

or estimated the importance of the matter by a view of immediate results, and it has taken only one year to show how short sighted was such an estimate. At that time the St. P. M. & M. Company was also seeking a subsidized entrance into this province, and was offering liberally to secure the aid of the Local Government. At that time the St. P. M. & M. was free from the control of the C. P. R. stockholders, and there is no reason to doubt, but their offers to the Greenway Government were made in perfect honesty and good faith. But in the past that company had played so subservient to the C. P. R. at times when the province of Manitoba most needed their independent help, that a cloud of suspicion hung around their every movement, and neither the Government nor people of Manitoba were willing to place much reliance upon their offers or professions, and as a natural consequence they were shut out from the entrance to the province, granted to the Northern Pacific Company. With this entrance secured the N. P. & M. Co. had no necessity for extending their lines outside of the province by which they were subsidized, so long as the St. P. M. & M. remained independent of C. P. R. control. Their proper course was to secure connections as thoroughly as possible throughout Manitoba, and push for their share of the heavy carrying traffic between here and the East, which the province is gradually developing.

But time works changes in railway as well as other prospects, and quite a change has come over those of the N. P. & M. Company within the past few weeks. It is now almost certain that the St. P. M. & M. road is once more controlled by C. P. R. influences, and that its interests and those of the Canadian road are once more identical. It is possible that this change may have resulted from the St. P. M. & M. failing last year to secure a subsidized entrance into Manitoba. But be that as it may, it is evidently once more a link of what once was our oppressive railway monopoly. By linking itself thus with the C. P. R. the combination furnishes a line to the Pacific Coast through the United States and another through Canadian territory, thus paralleling the N. P. road both on the north and on the south. The combination is in a position to compete to the Pacific Coast through the States under the provisions of the interstate commerce

law, or through Canada, where that law does not exist. It is nothing more than natural that, hedged in on both sides in this manner, the N. P. Company, through its adjunct the N. P. and M. should seek means to secure a road to the Pacific through Canada also, and thus be in a position to fight on even ground with the strong combination it has to oppose. The extension of the N. P. & M. road across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific is a huge undertaking, but not so huge as to scare a powerful company like the Northern Pacific. By securing control of either the M. & N. W. or N. W. central the burden of the undertaking would be materially lightened, as both roads have land grants from the Dominion, which could be made more valuable in the hands of such a powerful organization as the Northern Pacific. There is therefore every reason to believe that some of the rumors of railway deals now flying around are not without foundation, and that some arrangement between either the M. & N. W. or the N. W. Central and the N. P. & M., will soon be authoritatively announced.

In by-gone days Manitobans were wont to look upon railway deal rumors as only rumors of more monopoly ties being formed, but these days are gone, and a combination such as we have outlined would actually be a benefit to the whole Northwest. A second road constructed to the Pacific coast during the next few years, opening up the rich valley of the North Saskatchewan in its way, would be a big impetus to Northwestern progress, and it is not at all unlikely, that the commencement of this undertaking is close at hand.

Even the rumored combination of the C. P. R. and St. P. M. & M. Companies has now no terrors for Manitobans. It may, and doubtless will reduce the competitors for this traffic to two, but it will bring two powerful contending powers face to face to study our wants in that respect, and it is such competition, no matter how amicably it may be carried on, which is most effectual in cheapening as well as extending transportation facilities.

THE PEDDLERS' LICENSE.

The move of the retail grocers' association in petitioning the city council to increase the city license collected from peddlers is one which has received varied criticism from citizens of all classes, and

there can be no doubt but the majority of citizens favor an increase, although there are also quite a few, who like Mayor Ryan are more anxious about poor peddlers making a living, than they are about protecting the tax-paying traders of the city. It may be safely inferred, therefore, that a majority of our citizens believe, that such traders should be protected in their efforts to make business pay, whether the "poor peddler" makes a living at his itinerant trading, or has to apply himself to hired labor to get one. Whether the increased license should or should not be enforced, is a question to be decided not upon any grounds of philanthropy, but purely upon the relative value as citizens of the regular merchant or his moving opponent, the peddler. The philanthropic considerations of our city fathers should be confined pretty much within the scope of the health and relief committee, and should not upon any consideration be allowed to mix with a purely business question.

The city council need have no hesitation in deciding as to which class of traders demands their consideration. The merchant is a necessity to make a city, while a peddler in a city is an unnecessary individual altogether, for whose total loss no one would feel sorry, and many would be glad. He peddles nothing which cannot be had from the regular merchant in a city like Winnipeg, while he is, as a rule, an irresponsible individual, often requiring watching in his transactions, instead of being extended civic philanthropy. His persistent ringing of door bells at the front doors of residences, (for he is as a rule too cheeky, to push the sale of his wares through the domestics in the rear) is one of the worst annoyances to which families are subjected. In short our city council upon this little matter have to decide as to whether or not the claims of a useful and heavy tax-paying class of citizens shall be conceded, even if a class who are altogether unnecessary and often a nuisance, have to suffer.

It is a pity this system of taxing heavily peddlers was not applied to others than those who sell to families. There is a class of wholesale peddlers, who do not even reside in the city, who dump perishable goods in car lots here, and peddle them around to our merchants, getting out of the city as soon as they dispose of their consignment. Winnipeg in the winter time is a very handy market to send into, in a frozen state, goods, that would perish elsewhere, and these flying dealers who bring such, take care to keep clear of either assessor or tax collector. A license of \$500 would be a proper dose for such people.