

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 27, 1894.

## CHARGES FOR HANDLING GRAIN.

The recent action of the Great Northern Railway Company in reducing elevator rates at Duluth, has given rise to considerable discussion regarding terminal elevator charges. It seems probable that in the future terminal elevator business may be handled the same as ordinary freight. Indeed, it is said that the Great Northern management at first proposed to abolish the charge entirely for handling grain at its terminals, but was induced, through supplication of the private elevator interests, to stop half-way. The private elevators are of course interested in keeping up the rates, as they are obliged to meet the reductions of the railway terminal elevators. The railway companies handle other freight free of special charges in their storage houses, and why, we may ask, should any charge be made at all for handling grain? Railway elevators are simply freight or storage warehouses, built by the railways for their own convenience in handling their traffic. They make no charge for handling ordinary freight through their storage houses, and why should they charge for handling wheat, any more than for handling cases of dry goods and boxes of groceries? This of course applies to the receiving, elevating and discharging of grain, with storage for a reasonable time. Of course, where grain is allowed to remain in the elevator for a length of time, it would seem right that the railways should charge for storage. But for ordinary handling and short term storage, there is evidently no more reason why a charge should be made than in handling any other class of freight in and through the freight storehouses. The elevator rate now charged at Duluth is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per bushel for receiving, elevating and discharging, including storage for fifteen days. This is half the old rate. For storage beyond 15 days, the charge is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per bushel for thirty days or part thereof. It seems likely that a general reduction in elevator rates will follow this out of the Great Northern at Duluth.

## CANADIAN CATTLE IN GREAT BRITAIN

Cable information from London says the British board of agriculture has published the official documents concerning the importation of Canadian cattle. Mr. Gardner, president of the board, has decided that the prohibition must stand. The documents comprise the evidence of seventeen experts. The report says that no one testified positively that the carcasses examined were not cases of contagious pleuro-pneumonia, while many confirmed the decision of the officers of the board. The board considers that the evidence negatives the suggestion that the disease is crupous pneumonia. Hunting and Macqueen favored the theory that it is a disease hitherto unobserved. The board expressed the opinion that the next step rests with the Canadian veterinarians, and, in consequence, says: "It

is beyond question that a disease occurs in Canadian cattle which many of the ablest and best qualified veterinarians in Great Britain declare to be contagious pleuro-pneumonia, and which even these holding the opinion that it is a new disease pronounced bacterial, and that the disease could not have developed to the extent shown when the animals are killed, three weeks after shipment, unless contracted before leaving Canada. The matters deserve, and will doubtless receive, the serious attention of the Dominion government. In the meantime it is clearly the board's duty to maintain the regulation requiring slaughter at the port of landing."

It seems strange that if pleuro-pneumonia exists among Canadian cattle, as is the firm belief of the British authorities, it cannot be discovered in this country, and only becomes apparent after the cattle are sent to British ports. However, as the British veterinarians have failed to render a unanimous verdict as to the diagnosis of the disease, Canadians will continue to believe that the disease does not exist in this country. We should not, however, allow the matter to rest with this view of the case. Our officials should leave no stone unturned to follow the matter up and decide conclusively what the trouble really is. There is no use in saying that the cattle are all right, and that the British authorities are merely making use of the pleuro-pneumonia scare to protect the home cattle interests by placing restrictions upon imports. This kind of talk, though indulged in by some Canadians, is foolish. Evidently Canadian cattle are subject to some disease as they arrive in British ports. The consensus of British veterinarian opinion says it is pleuro pneumonia; but a minority believe it is some new disease of a bacterial nature. It should be an easy matter to determine if the disease exists among the cattle before they leave this country. An examination should be made of a large number of cattle as they are slaughtered at principal Canadian markets, with a view to discovering if similar diseased conditions exist in the cattle here. If similar conditions can be found here, the animals could be traced up, and the herds whence they were taken could then be subject to special examination. British veterinarians who have the confidence of the public over there, should be invited to assist in a thorough examination to be made in this country.

The Commercial took the ground where the embargo was first placed upon Canadian cattle in British ports, that it was not a very serious matter for this country. It prevents the shipment of Canadian stocker cattle to Great Britain, as such cattle cannot be slaughtered on arrival. Fat cattle, however, can be shipped right along, as they are in condition to be slaughtered at once. We do not believe it is an advantage to the country to ship stockers. If the British feeders can find it profitable to finish up Canadian cattle, our farmers and feeders should find it still more profitable to finish the animals here, before shipping, instead of selling them in a lean condition. The prevention of the landing of our cattle in Great Britain for feeding purposes is therefore rather a blessing in disguise.

So far as the existence of pleuro-pneumonia in Canada is concerned, there should be no effort to hide anything even if the disease does exist. The admission of the existence of the disease would not injure our cattle trade, as matters now stand. A more thorough investigation than has yet been made, should be undertaken at once, so as to have the matter cleared up, either one way or the other. If Canadian cattle are suffering from some new disease not heretofore known to veterinarians, let us know it as soon as possible, and find out what its symptoms are, where it exists, and what we must do to eradicate it. If it really is pleuro pneumonia, the same reasons will apply for advising a thorough investigation.

## THE FREIGHT RATE QUESTION.

The question of freight rates is one which at present is a frequent subject for discussion in many parts of this continent. In nearly all parts of the United States west of the Mississippi river and the northwest, there is an agitation for lower rates, particularly on wheat. It is very reasonably pointed out, that the decline in the prices of commodities has made freight rates out of proportion to the value of produce, and a readjustment of freights on the basis of lower values for produce, is urgently demanded. In Manitoba we have our agitation for lower freights, and in Eastern Canada there are many apparently well grounded complaints of the inequality in freight charges.

At present the Dominion Millers' association, which is practically an organization of Ontario millers with a Dominion name, has a freight question on hand. The complaint of the millers is directed against the Canadian Pacific railway and the Grand Trunk railway. The millers also make complaint in regard to ocean freights, which are higher on flour than on wheat, thus favoring the export of wheat as against flour, to the detriment of the home milling industry. Specific complaints of discrimination are made against the railways by the committee on freight rates. In December last a carload of milling product was shipped from St. Louis to Toronto, a distance of 720 miles, over several lines of railway, at 14 cents per 100 pounds, while the rate from Collingwood to Toronto on the Grand Trunk railway, 95 miles; or Harrison on the Canadian Pacific railway, 97 miles, was 10 cents per 100 pounds. On small quantities a like condition of affairs existed. Five barrels were shipped from Indianapolis to Toronto, a distance of 470 miles over four or five different roads, and the rate was only 17  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents per 100 pounds, while to ship this same quantity from Toronto to Hamilton, less than 40 miles, the rate is 14 cents. To a point a couple of hundred miles east the rate of 32 cents per hundred pounds was asked on double the quantity. On flour intended for export the railway freights were shown to be very much greater than on grain for export.

It is claimed that these discriminations greatly injure the milling trade. The lower export freight rate on wheat, as compared with flour, gives grain exporters an advantage over the millers. It would of course be an advantage to have the wheat ground in the country