

## Question of Lake Freights.

To the Editor of the Commercial.

Sir,—I have been interested in reading the accounts of the new air line of railway from Winnipeg to Duluth, about which so much has been written lately, and amongst the reasons and excuses given for its construction I notice one upon which particular stress has been laid by the Ottawa correspondent of the Winnipeg Tribune, viz: that when the railroad is completed to Duluth, owing to the immense size of the cargo steamers trading from there to Buffalo, that lake freights will be materially reduced.

The statement is also made that boats can load to draught of 20 feet of water from Duluth to Buffalo. Now, any one who knows anything, understands that the draught of water for the cargo steamers trading on Lake Superior is regulated wholly by the draught through the Canadian and American canals at Sault Ste. Marie, and the depth of water in the St. Mary's river; and while both the new American and Canadian locks have been built with a view of loading to 20 feet, the river at present is only navigable for about 16 feet, and just as large steamers can and do load at Port Arthur and Fort William for Buffalo as at Duluth or Superior. I might add that the largest cargo ever shipped in one bottom from any port on Lake Superior was the cargo of the steamer Andrew Carnegie last week, which loaded at Port Arthur and Fort William for Buffalo, with Manitoba wheat, and had over 182,000 bushels aboard, over 5,460 tons dead weight.

When the rivers and waters are deepened to allow steamers drawing 20 feet to navigate them, a steamer the size of the Carnegie will carry 230,000 bushels of wheat, or equal to 7,500 net tons; and shipments of this size may be made from the Canadian ports at the head of Lake Superior, as well as the American ones. When the question of freight rates is considered at present the rate from Port Arthur or Fort William to Buffalo is 1 3-8 cents, a figure so low that no matter how large the steamers might be, there is no room for reduction. Your readers will easily understand that even with the present draught of water and the size of the steamers, they are to-day about as low as it will ever be possible to get them.

Regretting that I have had to trouble you to contradict statements which those who attempt to lead public opinion should know better than to send out.

GEORGE T. MARKS.

Mayer's Office, Port Arthur, May 21.

## Winnipeg Prices a Year Ago.

Following were Winnipeg prices this week last year:

Wheat—No. 1 hard, in store at Fort William 63 to 64c for May delivery.  
Flour—Local price, per sack. Patent, \$1.55 to \$1.60; bakers', \$1.75 to \$1.80.

Bran—Per ton, \$8.

Shorts—Per ton, \$10.

Oats—Per bushel, car lots on track, Winnipeg, 18c to 19c. Car lots at country points, 10c to 13c.

Barley—Selling at 17c to 18c for ad here. Car lots at country points 13c to 14c.

Butter—Dairy, good to choice, jobbing at 10c to 13c as to quality and milky, creamery 14c.

Cheese.—Jobbing price 7c to 7 1-2c.  
Eggs.—Fresh, jobbing at 9c to 9 1-2c and 8c net.

Beef.—City dressed, 5c to 5 1-2c.  
Mutton.—Mutton held stock, 6c to 7c, fresh 9c.

Hogs—Dressed, 5c to 5 1-2c.

Cattle.—Nominal at 2 1-2c to 3c for butchers' stock.

Hides—No. 1 green, 4c to 4 1-2c.

Hogs—Live, off cars, 3 3-8c.

Sheep.—Sheep nominal at 4 to 4 1-4c off cars.

Seneca Root.—Dry 19c lb.

Poultry.—Chickens, 12c lb; turkeys, 14c; ducks, 10c; geese, 12c.

Potatoes—20c to 25c per bushel.

Hay.—\$7 to \$9 for baled on track.

Wool—5c to 9c as to quality.

## Hides, Wool, etc.

Chicago Shoe and Leather Review says. Since our Wednesday report a block of last summer's spready native steer hides was sold at 9 1-2c. A car lot of May natives was taken at 9c. Among other sales was a block of early spring butt brands at 8c, a lot of 5,000 March heavy native cows at 8 1-4c, and several lots of Texas heavy, light and extreme light all at 8 1-2c. The hide market has been subject to extreme fluctuations in recent years. May natives are selling at 9c to-day; they brought 1c less a year ago, 3 1-2c more two years ago, and 3 3-4c less three years ago.

A Toronto report quotes unwashed fleece wool at 11c, but the future very uncertain. Hides at Toronto were quoted firmer at 7 1-2c.

Bradstreet's reports United States wool markets dull and easy.

The London market is firm, and prices are on a parity with the close of the previous sale. The London sale closed May 22. It is estimated that United States parties bought about 7,000 bales at this series.

## CITY ASSESSMENT.

The total assessment of the city for the current year amounts to \$22,790, \$40 exclusive of exemptions, which amount to \$4,863,220, showing a net increase for the rateable property of the city over that of 1896 of over one-quarter of a million dollars. This increase is wholly represented by new buildings erected during the year 1896 and improvements added to others previously constructed, as it exceeds the reduction made on land and old buildings by over \$35,000. The total assessment by way of capitalized rental value for business tax is \$3,025,950, being a slight increase in this class of assessment over that of last year. The total population of the city taken in connection with this assessment is shown to be, inclusive of a fair percentage added for the transient and floating population, 38,691.

## ROOTS AND SHOES.

The Montreal Trade Bulletin says: Apart from a few sorting orders manufacturers have very little to report. Travellers are going out with their fall samples, but it is too early yet to hear from them, although a few orders have been received. Retailers report a fair business, with stocks well broken into. Those manufacturers who supply jobbers are pretty busy just now, and the whole business is as good as can be expected for the between season's trade.

## Comparative Prices of Staples.

	May 14, 1897	May 15, 1896
Flour, straight spg	\$4.10 @ \$4.25	\$3.10 @ \$3.50
Flour, straight wint	\$1.20 @ \$1.30	\$1.25 @ \$1.75
Wheat, No. 2 red	\$1.00 1/2	74 1/2 c
Corn, No. 2 mixed	30 1/2 c	35 1/2 c
Oats, No. 2	23 1/2 c	24 1/2 c
Rye, No. 2 western	43c	40 1/2 c
Barley, No. 2, Milw	...	...
Cotton, mid. upld	7 13-16c	8 1/2 c
Print cloths, 64x64	27-10c	29-10c
Wool, Ohio & Pa. X	19 @ 20c	16c
Wool, No. 1 combg	23 @ 24c	19 @ 21c
Pork, mess, new	\$3.75 @ \$9.25	\$7.00 @ \$9.75
Lard, prime, cont'd	4 1/2 c	4-5 @ 1-90
Butter, ex. creamery	15c	10c
Cheese, ch. east, fly	10c	9 1/2 c
Sugar, centrif, 0c	3 5 10c	4 1/2 c
Sugar, granulated	4 9 10c	5 1/2 c
Coffee, Rio, No. 7	8 1/2 c	14 1/2 @ 1 1/2 c
Petroleum, N. T. Co	55c	\$1.20
Petroleum, rfd gal	6 25c	6 95c
Iron, Bes, pg	\$9.25	\$12.75
Steel Billets, ton	\$13.75	\$19.50
Steel Rails	\$20.00	...
Ocean Steam Freight	...	...
Grain, Liverpool	1 1/2 d	2d
Cotton, Liverpool	9-12 1/2 d	3-3 1/2 d

\*Pittsburg.

## ENLARGING THE MILLS.

Montreal, May 27.—The Montmorency Cotton company is making arrangements to erect an immense new cotton mill at Drummondville, utilizing the rapids on River St. Francis. It will employ about 1,500 hands. The management has turned to foreign countries for customers. It is the intention to manufacture on an elaborate scale for the markets of China and Japan. Careful personal inspection of those markets by the agents of the Montmorency company has convinced the management that an immense field for trade lies undeveloped in these countries.

## CLEARING HOUSE RETURNS.

The following are the returns for week ending May 27th, 1897.

	Clearings	Balances
Total for week ending May 27, 1897	\$ 970,429	\$180,739
Total for week ending May 27, 1896	850,210	157,270
Total for week ending May 27, 1895	952,733	2-5-80

## THOUGHTFUL SUBSCRIBERS.

Quite a number of our subscribers have been thoughtful enough to send in their renewal subscriptions, since the Commercial office fire. To all these we say thank you. Following is a sample of the letters coming in:

Landers, B. C., May 13.

The Commercial, Winnipeg;

Enclosed herewith \$4 subscription to your paper. Presume every little helps, and after the fire will no doubt be needed. THOS. MCNEELY, General Merchant.

The old established firm of Adam Hope & Co., wholesale hardware merchants, of Hamilton, Ont., have called a meeting of their creditors. They allege that their difficulties are due to financial losses and a continuous shrinkage of sales during the last two years. Their total liabilities are obtained a compromise. The firm is one of the oldest in the trade in Canada.