

out of danger of damage to crops from water in wet seasons.

A thorough system of drainage should greatly assist in the settlement of eastern Manitoba, though there is any quantity of unoccupied land which is not actually in need of drainage. An organized effort is now being made to draw attention to these lands. Splendid farms can now be purchased at very reasonable prices in the Winnipeg district, and the district has many advantages to offer. One important consideration is the proximity to market. Winnipeg is by far the largest consuming market in the country. Butter, eggs, cheese, poultry, meats, cereals, and other products of the farm are wanted in large quantities. The production of these commodities in the district is not equal to the consumption of the city, and consequently supplies are brought by rail from more distant parts of the province. This means that farm products bring a higher price in Winnipeg than in other parts of the country, as the farmer near the city gets the same price ruling in other parts of the country, plus the local freight rate from country points to Winnipeg. This is equal to 5 to 7 cents per bushel (34 pounds) on oats, and other things in proportion.

In addition to this great advantage of being near a large consuming market, there is the rich quality of the soil, abundance of pasture and natural hay meadows, ability to procure water easily from running streams or wells, etc.

There is another point which should attract attention to lands in the Winnipeg district. These lands can now be bought at very low prices, say from five to fifteen dollars per acre, not including swamp lands, which can be bought even lower. These are wonderfully low prices for lands near the commercial centre of the country and surrounding a rapidly growing city. The abundance of vacant lands makes them cheap at present, but a rush of settlement would soon make a change, and, as the lands began to be settled up, the price would advance. Those who secure good farms now in the Winnipeg district can count as a certainty upon the quick advancement in value of their property. The rapid growth of the city cannot but have the effect of advancing the value of farming lands in the district. It seems almost amazing that good lands can be bought within easy driving distance of the progressive commercial centre of the province at the prices stated. Those who secure these lands now are therefore certain to find in a few years that they have dropped into a very valuable property.

CANADA'S FINANCES.

The presentation of the report of the Finance Minister was one of the most important events in the present session of the Dominion House of Parliament. The wide-spread agitation in favor of tariff reform it was expected would lead to some important announcements by Minister Foster regarding the policy to be pursued by the Government in dealing with duties, and these expectations have not been disappointed. The budget speech was delivered by Hon. Mr. Foster, on the afternoon of Thursday the 14th. There is no necessity of going into the figures and comparisons, as they

have already been published in full by nearly all the daily papers in Canada. It is sufficient to say that the finances of Canada are shown to be in fairly satisfactory condition as far as the balances of receipts and expenditure is concerned. The trade of the country, both internal and external, was shown to be comparatively rapidly developing—France, Germany, Holland, the West Indies, China and Japan are all dealing more or less extensively with us. The announcement of the policy to be pursued in regard to the tariff was not satisfactory to a great many Canadians. The Government continues in its determination to keep up the tariff, yielding to the demand for reduction, only, where it absolutely cannot help itself. This is excused on the plea that revenue necessities will not permit of any extensive alterations. The only hope held out in the speech is that next year a general revision will be made.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION PROGRESS.

Since the somewhat widespread discussion of the report of the Special Committee of the League, very little has been written or said in Canada on the subject of Imperial Federation. The report of the special committee was widely studied and commented upon, because in the first place the League took pains to have it well distributed throughout all the Colonies in a handy pamphlet form, enabling every one to make a study of it at first hand, and in the second place because it was by far the most important step yet taken in the direction of Federation. It was the first tangible result of the work of the League; a distinct step towards the accomplishment of their object. No very great amount of interest in the question could be awakened until some draft, however rough was made of the proposed form of union, and this is precisely what the Committee's report is intended to be. The way is now opened up to a wonderful extent for a full and free discussion of the whole question which will lead to the final accomplishment or failure of the scheme. The report lays down the main principles upon which the great reform must be carried out and gives the people something definite to form an opinion upon. The argument which has always been trotted out when the subject of Imperial Federation was brought up, that its foremost advocates themselves could not give any idea of the principles upon which it was to be accomplished, is no longer serviceable.

But as we have said, the subject is not now being discussed in Canada to any extent. After everybody had expressed their opinion upon the Special Committee's report, it was let drop and will not be taken up again until there is some new development. Canada seems to be looking to the old country to do all the agitating.

In the old country, although the subject is to a great extent overshadowed just at present by others of more immediate consequence, there is still a lively discussion going on. One thing we notice, in the comments of the British press is that they are possessed of the idea that the Colonies are opposed to contributing anything towards Imperial defence. They look upon

that as the rock upon which the scheme will be wrecked. As far as Canada is concerned, the idea is a mistaken one. The Dominion fully expects to bear its share of the financial burdens of the Federation, especially of the burden of defence, since that is a matter of such vital importance to it. And why should we not? If we share in the advantages of the magnificent defence system which would be established, we should certainly be prepared to contribute, and that handsomely, to its cost, especially when we know that were we to undertake to provide our own defences both by land and water, the price would greatly exceed anything that we will be called upon to pay as a contribution towards a general Imperial defence.

Federationists everywhere are waiting with keen interest the next act in the drama. It will probably be the presentation of the report of the Special Committee to the Prime Minister for the consideration of the Government, which cannot take place for sometime yet on account of the pressure and importance of parliamentary business. If it is then thought advisable and circumstances are propitious a conference of representatives of the self governing Colonies will be called to discuss the whole matter.

MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES.

The reported decision of the Canadian steamship lines to raise the passenger rates will have a bad effect upon the immigration to Canada this year. The reason assigned for this action is not very clear, but is said to have been done because the outlook for passenger trade is exceptionally good—not a very reasonable reason. The World's Fair, it is expected, will attract crowds from across the Atlantic, and the steamship companies are going to "make hay while the sun shines," by increasing passenger rates. The increase amounts to fully 10 to 15 per cent on cabin passages, \$5 a ticket on intermediates, and \$6 a ticket on steerage passages. This, while a comparatively small sum in itself, is a plenty large enough increase to scare large numbers of good settlers out of coming, diverting a part of the stream of emigration to some other land. The action, when looked at in the broadest light, does not seem to have been a very intelligent one, even from the steamship companies' point of view. They have been working hard all winter to lay the foundation for a big business in carrying settlers in the spring, and now they undo all their work, and render it worse than useless, for the sake of a paltry temporary advantage. The people who have been worked up to the point of emigrating to Canada will likely continue in their determination to emigrate, but they will turn their footsteps to some country which is reached by a more inviting route. The Australian agents, we may be sure, will make the most of the chance to turn settlers in that direction. Thus not only will the companies lose the immediate traffic, but they will lessen the rate of increase of their permanent business, by retarding the growth of the country which creates it.

Strong appeals should be made through every influential channel to the steamship companies to reconsider this matter. If they continue in their determination to keep up the rates they will injure the Canadian interests very seriously.