

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 23, 1886.

ECCENTRIC LIBERALITY.

The General Manager of the C. P. R. has during the past year and a half been making frantic efforts to make the farmers of the Northwest believe that he and his Company have the most philanthropic intentions towards them, and that every move the Company makes with the General Manager in the lead (the choke off arrangements and subsidizing of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba road included), has been an unselfish effort to benefit the struggling agriculturists of the Canadian Northwest. Their efforts to create and spread a belief in such intentions are very manifest, and it is tantalizing that the horny handed class fail to see where the unselfish intentions come in.

The latest bid of the C.P.R. General Manager for the gratitude of the farmers of the Northwest is to be found in a circular dated February 18th, and issued to agents of the Company all along its lines. The circular announces a rebate of five cents a hundred pounds on the freight of the lowest grade of frozen wheat from this country to Ontario and Quebec. Had the circular contained nothing more than the announcement of this reduction on all wheat below number three frozen it could have been accepted as a very welcome and moderately liberal concession, and grain dealer and farmer could both have had reason to be thankful for it. But then the General Manager of the C.P.R. is an original genius, and never could think of making a concession in the manner that ordinary mortals or even ordinary railway officials could make it. There had to be conditions connected with the concession which would give the whole matter the stamp of his grasp of mind, and let the world know that it was his own "great idea." These individualizing points were brought out in the following paragraph of the circulars, setting forth the manner in which the rebate would be made:

"On arrival at destination, receiving agent will obtain certificate from consignee that the wheat will be used for feeding live stock, and for no other purpose, and forward same to me, (the General Traffic Manager) when I will draw voucher for reduction."

In raising, shipping and exporting wheat from the western portion of this continent, we have all been priding ourselves upon contributing towards feeding the needy millions of Europe, but the General Manager confines his philanthropic sympathies to his own continent, and offers an incentive to feeding the hungry cows, horses and pigs of Ontario and Quebec. The idea though commendable is rather an eccentric one. But then, original people and great minds are often eccentric, and it may be that the C.P.R. General Manager is figuring upon being decorated with a string of medals from Eastern Canadian Societies for the prevention of cruelty and extension of kindness to animals. Assuredly this eccentricity in railway management is well worthy of the favorable consideration of such societies.

But people will be selfish and sordid, and as we are more interested in the welfare of Northwestern farmers, than eastern cows, horses and pigs, we may be excused for inquiring whether or not this new alleged rebate will in any way benefit our agriculturists. The five cents a hundred reduction has conditions around it, and conditions which cannot be completed until the grain has reached the eastern consignee. That consignee may be a commission or middleman of some other class, who is handling and transferring the consignment on a mere shaving of commission, and who neither knows nor cares for what purpose the grain is used. He might receive a consignment of wheat to-day unfit for human food, but which might be used for various manufacturing purposes, or in some other manner. To secure this five cent rebate he must be certain that the grain is not going to be used for any such purpose, and in fact if he is a thoroughly conscientious man, he would require to see the grain dished up to horses, pigs and cows, before he would subscribe to the certificate required by the company. In this manner the Northwestern shipper cannot make sure of his reduction in freight, until he receives his returns from an eastern consignee, or he must entrust his business in the east to unscrupulous men, who are prepared to certify to anything blindfold provided there is money in so doing.

At this point comes in the farmer's chances of sharing in the advantages of this alleged freight reduction, and it is easy to see that these chances are slim.

Very few farmers ship their own grain direct to the east, the local grain buyer being their purchaser as a rule. Now that individual, when purchasing low grade frozen wheat, is not soft enough to pay the advantages of the reduction to the farmer, and take chances of getting it back again out of the railway company. Such a proceeding would be a very unbusiness-like one, and is not likely to be followed by any grain buyer. That trader will only be acting upon safe business principles if he buys without regard to the reduction in freight, and when he is fortunate enough to secure the latter, put it down as so much extra found. He would certainly be very foolish to pay out money for which he had no guarantee of a return except what depended upon the unscrupulousness, or perhaps the caprice of his eastern consignee. Had the rebate depended upon the certificate of the Winnipeg Inspector placing the grain unfit for human food, it might have worked, for a shipper could only be disappointed on one or two cars, until he discovered his mistake. But by waiting for returns from Ontario or Quebec, at the rate they have been made on the C.P.R. this season, a man doing a comparatively limited grain shipping business might have from twenty to fifty thousand bushels in transit, and in chancery so far as freights were concerned. Grain buyers will not pay up upon any such chances, and farmers will not profit a cent by the latest rebate on wheat freights to the east. But then that matters very little so long as the arrangement displays the original genius of the C.P.R. General Manager.

CREAMERIES.

An industry, which is intimately connected with that of cheese manufacturing—in fact, simply another branch of the same business—and which is of equal, if not of greater, importance to a large portion of the people of the Northwest, is that denoted in the heading of this article. We say, of importance to a large portion of the people, but this does not cover the ground entirely. The rural population, of course, would be more directly benefited by the establishment of creameries throughout the Province; but in this case what would be a benefit to so important a portion of the population, would be a benefit to all, and what would prove a source of wealth to the farmer, would be