

TRANSVAAL DIFFICULTY IN BRIEF.

After you read this you will wonder why so many columns are expended to explain anything so simple:

An Irish correspondent of the Pretoria Press volunteers the following lucid explanation of the promised franchise law:

"Look here, if a man comes into the country before the law is passed, he can get the franchise nine years after he has been seven years in the country, five years after the law was passed, or within five years after he has been here two years, provided he has been here seven years, after he came here nine years ago, provided he can prove to the satisfaction of the Fieldcornet, the Commandant, the State Secretary, the State Attorney, and the Under State Secretary of the Green Tape and Sealing Wax Office, that he has always been a man of good character, and has never played less than penny nap. He must then give six months' notice that he intends to apply five years after he has been here nine years, or two years after he has been here seven years, and the Fieldcornet shall then take his name and address and forward the same to the Commandant, who shall forward it to the State Attorney, who shall forward it to the Landdrost, who shall forward it to the State Secretary, who shall call a special meeting of the Executive Council at once. The thing's clear as mud. I can't see what all this fuss is about."

A CHANGE OF SYSTEM WANTED.

Professor Goldwin Smith, replying to the criticism of the Globe, asking why those who signed the letter applying to the Council for an explanation of the extraordinary cost of the City Hall, do not themselves give the city the benefit of their aid and advice as councillors, in a letter to that journal, says:

"Some of our number might reply, as, indeed, might the leading men of the city generally, that they are too much occupied with engrossing business and paramount duties of other kinds. For my own part, if anybody had asked me to run for Council, my reply would have been that I was not qualified for an office requiring so much special knowledge and experience as the administration of a great city, and that, while I was anxious to render any service in my power to the community, I thought it best to confine myself to a field such as that of the charities, where I hoped to be at home.

"Common sense and honesty may suffice for the management of a village. A great city like Toronto presents totally different problems, some of them scientific, and can be properly managed only by a skilled and thoroughly responsible administration, continuous enough for systematic policy and for the exercise of foresight. Without continuity you can hardly have thorough responsibility. Of the thirteen aldermen who, with the Mayor, formed the original committee for the construction of the City Hall, one only now is left to answer for the result. The Mayor has been thrice changed. Saving the one alderman, the architect alone of all those charged with the conduct of the work at its commencement remains the same.

"I do not blame members of the Council, knowing that I could not myself have done better, or, probably, half as well. But we cannot help questioning the excellence of a system which lavished our money on the Don improvement, and on the improvident extension of the block pavement, now in a sad state of dilapidation, which threw away a large sum in the Gladstone avenue case, and is now expending two millions and a

half, instead of the \$800,000, which was the original estimate, on this City Hall, while we are bearing a heavy debt, while necessary objects, such as sewerage, call for attention; while the police is short-handed, and duties belonging to the municipality, such as the maintenance of roads and sidewalks, are, under the delusive name of 'local improvements,' cast on the private citizen.

"The system of popular and periodical election seems better adapted to the case of legislative than to that of administrative bodies. Among the people of a great city there is little cohesion or power of mutual consultation for the choice of the fittest men, even if the fittest men would allow themselves to be chosen. What we want, to secure our interests for the future, is not merely a re-division of wards or an alteration of aldermanic tenures, but a change of system such as may adapt our government to the proper purposes of municipal administration. This some of my fellow-citizens, who have more years before them than I have, may yet hope to see."

RAFTING PILES ON THE OCEAN.

The large pile raft which has been described by Seattle papers as preparing on the coast, was to start for San Francisco on Aug. 26, in tow of the steamer "Czarina." This raft has been building in Seattle since last February, when the cradle for the raft structure was launched. The raft is 625 feet long, 55 feet beam, 38 feet deep, and draws 24 feet of water. It contains 11,000 piles averaging 60 feet in length. It is said that this quantity of timber is about 11 times the pile cargo of a fair-sized sailing ship. The raft is shaped like a whaleback steamer, being pointed at both ends, and bound with 2-inch chains placed 6 feet apart from end to end. The cost of constructing the raft, including the cradle, was something more than \$5,000. It was intended that after the raft was launched from its cradle the latter should be towed into fresh water, in the Snohomish river, to remain one month for the purpose of killing toredos, before constructing another raft. This raft was constructed by the Robertson Raft Co., which a few days ago launched a similar raft 600 feet long at Stella, on the Columbia river, to be towed to the same destination.

REASONABLE RATES.

The Interstate Commerce Commission, in an opinion by Commissioner Yeomans, has announced its decision in the case of A. J. Gustin against the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company, and Aldace F. Walker, John J. McCook, and J. C. Wilson, receivers thereof, and others.

The commission holds that the defendants, having engaged under their tariffs and course of business in the through transportation of traffic from Chicago and other points to Kearney, Neb., over continuous lines formed by their connected roads, are required by the act to regulate commerce to make their rates on such transportation reasonable and otherwise in conformity with the provisions of that statute, and such duty is not avoided by the fact that the rates to Kearney may be combinations of rates to and from Omaha.

The necessities of carriers often demand, and traffic conditions frequently warrant them in exacting, a share of through rates which gives them more per mile than that which results to a connecting carrier from the division accepted by it.

The rate per ton per mile rule brings rates down to the narrowest point of scrutiny, and for that purpose is valuable; but it excludes consideration of other circumstances and conditions which enter into the making of rates, no matter how compulsory or imperious they may be, and

it cannot, therefore, be accepted as controlling in determining the reasonableness of rates.

Combination rates always afford an advantage to the basing point, and entail some disadvantage upon the town to which the combined rates are applied, and when traffic is brought to the two places to be distributed in common territory, the preferences and prejudices resulting from such rates must generally be held unreasonable and undue.

Freight rates from Chicago and other eastern points to Kearney, Neb., made by combining rates to and from Omaha, a point on the Missouri river, are not unreasonable in amount, and the evidence was insufficient upon the question whether such rates subject Kearney merchants to unlawful disadvantage.

AN UNHOLY DODGE.

The story of the latest confidence scheme for fleecing the unsophisticated farmer is going the rounds of the rural press of Missouri. A man, who represents himself as a travelling preacher, calls and asks to remain over night. Before the hour for retirement a young man and woman come along and ask if there is not a minister in the house who can perform a marriage ceremony. Of course there is. The young couple join hands and the farmer and his wife are asked to sign the marriage certificate as witnesses. The certificate afterwards turns up as a promissory note.

COMMERCE OF BUFFALO.

That active competition is hurting the grain-carrying trade at Buffalo is made evident by statistics made public on 1st September. For the month of August, the receipts of flour at Buffalo, N.Y., were 1,380,707 barrels, as against 1,520,703 barrels last year, a decrease of 28,996 barrels. Grain receipts for the month were 15,561,211 bushels, as against 20,174,988 bushels last year. From the opening of navigation to date, the receipts of grain were 77,974,454 bushels, as against 107,257,626 bushels last year, a decrease of thirty million bushels. The receipts of flour also decreased 600,000 barrels.

THE MACHINERY TAX.

The city assessors are experiencing trouble with the proposed machinery tax. The Street Railway Company sent in a valuation of its plant, putting "junk" values upon the different articles, in accordance with a recent judgment delivered in Ontario respecting the taxation of poles wires, etc. This the assessors refuse to accept, making an independent valuation based on the actual value of the plant. Recently the company gave notice of appeal from this valuation, and the matter will be put through the law courts in a friendly way.

The Grand Trunk have written stating that the information asked for would take a lot of preparing, and as it had never been asked for before, the company would like to find out why it was wanted.

The Bell Telephone Company have notified the assessors that they do not consider that the tax can be legally imposed. The matter will be fought out in the courts.—Montreal Gazette.

—"I," said the university youth, "intend to be a stump speaker; or, in other words, a stump agitator." "All right, Jeemes," said his horny-handed parent, "you'll find the grubbing hoe on the porch. Just step out and agitate a few of those stumps in the back lot."—Chicago News.