

plain of, by opening their list of stockholders for further subscriptions, and increasing their proposed capital from \$20,000 to \$50,000. This move, unfortunately, was too late, as the second had by that time made considerable of their arrangements for organization, and as both were absolute in their claim to a right that belonged to neither, but to the business public of Winnipeg generally, the two companies are now before the provincial government asking a charter for the same object.

There have been instances of rival stock exchanges in other cities, and notably San Francisco, where two were co-existent for many years. In Manitoba the granting of a charter for such a purpose implies the giving away of a much greater public privilege than it does in the State of California, and the company obtaining such a charter should be one formed solely with a view of promoting public good. As already stated neither company is organized upon a scale of magnitude in keeping with the wants of Winnipeg. A number of men may form themselves into a company with a capital of \$10,000 for the purpose of dicker and dabbling in bank and railway stocks, and no person has any right to complain, but when they claim for themselves the name of Winnipeg Stock Exchange, the claim appears insolently assumptive, if not ludicrously absurd. After comparing the organization and its capital stock with the great and promising city whose stock transactions it would seek to control, we are very forcibly reminded of the old fable of "The Frog and the Bull."

PROTESTED DRAFTS.

If there is any matter connected with the financial affairs of Manitoba which calls for legislation it is in connection with the protest of drafts. At present the power of protesting a draft is of a very absolute nature, and is often the cause of great injustice to business men in this province. No person can complain about the protesting of an accepted draft, no matter how promptly the protest may be carried out, but in the case of an unaccepted draft it seems as if the power allowed to the party making the same is much too great. A creditor in the East can draw upon a debtor in this province and if the draft is not honored can cause the same to be protested without the debtor ever accepting or signing the same.

This law may work well enough in old centers of trade, where goods leave the sender and reach the consignee in a few days. But in the North-west goods are often weeks and even months in transit, and not unfrequently drafts are presented before they have arrived. In such a case the consignee is, to use the old saying, "Between the devil and the deep sea." If he accepts the draft he has no recourse for any deficiency in the goods in transit, and if he refuses to accept he is liable to have his draft protested. The hardship is even greater when the creditor is a resident of the United States. In the Eastern provinces there is some means of recovering an over payment by a simple process of the law; but in the majority of the United States a resident of Canada cannot sue a local individual or firm without furnishing bondsmen for the amount, and in some States double the amount sued for. To follow up a matter of this sort in the United States therefore, would in nineteen cases out of twenty, cost more than the amount in question.

Numerous good and honorable business men of the North-west have had drafts protested and their credit injured in this way, and often when the parties who have drawn upon them have not understood the circumstances, and have been truly sorry for the occurrence afterwards.

It may seem an extreme position to take, but we believe the commercial wants of the North-west demand a law which would place it beyond the power of any distant creditor to protest an unaccepted draft.

TARIFF AND GRAIN PRICES.

The question of tariff versus free trade is being freely discussed at present by the country press of Ontario, and in looking over the columns of some of the journals published in that province, the student of commercial questions cannot refrain from a smile at some of the ludicrous assertions and comparisons which are set forth for or against the national protective policy. In the more prominent journals, where the bearing of the policy upon general trade and manufactures is discussed, there is nothing very remarkable, beyond the usual stock of argument indulged in by parties who differ upon this important point; but when the interests of the farmer, and the effect of the tariff laws upon grain prices are discussed, the arguments used are often of the most

ludicrous description. Scarcely two journals who have taken up the subject can agree as to the comparative prices of grain in 1878 under a free trade system, and in 1882 under protection, although the champions of either policy claim that the price has been raised or lowered as the case may be by protection. It seems as if the fact that Canada is an exporting country in the commodity of grain, had never dawned upon the minds of these would-be political economists, and that the demand from the crowded nations of Western Europe, where the surplus grain of this continent must find a market, is what must rule the price of grain in the eastern provinces of this Dominion. It is true that at intervals a protection or free trade policy may have their effect upon the home market, but this occurs only under exceptional circumstances, while in the general run of business the reports of the *Mark Lane Express* or the telegrams of Beerbohm are all powerful in causing fluctuations of the produce barometer of the American Continent. Speculative rings may for a time interrupt this natural state of affairs, but even speculators in any grain center of America watch very carefully the Liverpool reports and are very cautious about bulling the market, when grain is above the shipping margin of Liverpool quotations. The question of protection or free trade certainly occupies but little of the attention of the speculative class of grain dealers, and while a free trade market is open in Britain for the products of the Canadian soil it is impossible for the political economist as well as the commercial student to see the connection in this matter which our Ontario contemporaries wish to show forth. There is no use in denying the fact that the grain purchasers of Britain control the grain markets of America, and many who have been skeptical upon that point have paid dearly for their skepticism. Many will remember the corner attempted in 1879 by a New York syndicate headed by James R. Keene and Jesse Hoyt, and how disastrous was the failure which attended the attempt. With millions of money at their disposal, and a general failure of European crops as a favorable circumstance, this ring were unable to force European purchasers to pay extortionate prices for American grain, and the corner they attempted to form cost them several millions of dollars. This was only