

of grain. Capitalists and others contemplating investment in this country with the understanding that its chief products were cattle and grain, might easily be misled should they refer to the official blue book mentioned.

PURE BRED STOCK.

The action of the Canadian Pacific Railway company, in its efforts to improve the stock of this country, is certainly worthy of the highest commendation. The company imported from Ontario last September 29 pedigreed bulls, which were distributed among farmers in the following districts. Seven in the Mennonite reserve, two east of Winnipeg, one at Gimli, two north of Stonewall, three on the Southwestern branch, two on the Pembina and Souris branches, one on the Manitoba & Northwestern, and the remaining 11 on the main line of the C. P. R. and Northern Alberta. The company also brought in from Ontario 80 pure bred boars of the Berkshire, Yorkshire and Tamworth breeds. These were distributed generally through Manitoba and Assiniboia, with the exception of 16, which were placed between Calgary and Edmonton and one at Prince Albert. All these animals have been placed with responsible farmers, under an agreement by which the bulls, at the end of two years, and the boars at the end of one year, become the absolute property of the settler receiving them. For the term stated their services are free to the settlers in the neighborhood. I understand it is the intention of the company to purchase 30 more bulls and about the same number of boars, a proportion of which will be brought to Manitoba and distributed on the same general conditions. The company will then discontinue the free distribution of pure bred sires. The company is also giving, under an arrangement with the Territorial government, free transportation for eight carloads of bulls and three carloads of hogs from Ontario and Manitoba to any point in the Northwest. The aim of the company has been, I understand, to distribute the free animals in such localities and in such a manner as to come in competition as little as possible with dealers in pure bred stock. Some of the largest dealers warmly approve of the course adopted by the railway company in bringing in these animals, and I am confident that when, year by year, the good results of this experiment are made apparent, all interested, whether farmer, dealer or consumer, will recognize the wisdom of the move.

RAILWAY MATTERS.

Considerable activity in railway construction in Manitoba has been shown during the past year. Over 350 miles of new road have been added, making the present total slightly under 2,000 miles. Manitoba enjoys a greater railway mileage than that of any other portion of the Dominion. For while the population is approximately 4 per cent of the total population of Canada, her railway mileage is 10 per cent of the total railway mileage of the country. Ontario with 44 per cent of population has less than 40 per cent of mileage.

The policy of encouraging the building of railways by state aid has no doubt been beneficial, in fact, absolutely necessary for the rapid development of the west. Whether the time has not arrived, however, when a halt may not very properly be called, is a question which must be faced in the early future. Personally I cannot say that I take a very favorable view of the suggested policy of government

ownership of railways, although free to admit that it is a subject worthy of deep and earnest thought and careful consideration by all. I do maintain, however, that in cases where it is found advisable to grant provincial aid or confer valuable concessions the public interests should invariably be safeguarded and conserved by means of certain governmental control over rates, right of granting running powers, etc.

METRIC SYSTEM.

I cannot pass over the visit of the Honorable Sir Henri Joly, minister of inland revenue, without some slight reference to the metric system, the adoption of which he so earnestly, and needlessly to say, so intelligently advocated. The system presents so many advantages over that now in vogue that its teaching should occupy a particularly prominent place in the curriculum of every school and college. The inevitable result being its early introduction, with practically no disturbance to the business community. Its adoption in so many countries with which we have extensive dealings, and its increasing use, especially in scientific work, in our own, renders it almost imperative that we should acquaint ourselves with its principles. While speaking of Sir Henri Joly I desire in my official capacity as president of this board, to thank him for the deep interest he has shown in all matters brought before him by the board and to promise him a warm and hearty welcome whenever he may again be pleased to visit us.

THE N. P. FIRE.

My first official act as president of the board was that of calling the council together on the 10th of February last to consider the very serious loss the city had just sustained through the destruction of the magnificent property of the Northern Pacific Railway company, consisting of the Manitoba hotel, railway station and offices. General regret was expressed by those present and a resolution unanimously passed earnestly sympathizing with the railway company in its loss. Subsequently a special meeting of the board was called to meet Mr. Mellen, the general manager, and other officials of the road, who accompanied him. The company was strongly urged by the large gathering present to rebuild without delay. Nothing, however, has been done except reinstating the railway offices. I am confident of the support of a large majority of this board when I express the opinion that the railway company made a serious mistake in not acceding to the kindly pressure brought to bear at the time, and to have at once completely reconstructed their former handsome buildings. I say this advisedly, as being more or less in touch with the business community, and knowing of the strong sympathy which existed, I am satisfied that any reasonable sacrifice the company might have made in rebuilding would have been most fully and warmly appreciated and the company compensated in a marked degree by increased traffic for the road. The wretched monument now standing does not appear in accord with the progressive policy of a great and wealthy corporation.

STATE OF TRADE.

My predecessors have, I believe, usually adopted a cheerful tone when writing under this head, even when the existing conditions were not particularly encouraging. If trade was good they looked for its being still better. Always exhibiting confidence never lacking in faith. In my case there is no room whatever for doubt as to the

satisfactory condition of trade, and I make the statement with the full realization of its importance that the year during which I have had the honor of being the executive officer of this board has been the most satisfactory the country has ever enjoyed.

Our largest financial institutions report business and collections in excess of any previous year since the incorporation. As an evidence of the confidence being shown in the future of the west I might say that last year the land business of the Canadian Pacific railway, both in sales and collections was the largest in the history of the company. This, of course, means increased acreage in crop, and in turn increased income to the province.

The grain crop of 1899 it is now admitted was somewhat over estimated. While this may be true as to quantity in quality it has rarely if ever been equalled, 85 per cent of the wheat marketed grading No. 1 and No. 2 hard. The amount of wheat inspected at Winnipeg for the last half of 1898 was 4,271,250 bushels. For the same period of 1899 it amounted to the handsome total of 17,368,410 bushels. Considerable wheat is still in farmers' hands. It is estimated the total exports of the 1899 crop will probably reach 30,000,000 bushels. The export movement in oats and barley is of course inconsiderable when compared with that of wheat. The province is now an exporter of oatmeal which bids fair to become a valuable industry.

The price of wheat has been somewhat disappointing, not having reached the figure generally anticipated. Nevertheless a very large sum, in the aggregate, has been realized, and distributed among the farmers of the country.

The export of cattle from Manitoba and the Northwest during the year 1899 was approximately 50,000 head, of which 34,000 represent fat cattle and 16,000 stockers were shipped by rail or driven across the boundary into the United States.

The significance of these figures may be better understood when we remember that as recent as 1885 the first shipment of Manitoba cattle, consisting of some 16 head, was forwarded to Toronto, and as a novelty, and by way of advertisement were paraded about the streets of that city labeled Manitoba beef.

It may be said that there has practically been no export movement in horses, sheep and hogs, in fact to keep the local packing houses working, they were obliged to bring in both live and dressed hogs, otherwise their plants would be idle. This phase of the farming industry is much to be regretted, in view of the capability of our land to produce unlimited quantities of coarse grains. Local delivery of hogs is said to be slightly improving, although still far below market requirements.

While referring to grain and cattle I might draw attention to the fact that we have resident in Winnipeg the two largest export dealers in both these staples operating in Canada.

From reliable data, I am enabled to say that the importation of merchandise to Winnipeg houses during the past year was approximately 100,000 tons or about 400 train loads, of 20 cars each. Truly a wonderful contrast to the situation of but twenty years ago, when for six months of the year the only means of communication, or of bringing in supplies was by ordinary road vehicle—principally the