

years ago it appeared as if with the extinction of the buffalo it would dwindle down to very small proportions. But as the buffalo began to disappear in the country between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, the cattle of the settler began to take their place. Within Manitoba cattle raising is fast on the increase among our farmers, and as these men get their footing more solid financially, their live stock operations will steadily increase. Away beyond the province and around the base of the Rocky Mountains the cattle of the ranchers can already be counted in scores of thousands, and what proportions this business will reach within three years from the present day few are prepared to estimate with any degree of accuracy. The great bulk of these cattle will no doubt be shipped alive to eastern markets for some years to come, but quite a share of them will be slaughtered before leaving the country, and should the Hudson's Bay railway be built any way soon, few of these cattle would leave the country alive. The magnitude of the hide and skin trade of the country within the next few years, therefore, promises to be something truly great, and the move for the appointment of an inspector here is a wise step and one in the direction of allowing the country to retain the power of directing its own trade affairs in that line. Hitherto there has been no inspector or inspection nearer than the cities in Ontario, but that would prove almost useless to govern a trade, a large share of the export of which will naturally find its way to the wider markets of the United States. Winnipeg is at present the natural point for such inspection to be located, as from here there is a command of both the eastern Canadian and United States markets. That other points of inspection will in time require to be located west of this is a certainty, but time will regulate that matter, and in the meantime it is the duty of Winnipeggers to take the initiative and introduce the first system of inspection in the Northwest. As already stated there can scarcely be a doubt but the interests of all concerned will be carefully looked after in the selection of an inspector, and there is equally little doubt but in a shorter time than most people think, the grades of Manitoba hides will be as well known and as widely recognized as will those of Manitoba wheat.

### THE NORTHWEST CENTRAL.

It is never a pleasant duty to talk about any of the premature railway schemes of boom days, as they can hardly fail to bring up remembrances we would rather bury out of sight. Among the class of projected railways we mention, must be included the Northwest Central, or to give it its high sounding boom title the Souris and Rocky Mountain. In boom days a Manitoba railway, which did not aim to run to the southern boundary line in opposition to the Government's disallowance policy, or clean west to the Rocky Mountains, was not worth the trouble of fixing up on paper, and the number of lines which were flouted (on paper) with these great pretensions we do not, now that we have reached a sober state of mind, care to enumerate. Among the number was the Souris and Rocky Mountain, and that there was an earnest desire and a necessity for the construction of a portion of it is evinced by the fact of some fifty miles being graded and ready for track laying. But this work was accomplished upon promises of payment only, and the great bulk of the work stands to day unpaid for, and nearly two years waiting for ties and rails to complete it.

But this season there has sprung up a desire to go on with the construction of this road, and with the desire has come a change in its name to the Northwest Central which would indicate that its present projectors are more modest and more practical in their aims. To the honor of the Dominion Government be it said, that no company can take over the charter and the advantages attached to it, without assuming the debt which has already been contracted in the way of construction, and it is to be hoped, that no matter what changes in management, route and construction may take place, this decision will be adhered to the letter.

But there are other troubles in the way of this road now. It is alleged that friends of the Manitoba Northwestern and Canadian Pacific Railways are intriguing at Ottawa to take away the land grant of the proposed line, and so block its construction. Other influences are alleged also to be working against the road, but a close inquiry into the matter shows, that neither the Northwestern, the C.P.R. or any other railway company are making opposition, although projectors of the Northwest Central and their friends, are

as suspicious and as eager and almost as aimless in their search for opponents, as was the negro in search of the man "Who struck Billy Patterson." The C.P.R. can certainly have no interest in opposing a road which must prove a valuable feeder to itself, while the Northwestern people have a field wide enough for their endeavors without bothering the Central, they give assurances the honesty of which cannot be doubted, that they have no desire to do so.

It seems as if the greatest trouble the Northwest Central is likely to encounter will be from those who are anxious to secure its construction, but who cannot agree as to its starting point and route. In this respect it is like many another northwestern enterprise hindered by internal dissensions. The point of starting is now a matter of dispute between Melbourne and Brandon, and were it merely a question of which point should receive most consideration, the importance of Brandon would at once claim precedence. It is unquestionably now the second point in the northwest in trade importance, and in that respect has good claims to become a junction point. But in taking hold of this question, we have existing rights to deal with. To make Brandon the starting point of this road, and construct from that northward and westward, would be to leave forty miles or so of the grading done two years ago behind and valueless, and forty miles of road graded. It must be admitted that these interests did not receive their due consideration, when the Government decided to make Brandon the starting point and leave all the graded track east of Rapid City unused. Brandon could have secured a junctional point without this injustice, even if its citizens had to look after the construction of a loop to Rapid City. But one piece of injustice has been perpetrated, and it is quite likely, that another may follow. To pay for a long stretch of road bottom not used or taken possession of, will not be pleasant to the new projectors of the line, and we may expect soon to hear the dishonest notes of repudiation sounded, and possibly see the men who struggled and sacrificed to build the Souris and Rocky Mountain Railway defrauded out of their honest claims, if the wrong direction is taken, the next will be to repudiate the old debt on the road. With the starting point at Brandon, the argument against paying for a road bed not used would be difficult to enforce.