

in the season. The high freight and the impossibility of turning the money invested in business over more than once in the year had the effect of keeping prices of all articles remarkably high, and always prevented large stocks in any line from being brought in. As a merchant's money was of little value to him until the time of his leaving for Winnipeg for a fresh supply of goods, and as he was tolerably certain of getting it some time between fall and spring the result was that business was done altogether on a credit business, which in the end did not result beneficially either to buyer or seller. The buyer bought more goods than he could pay for easily, the seller had difficulty in collecting his money, and the consequence was hard times all around. The steamboat line being under new management last summer, and the railroad being built so far west of Winnipeg was supposed to improve matters somewhat in the way of reducing freights and bringing goods in more frequently and cheaply. But these expectations were disappointed. Steamboat communication proved a failure, and instead of freight coming through in two or three months by cart a whole steamboat load that was started in the summer from Winnipeg did not arrive until the following spring. Late in the fall it was decided to bring in goods from Swift Current, on the railroad, which in ordinary seasons would not have been difficult, but in this instance the snow came early in the season, freighting was difficult, and instead of freights being lower they were fifty per cent. higher than ever before, and besides merchants had to bear the loss of goods lying at points along the road or river all winter. Fall stocks did not arrive until nearly spring or after spring had opened. As a consequence business was very much deranged, and prices instead of being lower than in previous years were considerably higher.

With the completion of the railroad to Calgary, however, a great change has taken place. Freights are now four and a half and five cents from Winnipeg as against nine and ten cents in former years or fifteen cents last year. Goods now come through with certainty in a month's time or less from Winnipeg with very little loss or damage, and can be ordered by telegraph and forwarded at any time of the summer or fall. Besides, prices of almost all staples are much lower in the east than formerly. The consequence of all this is that prices here have taken a great tumble and stocks of goods have been materially increased. At the same time it has made it necessary that business should be done more on a cash basis, and the plan has been adopted of putting everything down to the lowest possible notch for cash, but if any purchase has to be booked a considerably higher price is charged. This may look somewhat hard to a person who may not happen to have the cash in hand, but it gives the person who has the cash the advantage to which he is justly entitled, and puts the merchant on a solid footing in getting his money as soon as he parts with his goods, so that he is at once in a position to use it in buying more. It makes it an object with the intending purchaser to wait until he has the money before he buys, and in this way he is to a great extent prevented from buying things that he can do without or that he will have a

difficulty in paying for, and he too is on a solid footing than if he bought on credit not knowing when or how he could pay. Unlimited credit and high prices for goods have been a great drawback to this district in the past, and now with low prices and cash transactions it looks as though better times were on the way.

There is a difference in the price of almost every article, but especially in staples, on which the freight is heavy and on which a lowering of the freight makes a great difference in cost. The following is a comparative list of the cash prices of various articles at the present time and last season, and there is no doubt that the former will compare favorably with those at any point on the Saskatchewan or throughout the territories outside the line of railroad: Bacon, smoked, 22½c, 40c; hams, 28c, 40c; brown sugar, 16½c, 30c; Paris lump sugar, 22½c, 35c; syrup per keg, \$8, \$12 to \$14; currants, 20c, 35c; slice dried apples, 25c, 30c; evaporated apples, 33½c, 30c; beans, 15c, 25c; soda biscuit, 20c, 25c; cheese, 30c, 40c; salt, 8c, 20c; California fruit, 75c, \$1; jams, 50c, 75c; canned corned beef, 65c, \$1; soap, per bar, 14c, 25c; myrtle navy tobacco, 75c, \$1.25; black chewing tobacco, 65c, \$1; powder, 50c, 75c; shot, 20c, 30c; matches per qr gross, 35c, 50c and 75c; rope, 20c, 30c. Stoves, No. 8 cook, \$42, \$60; No. 9 cook, \$45, \$75; box, 25-inch, \$14, \$25; box, 28-inch, \$17.50 to \$20, \$40; Empress cook stove: \$1.27, \$1.75; grindstones, 12½c per lb, 23c; fixtures, \$1.50, \$3.50. Cottons 10c to 20c per yard, 30c to 50c; prints the same prices; men's socks, 50c, 75c; white blankets, 2½ point \$6, 3 point \$7, 3½ point \$8, 4 point \$10 per pair, against prices 30 per cent. higher last year. In winter clothing, boots and shoes, hardware, and goods generally, there is a fall in prices of from 30 to 40 per cent., but at present it is not possible to quote prices satisfactorily in all lines until the large outfits now on the road arrive.—*Edmonton Bulletin.*

Burglar Alarms.

Yankee ingenuity in this, as in other fields, has asserted itself, and the result is showing in the very large number of burglar-alarms patented in this country and in the great variety of principles called into action and designs produced. Many improvements have from time to time been made, and the efforts in this direction have assumed a more rational and practical direction. Yet this is a field by no means untried in earlier times and in other countries. Though comparatively new in general practicability, such devices have been to some extent in use for the past two hundred and fifty years, and since the earliest ages nature has provided one which, according to the testimony of all burglars and experts, has never been surpassed—a vigilant and high keyed black-and-tan. Doubtless, however, one of the earliest contrivances, consisting of string with screws fastened to one end for fixing in the doors and windows and loops in the other for slipping over the toes of the sleeper proved efficacious. In the "good old days" the traveller carried not only his own especial locks and bolts, which, on retiring, he fixed to his chamber door, but also a full equipment of alarms in the shape of pistols, bells,

torpedoes, etc., which he affixed to the doors and windows in such a way as to be let off or rung by any attempt to open the door surreptitiously. The Marquis of Worcester in his "Century of Invention" (1655) mentions several devices for this purpose, but leaves no description of them. Later some aspiring genius "to fame unknown," gave to the world an appliance which upset the bed, spilling its occupants upon the floor, upon the entrance of an intruder. Strange to say, this did not prove popular. Another alarm, of later birth, consisted of a mechanism which, upon the opening of a window or door, turned on the gas and exploded the same by fire struck from a flint through mechanism actuated also by the opening of the door or window. Indeed, a common feature of all earlier forms of burglar alarms was the automatic production of light by striking sparks from a flint into tinder. The pistol alarm seems to have been the first favorite. This was usually attached to the door-jamb by a pivoted post whose tang was screwed into the jamb; the muzzle of the pistol was placed at the crack and the trigger tripped by any motion of the door, sent the contents of the pistol in the direction of the intruder. As however, this was sometimes attended with unpleasant consequence to friends, servants and harmless visitors, the torpedo, as less aggressive, took its place. This was suspended from a pin and so arranged as to fall when the door was opened and thereby explode. This, in turn gave way to a hinged plate on the threshold, which, when stepped upon by the burglar, actuated the bell by a rod and lever. But this could be stepped over. Then came the series of clock alarms in cases attached to the door and sprung by opening the same, followed by the electric circuit, consisting of copper wires running through the house and connected with a battery; circuit connections being attached to the windows and doors in such a way that when any of these were open the armature would fall from the magnet and the alarm be sounded and sometimes a light struck. Another class of alarm is attached to the clock in such a way that any improper attempt to open the door or draw the latch sets an escapement driven by a cog and spring in motion, each pulsation of which strikes a blow upon a gong. These general features are applied to nearly, if not quite all of the latest forms of burglar alarms, which vary greatly, however, in detail and design and are for the most part familiar.—*Call Smith in the Industrial World.*

A novel and ingenious way of building railways has been adopted by the Republic of Guatemala, as follows: A national subscription has been decreed, to which every inhabitant of Guatemala having an income of \$100 or more will be required to contribute at the rate of \$4 per annum for ten years. In this way the estimated cost of the road, \$12,000,000, is to be collected on 300,000 shares of stock of the par value of \$40 per share. Every subscriber to the fund is entered as a shareholder from the outset, and is entitled to a pro rata share of the eventful profits. All of the national land, a league in width, on both sides of the road, can be bought only for railroad scrip, not for money, and it is estimated that the sale of these lands will finally redeem all the bonds, thus leaving the property an unencumbered possession of the State.