

its provisions may be materially changed in many respects, for the pressure that will be brought to bear upon Congress, to secure the proposed amendments will be such, than some of the points will be conceded.

The point upon which most pressure will be brought to bear is the anti-pooling provisions of the law, which are alleged to have wrought great injury to railway corporations, without giving anything like corresponding advantages to the general public. The question is treated of by *Bradstreet's* in its issue of the first inst., and the opinions of a large number of leading railroad managers, heavy shippers, trade journalists and others upon this point are there published, and with scarcely an exception these parties favor the repeal of the anti-pooling clause of the act.

In handling this knotty question Congress will have no enviable piece of work, and the decision the legislators may arrive at, while it may be just and equitable may prove to be anything but popular. There is a growing feeling all over this continent against combines of every kind, and it is difficult always, and sometimes impossible to make the average American citizen believe that a pool of railways on rates is anything but a combine of the most dangerous character against the public interest. Of course people having frequent transactions with different railway corporations may view the matter differently and more intelligently, and be convinced of the truth of some of the opinions expressed by the correspondents in *Bradstreet's* namely: that pooling is the only means of securing uniformity of rates, by which home commerce can be conducted upon a safe basis.

Some of the correspondents of *Bradstreet's*, notably those connected with railways, take the ground, that there is an anomaly in the application of this anti-pooling arrangement, without its being carried out in the business affairs of the country generally. It should be remembered, however, that in the United States, as in Canada, railway corporations have received large subsidies from the nation, and are accorded many privileges not allowed to parties in general business, and The nation has a right to interfere in their arrangements to protect public interests. the question is, therefore, does the anti-pooling arrangement benefit or injure public interests? If, as asserted, it makes

rates so uncertain as to make general business unsafe, and is a block to making railway capital profitable investment, thus taking away the great incentive to railway development, it may be producing more evil than good to the public. It is to be hoped, that Congress will act in the best interests of the public in this matter, for while it is a question apparently affecting United States interests only, it is one in which people in this portion of the Dominion are materially interested,

NORTH WESTERN COAL FIELDS.

Elsewhere in our columns will be found an article quoted from the *Morning Call* of Wednesday last, which gives some hints of value on coal beds in the Northwest and British Columbia, as expressed by a Mr. Maltby, an expert in coal mining business of many years experience. The article in question is worth a perusal, not only for the information it contains, but also to show who are putting forth efforts, and in what localities they are being put forth for the discovery and development of our Northwestern coal fields.

It has long been a fact fixed in the minds of those who made the most superficial inquiry into the matter, that in the most westerly portions of the territories valuable fields of coal are still undiscovered; and those who are acquainted with the progress of coal mining development in older fields, will be in no way astonished at Mr. Maltby's statements about the folly of wasting time and money on the working of surface cropping veins, such as have in some cases been worked at a loss in the territories. After their discovery, there was considerable money as well as effort wasted in trying to work profitably surface cropping mines in the Upper Mississippi coal fields, and not until shafts were sunk reaching a third vein did mines then become profitable. In the North of England and in Belgium the experience has been similar, and in some localities of the former, a fifth vein has been reached at great depth, showing a much finer coal than others nearer to the surface. It is safe, therefore, to conclude, that as yet, only the surface of our Northwestern coal fields have been touched, and as yet their actual wealth is not known.

Manitobans would do well to note where and by whom these efforts at discovery and development of coal mining are being made. The area of search and effort seems to be all from the valley of the Saskatchewan westward or northward, and fields already being worked there have so far proved of very little value to the province of Manitoba. The freight rates

on coal from these territorial fields to the province are held by the C.P.R. management so high, that importation of coal from the United States is still the principal means of supply. The distance is no doubt great from the mines to Manitoba towns, but even for the distance the carrying charges on that road are abnormally high, and it seems as if the company were interested in blocking the development of the territorial coal mining industry. Whether or not, it is a certainty, that the working of coal in the Saskatchewan valley is of no value in the direction of providing a cheap fuel supply for our Manitoba towns, and it is not at all likely that for many years railway competition in the territories will be sufficiently keen to reduce their freight rates materially. If, therefore, we are to have cheap coal in the near future throughout Manitoba we must seek and find coal fields nearer home.

It is a well known fact, that we have extensive coal fields in the Souris valley in the southwestern corner of this province, only about 200 miles in a direct line south of Winnipeg, and not more than 100 miles from Brandon. Although it is almost a certainty, that within a year there will be railway communication and perhaps railway competition into this same district, there seems to be no effort made by any person or corporation to test the value of these coal fields. All are content to know that coal in abundance exists there, and yet we see only specimens of surface croppings from veins, which such experts as Mr. Maltby tell us cannot be worked profitably. Surely there is unpardonable apathy upon this all important matter, or some efforts at shafting or other operations would be made to determine the value of the coal supply to be found there. This is a matter which private enterprise should grapple with, but it is also one which our Local Government should encourage, and they would only be doing their duty to our citizens generally, if they offered some incentive to the development of the coal fields within or close to the boundaries of the province. It is almost beyond doubt, that below the surface croppings now visible in the Souris Valley more valuable veins will be found, thus corroborating the theory of Mr. Maltby, and it is high time some well directed effort was made to discover and develop such. We should take a lesson from the C.P.R. company in the effort and expense they put forth, to discover coal fields, which are likely to be for many years too far from any considerable market. A convenient market for its products is the best guarantee for the success of a coal mine, and mines opened in the Souris Valley or anywhere else in or near to Manitoba would have at the start some sixty thousand residents of Manitoba cities and towns to supply with fuel, and they would soon have a demand for industrial purposes, which would make them wealth earning institutions.