the current is setting. If time on sugar should be reduced to thirty days, as it may possibly be at some time not far distant, it would only be in keeping with the tendency of the times, and would also have the effect of encouraging further efforts in the same direction.

It naturally follows, that if wholesale dealers are to make a general move to shorten credits, retailers must do the same thing as regards their trade. In fact to be successful a general move must be made all along the line, in the same direction of curtailing credits to a reasonable length of time, or abolishing the system entirely. In Manitoba the retail dealers at several points seem disposed to grapple with this question, with the object of improving the condition of trade in their several localities. It is to be hoped that any efforts in this direction will prove successful, and that other localities will be encouraged to follow suit, until business has been placed on a better basis all over the country. In fact the correction of the abuses of the credit system should start right with the retail trade, more particularly in the rural districts. If a better basis of doing business between retailers and their customers were once established, it would be a comparatively easy matter to improve the credit system between wholesale dealers and the retail trade.

The coupon system is a plan which seems to be finding favor in some sections of Manitoba, in the efforts being put forth to remedy the evils of long and promiscuous credits. This system is likely to be adopted in a number of towns in Manitoba, through the united action of the retail dealers, and a practical test of the new departure will therefore soon be made. If it finds favor and is shown to be an improvement upon the existing credit system, it will likely come into pretty general use. Under the coupon system a person who wishes to obtain a line of credit will give his storekeeper a note for an amount to be agreed upon, in advance of the purchase of goods. For instance, a customer may require during the season, goods to the amount of say $100. Instead of purchasing these goods as he may require them and having the amount charged up each time, he will give his note, payable at a time agreed upon, for $100, receiving in return coupons or due bills equal to the amount of the note. These coupons represent cash, or are taken as cash by the storekeeper, in exchange for goods. The system seems to be a legitimate one, and one which gives no unfair advantage between the storekeeper and his customers. The coupons are also made to apply in payment of the note, so that if the coupons should not all be used in the purchase of goods, the balance can be applied in payment of the note With this consideration attached to the coupons, the storekeeper cannot take any undue advantage of his customer through the possession of his note. Another very favorable feature of the coupon system is, that it will save an endless amount of work in keeping books and charging up every little purchase of goods. It will also put a stop to the innumerable annoyances which invariably accompany a credit business, from disputed accounts. On this account alone the system should prove a great advantage to the retail trade

A customer might object to give a note before he obtains the goods; but on the same principle the storekeeper has as good a right to object to give out his goods before he receives payment therefore. In fact, even with this coupon system, the customer still has the advantage of the merchant, for there will be risk in exchanging goods for the notes. The merchant must take the risk of the note being paid. The fact that he receives a note does not ensure him against loss, for the note may never be paid. The chief advantage to the storekeeper, therefore, is, that it puts his accounts in better shape, saves him a lot of work in book-keeping and the annoyance of disputed accounts, and gives him the use of paper which he can apply as collateral security in his banking or commercial transactions.

Another favorable feature of the coupon system is, that it should have a tendency to make storekeepers more careful in giving credit. A customer is often allowed a little credit in the regular way, with the intention that the account will not be allowed to assume large proportions. But once a name is entered upon the books, it is often no easy matter to keep the account from growing In this way storekeepers frequently find that they have contracted bad accounts. Now, under the coupon system, the storekeeper will investigate a case before he hands over coupons for a large amount to a doubtful customer. Then, again, he would not be willing to take the notes of risky customers, as such paper would be no use to him in financing his business affairs. Another feature is, that under the coupon system, a customer could readily discover at any time just how he stood with his storekeeper, without either having to keep accounts himself or asking the storekeeper for a statement. Altogether the system has several points which appear to be improvements upon the existing credit system, while at the same time it gives the storekeeper no undue advantage over his customers in any particular.

## MONTREAL WHEAT QUOTATIONS.

There seems to be something radically wrong with the wheat quotations sent out from Montreal. In fact Montreal quotations, have for a long time been a laughingstock to those who know the real value of wheat in that market. Last summer and fall for months at a time wheat quotations from that place were known to be away above real values, and the same feature still continues. For instance, one day last week public quotations from Montreal reported No. 1 hard wheat at $1.04. Everybody at all posted as to the situation, knew at once that this was an absurd quotation, and only smiled at the figures. Still these quotations going through the country at figures so far above the real value do a great deal of harm. Provincial editors have several times recently made use of these fancy Montreal prices to show how much the Manitoba grain buyers were beating the farmers on every bushel of wheat marketed.

To show the absurdity of this quotation of $1.04, a private letter of a perfectly reliable nature reported No. 1 hard May wheat bid the same day at 97½ cents. Now if May wheat was only worth 97½ cents per bushel, Cash No. 1 hard would be worth not over 87½ cents. It will cost say ten cents per bushel to carry the wheat until May, so that cash wheat is worth ten cents less than May wheat Those who are posted as to the way grain business is done in Montreal, know the reason for the irregularity of quotations from that quarter. There is very little business done on the open board. Transactions are invariably done in private, and the prices reported to the public are whatever the buyer and seller may agree upon to state to the reporters

At best Montreal wheat quotations are more ornamental than useful, for the simple reason that there is not enough business done in wheat in that market to establish authoritative prices. Even if the quotations sent out were reliable, the amount of business done there is not of sufficient volume to make the quotations important or valuable to the grain trade elsewhere. Grain men who are posted as to both markets, say that there is more business in wheat done in Winnipeg every day than in Montreal in weeks, and even months This was particularly the case last summer, when fancy quotations were sent out from Montreal regularly at about 10 cents. per bushel over actual values, without a single transaction in wheat for weeks at a time.

Private letters from Montreal last week spoke of a sale of No 2 hard at 89½ cents per bushel, while public quotations for the same grade were at 94 to 96 cents. One letter spoke of an offer of No. 2 hard at 87 cents, but not authoritatively.

## THE TRANSFER RAILWAY.

A strong and united protest should be made against further delay in opening the Winnipeg transfer railway The Canadian Pacific company refuses to do any transfer business with the Northern Pacific company until compelled to do so by the proper authorities. The power to compel the former company to allow a connection with its lines lies with the railway committee of the Dominion Government. The facilities have long since been provided for a connection between the two roads, and the railway committee was long ago applied to to order the connection. The same remarks are true in the case of the connection sought for by the Northern Pacific company with the Manitoba Northwestern at Portage la Prairie. It is in the interest of the general commerce of the country that these connections should be made, and the long delay in getting the railway committee to order the connections seems unreasonable. There is a pretty general feeling abroad that the Dominion Government is still endeavoring to use its power to balk the freedom of railway extension in Manitoba. At least, in this particular case it seems evident that the railway committee is unnecessarily withholding the right of the Northern Pacific company to compel the other companies to do a transfer business with its lines. It is evident that the Dominion Government is not yet fully prepared to deal impartially with railway questions in Manitoba If this disposition to deal unfairly with independent railways is continued, a sharp protest should be made by the people of Manitoba.