

SUPPLEMENT TO THE COMMERCIAL.

the interests involved, Sir William announced that the matter of a reduction in grain freight rates had been fully considered by the directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and their decision was that no reduction could be made.

The Dominion Government, in answer to petitions from Manitoba, appointed a Commission from the Department of Railways and Canals, to sit at points in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories and receive evidence, presented by the Provincial and Territorial Governments, and associations or individuals, regarding freight rates charged by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Considerable time elapsed before the Commissioners were appointed, and it was not until November that their names were made public. The Commissioners arrived in Winnipeg without any public notice having been given that they were coming, and consequently, persons who desired to appear before them were not prepared immediately to submit their evidence. The Board, co-operating with the Provincial Government, arranged with the Commissioners, at the first formal meeting held, that they should return to Winnipeg at a subsequent date to receive the statements desired to be given by the Government and this Board. After visiting several provincial towns and villages, where, in cases, very short notice was given the residents of their intended settings, the Commissioners returned to Winnipeg on the 13th December, and Mr. J. H. Ashdown, Chairman of your Committee appointed to look after this matter, presented a full statement of the views of the Board, accompanied by an extensive series of tables of freight rates comparisons, percentage exhibits, and comments thereon, showing clearly that the Canadian Pacific Railway rates on this Western Division are largely in excess of those prevailing on their Eastern Divisions and other roads.

COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA.

The Hon. Mackenzie Bowell, Minister of Trade and Commerce, having telegraphed asking that the Board would give Mr. J. S. Larke, Canadian Commissioner to Australia, an opportunity of addressing them, a general meeting was called for the 5th December, when Mr. Larke explained the object of his mission to Australia and consulted with those present on prospective trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies. The conclusion arrived at was that at present no trade, of consequence, could be carried on between Manitoba and Australia.

CUSTOMS MATTERS.

The Hon. N. Clark Wallace, Comptroller of Customs, met your Council on the 14th December for the consideration of a number of matters connected with Customs regulations at this port, which the Council laid before him in detail, with the result that the Comptroller promised to arrange if possible that the Customs offices should be moved from the present inconvenient situation to the Post Office building. He stated that he had considered the representations before made by your Council regarding this matter, and had almost completed arrangements whereby the Land Commissioner's staff might be removed to the present Customs offices and their rooms utilized by the Customs Department.

The matter of the detention of a foreign consignment by the officers until any packages selected by the Appraiser were returned to the railroad warehouse,

was submitted to the Comptroller, and he assured the Council that he would at once give instructions to immediately deliver the balance of a consignment when the Appraiser had chosen such packages as he required for examination.

The inconvenience and delay experienced by importers in having their postal packages removed from the Post Office to the distant offices at the Customs House, was represented to the Hon. Mr. Wallace, and he agreed to place an officer in a convenient place in the Post Office building to deliver packages direct to importers on the postal entry being made thereof.

Some minor details regarding Customs regulations at this port were also satisfactorily arranged.

DUTY ON DAIRY MACHINERY.

Representations having been made to your Council that the duty imposed on most dairy utensils and machinery was at the rate of 27½ per cent, while the rate levied on other agricultural machinery, such as mowers and reapers, etc., was 20 per cent., and that it would be of great benefit to the dairy farmers of Manitoba if the duty on their machinery was reduced, the matter was brought to the attention of the Customs Department and a request made that a change in the rate of duty be made. The matter is now under consideration.

IMPROVED POSTAL FACILITIES.

A large number of petitions signed by many persons resident along the lines of the Northern Pacific Railway in Manitoba, were forwarded to the Board with a request that the prayer of the petitions, for improved postal service between points in the United States and points along the lines of the Northern Pacific Railway, should be endorsed by the Board and the matter urged on the attention of the Postmaster-General. After consideration your Council acceded to the request and the Postmaster-General was communicated with and replied that he is giving the subject attention.

GENERAL MATTERS.

The general correspondence of the Board for the year covered a wide range of subjects such as: Customs and railroad tariffs, Exhibits of Manitoba products in different places, Prospects of starting industries in Winnipeg, Statistics on many matters connected with Manitoba and Winnipeg, Analysis of Manitoba grain, Red River improvement, Formation of Boards of Trade, Grain Standards, the Manitoba elevator system, Flax culture, Lands adjacent to Winnipeg, etc.

VISIT OF THE HON. R. REID.

In May the Council extended an invitation to the members of the Board and the public generally to attend a meeting in the Canadian Pacific Railway station rooms, kindly placed at our disposal by Mr. Robert Kerr, on the occasion of the visit to Winnipeg of the Hon. R. Reid, Minister of Defence, of Victoria, Australia. The hon gentleman addressed a large gathering on the subject of trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies and much interest was manifested in the points advanced by him.

BANQUET TO VISITING STATESMEN.

On the 23rd June a banquet was tendered to the Australian delegates to the Colonial Conference held at