

Then there is the additional advantage to Canada of this trade growing to such an extent, as to warrant the establishment of first class steamship lines between our Pacific ports and those of Australia, in which case Canada would undoubtedly become one of the highways of traffic and travel between Great Britain and its Antipodean colonies.

It does seem strange, but is nevertheless true, that Canada and Australia have never had any special postal arrangements between them. A letter from here to Australia costs fifteen cents postage if sent by San Francisco, and twenty-two cents if sent by Brindisi, while a newspaper costs five cents. So long as these postage rates last, it is not at all likely that there will spring up among the trading community in either country any intelligent desire for closer trade relations. A freer interchange of ideas is necessary before the general public in either could discover the advantages to be gained. About the first duty on the part of both Governments will therefore be, the arrangement of a postal union between the two colonies, so that the press of the one can have an unimpeded circulation in the other. There will soon afterwards be a growing knowledge of each other, which cannot fail to culminate in some arrangement for equally unimpeded trade intercourse between them. It is to be hoped that this postal arrangement will be speedily made, for as yet Canada is to Australia and Australia to Canada, in a trade sense, little better than a *terra incognita*.

There is but one great obstacle to our opening up valuable trade intercourse with Australia, and that is, the hoggish selfishness of a great proportion of the protectionist element in this Dominion. That class are prepared to trade with any outside country on the "heads I win and tails you lose" principle. In the case of Australia they will no doubt show their selfishness as usual, but it is to be hoped that their cupidity will for once receive a check. Against Australian trade intercourse absolutely free from tariff they cannot apply either the disloyalty cry or that of pauper labor. Australia is as free, if not freer from pauperism than Canada, and her working classes are as well, if not more highly paid for their labor. As to the disloyalty cry, that is at a heavy discount. The most gushing Imperialist in Canada can tolerate the admission free of duty of goods from a

loyal colony like Australia, and the arrangement will not prevent him from hugging the "British Lion" until the royal animal slings his tail around like the lash of a mule driver's whip, and literally bellows with joy in the fondness of the hug.

CROP ESTIMATES.

It is amusing, were it not for the damage they may do, to note the reports of men in the East on the crop of Manitoba and the Northwest, and particularly the damage from frost and other causes, which these irresponsible reports from uninformed persons state with such assumed accuracy. If a prominent politician or a personage of any note has been three days in the Northwest during the past two months, supposing he had not the knowledge of grain, to tell wheat from barley unless the one was in bread and the other in beer, or of agriculture to know a plow from a harrow unless he was told the difference, his opinion is heralded by the eastern press, as just the correct estimate of our crop for the present year. In the most flippant manner a percentage of fifteen, twenty or twenty-five per cent is published as the extent of the damage just in proportion to the figures fixed in the mind of the individual who has furnished the worthless estimate.

One very noteworthy fact is, that where opinions have been expressed about our crop by eastern men, who have lately visited the country, and who have the practical knowledge to form an estimate under ordinary circumstances, such opinions have been anything but definite as to the extent of damage. The reason for this is to be found in the fact, that the men here best able to form an estimate have themselves acknowledged their utter inability to do anything more than make a good guess on the matter, and the best guessing these well informed individuals can make is after all only a very rough approximation.

A telegram from Montreal to a Winnipeg daily gives credit to Mr. Hague, general manager of the Merchant's Bank, for some utterances upon Manitoba's crop of 1888, and these utterances are by no means so rose colored as some of our eastern friends would like them to be. Mr. Hague has spent quite a long day, if we may call it so, in the Northwest this fall, and he has not only made a close personal investigation of the matter he speaks about, but has made use of the

information of others here, who were well able to assist him, and the result is a very clear and comprehensive review of the whole matter, which will be found elsewhere in our columns.

Mr. Hague, with the caution peculiar to men of his business acumen, is careful not to attempt an exact estimate of the aggregate of our crop, or the extent of the damage that has befallen it. He goes so far as to say that half of the crop or thereabouts has been harvested safely, but to what extent the balance is damaged he believes no man can say at this stage, and in the latter statement he tells the absolute truth. The damage is so scattered and so erratic in distribution, that the bulk of the crop will be thrashed and ready for market before a properly collected and properly compiled estimate could be reached. Where side by side grew fields of wheat, the one an abundant crop, and the next a badly damaged if not a ruined one, the difficulties of reaching such an estimate can be easily imagined if not calculated.

Mr. Hague speaks the language of genuine sympathy, when he states: "There is a certain quantity that is so far damaged as to be worthless—not enough to hurt Manitoba or affect the Northwest, but enough to hurt the poor farmers, who have had to stand the brunt," and from sympathy he glides with an elastic tread to wholesome advice when he adds: "Manitoba farmers are learning that there are other things in the world than wheat-growing to make farming profitable."

We have no intention of furnishing a certificate of the correctness of Mr. Hague's approximation on our crop of this year, but we do say, that it is one of the best that has yet come from an eastern man or source, and is probably not far from the actual facts as they exist. But it has the additional recommendation, that on its very face it bears evidence that it is the result of a careful and intelligent course of inquiry by one who is anxious only to get at the truth. It certainly stands out in bold relief from the flippant estimates from much less reliable sources, some of which would lead people at a distance to think, that we had escaped crop damage entirely, while others infer, that Manitoba has as usual lost its crop by frost, and is consequently only a hyperborean region, where a crop gathered in safe occurs only by accident, probably when the clerk of the weather has overlooked the details of his weather programme for a few weeks.