goods, and they could get their mails at the same time. Under the present system the business men along the line are obliged to use the telegraph or express systems in communicating with Winnipeg or other points, at considerable expense, or wait for the slow mail delivered at the nearest country office by carrier. This is most unsatisfactory to the residents along the railway, even where they have a post office close by. At Roland station for instance, there is a post

office within two miles of the village, but it is only supplied with one mail per week, which is carried across the country from Morden, on the Deloraine branch. By this service it takes about three weeks to get an answer to a letter addressed to Winnipeg, less than seventy miles distant, though three passenger trains per week pass the place. Goods shipped from Winnipeg are received one to two weeks before the invoice, which is sent by mail, is received.

This is the condition of things along the Morris-Brandon branch, and it is certainly very disgraceful to the authorities who are responsible for it. Some points, such as Wawanesa, receive two mails per week by carrier, but this is not much of an improvement. Why this state of things should exist so long, is a matter for wonder. It is believed by some that the Dominion Government has decided to boycott the Northern Pacific, hence the reason for withholding the mails from this road. Whether this be the case or not, is not our matter to enquire. The question is not one for the railway, but for the people. The people along the Northern Pacific railway system in Manitoba have a right to demand and receive reasonable treatment from the Government. They are citizens of the country and are doing their share to support its institutions. The railway provides the means for a very much better mail service than can be supplied by the old system in vogue before the road was built, and it is the duty of the authorities to take advantage of these facilities. Unless reasonable treatment is soon accorded to the residents along this railway, the people should make themselves heard in no uncertain way.

MIXED FARMING.

Several of the English delegates who recently visited the Canadian Northwest to spy out the land so to speak, expressed their surprise at the general limitation by our farmers of their operations to simple grain raising, and were at a loss to see how farming could be made profitable one year with another, where stock-raising was so generally neglected. To an English farmer this would certainly seem somewhat of a mystery, seeing that during a very short visit to a new country, he could scarcely be expected to grasp the situation, or divest himself of the fixed ideas he held on farming, a pursuit he had been trained in according to accepted English ideas from his earliest thinking days. He might fail to comprehend that breaking up of the virgin prairie soil is in some measure like the breaking of a colt, which had never known the restraint of even a halter. That this virgin soil like the colt had to be subdued, and that grain-raising for a few years was the only practical and profitable way of subduing it, and bringing it into a condition to be used for other branches of agriculture. The English farmer visitor might also fail to learn that the great majority of our farmers are still busily engaged in this work of subduing the soil, and that sixty to seventy per cent. of the Northwestern lands in crop during the past season have been broken up from prairie sod during the past five years. Another temporary circumstance may not have been known to the English farmer, namely, that owing to dry years and short crops of hay, roots and rough grain from 1887

up to the present year, the raising of cattle, and still more so of hogs has fallen off instead of increased during the past three years, and the situation in that respect is probably worse now than at any time during the past five years.

After making allowance for all the above circumstances, a view of the situation at present furnishes ample proof of the folly noticed by some of our English visiting delegates. It is not necessary to look at the agricultural situation to see this, as the commercial one has the proofs on the surface. If in such products as beef and pork we filled our own local wants, and made no attempt at exporting we should fall far short of our capabilities. But we do not begin to supply our home wants in either. At least \$2,000,000 is paid for imported hog products by the people of Western Canada, every pound of which should be produced in or close to the Province of Manitoba. Then on the beef question many people think the local consumpt is attended to, when the butcher gets enough for his demands, whereas every pound of cured and canned beef could, and should be produced and canned in this country. Another item of imports seems a singular anomaly, namely, that of dressed mutton, a very large proportion of the supply of which comes from the State of Montana, and so on we could enumerate products imported, which could be raised with what goes annually to waste on our prairie farms.

It can be clearly seen, that this neglect of stock-raising is a great drawback to industrial development in our towns and cities. If we cannot get our farmers to raise sufficient beef, pork, mutton and so forth to fill the local demand for cured and canned meats, it is folly to expect our town and city people to invest in packing and canning undertakings; and if we cannot, for want of the raw material which the farmers only can produce, establish industries, which will depend mainly upon a home demand, it would be commercial insanity to think of establishing those, which would depend mainly upon an export market.

There can be no doubt but there are great difficulties in the way of our farmers in getting into stock-raising, for a few years after they settle on a prairie farm, but we have now a number of old settled farmers, who have every facility for going into the undertaking, and their efforts put forth would more than supply the local demand for meat products, which we now have to import. The argument of insufficient financial resources to go into stock raising is a powerful one, for a great many of our farmers are too poor as yet to do so. But the number who are financially able is ample, if they will only lend their efforts in that direction. Besides there are too many of our farmers with four to six hundred acres of land, and no live stock pleading poverty, where with two hundred acres and a reasonable share of live stock, they would have no cause to complain.

Thomas Edison, the great inventor, has bought 30,000 acres of nickel property in the Sudbury district. His expert says that it is the richest mine in the world. Mr. Edison claims that the new process he has discovered will cheapen the production of nickel.