

ducts coming from the United States offset the increased cost of freight from Manitoba to a considerable extent. Notwithstanding the duty, however, a good deal of stuff can be brought in from the States cheaper than it can be sent from the prairie districts, owing largely to the low freights by water from points south to Victoria and Vancouver. Thus we find that considerable quantities of butter, eggs, flour, feed and grains, meats, live stock, etc., are brought in from the south, and sold in competition with prairie products, which are subject to the long and costly railway haul across the mountains. With a general reduction of the duty on agricultural products, this trade between the Pacific coast cities and the prairie country would be about obliterated, through the advantage in freights enjoyed by producers of such products in Pacific coast states to the south.

As stated, more recently competition has been felt from Australian products in coast markets. Australian butter has been sold in British Columbia, and considerable Australian mutton is also handled there, the mutton being brought in in refrigerator compartments in the steamships. This competition from Australian mutton has been a very severe blow to sheep raising in the prairie country this year. Even with the duty on Mutton, the Australians are able to sell the mutton very low in Vancouver and Victoria. A considerable sheep ranching industry has grown up in the territories of late years, the ranchers finding a profitable market in the coast cities and Winnipeg. The Australian competition has so reduced prices that the ranchers claim there is no profit in shipping sheep to the coast, and they have forced their sheep upon the Winnipeg market, with the result that there has been an oversupply here and a great reduction in prices in the Winnipeg market also. Sheep have consequently shrunk heavily in value all over the country, and we hear that one of the largest and probably the most successful sheep rancher in the territories is going out of the business entirely in consequence of this change in the situation. This is one respect in which increased trade with Australia has not been beneficial to an important interest in Manitoba and the Territories. The reduction in the duty on mutton to encourage trade with Australia, has therefore been a bad thing for our sheep-raising interest. If the duty on mutton were entirely removed, it would be out of the question to ship sheep from this side of the mountains to the coast.

We have heard a great deal about the natural interchange of commodities between British Columbia and the prairie region. The one is a mineral and timber country very largely, and the other an agricultural and pastoral region. To this extent the conditions are favorable for an interchange of products. It is evident, however, that the prairie country has not very plain sailing in supplying coast cities with farm products. What with competition from the Pacific coast states, favored by low freight rates; competition from Australia, and competition from the local producers of British Columbia, the best the prairie country can do is to obtain a share of the trade.

Even that share, as we have seen, depends for its existence upon the duties which imports from other countries are subject to, and with the removal of the duty it would be almost obliterated.

LOWER FREIGHT RATES, AND REDUCED ELEVATOR CHARGES.

Several important announcements of special interest to Manitoba farmers and consumers, have been made this week. One is the reduction in the charges for handling grain at both interior and terminal points. This was foreshadowed by The Commercial two weeks ago. Canadian Pacific railway terminal elevator rates have been reduced about 50 per cent., and a reduction of 3 cent per bushel has been announced in interior elevator rates. This will amount to a saving of about one-quarter million dollars in handling this crop, and will be of great direct benefit to the farmers.

Another important matter is the reduction in the freight rates on lumber from the Lake of the Woods mills to Winnipeg and western points. This was also foreshadowed in The Commercial last week, and is an outcome of the lowering of the duty on lumber. Owing to the reduction in the duty, lumber has been coming in from the United States. The lumber manufacturers here reduced their prices some time ago, but it did not stop importations, and they claimed that they could not make any further reductions in prices unless through a reduction in freight rates. This reduction in freight rates will be a direct benefit to the consumer, as the price of lumber will be lowered proportionately. It will amount to quite a sharp reduction per thousand on lumber, as the freight rate shows a reduction of as much as 35 per cent. to some points. The rate to Winnipeg has been reduced from 15½ cents to 10 cents per 100 pounds. If the reduction had been made earlier in the season, it would have been of greater benefit; but it is none the less welcome now.

The third important announcement is the reduction in coal freights from the western mining points of Lethbridge, Oamore and Anthracite. The new rates are published elsewhere in this issue. With cheaper fuel, cheaper lumber, and a reduction in the cost of handling grain, the conditions are more cheerful for Manitobans.

UNITED STATES WHEAT CROP.

The official crop report of the United States, so far as wheat is concerned, is considered this year to be more unreliable than ever. The actual movement of wheat from recent crops, has proved that the official report has been far under the actual production of this cereal. The official report of the Washington department of agriculture, for August, would indicate a total crop of 391,528,000 bushels of wheat for 1894. This indicates both winter and spring wheat. Private and other estimates of the crop, however, agree upon a much larger production than is indicated by the official crop. The latest reports indicate a larger crop than earlier estimates. In fact the estimated production of wheat this year in the United States is steadily creeping up, until now some good

authorities believe that the crop will approximate 500,000,000 bushels. That very trustworthy authority, the Cincinnati Price Current, for August 24, in its weekly review of the corn and wheat trade, has the following to say of these crops:—

The recent rains have done something at arresting damage to late portions of the corn crop. Conditions are quite variable, so that it is difficult to reach reliable conclusions as to the general average status of the crop, but there is little to support calculations exceeding a total of 1,600,000,000 bushels, and it does not appear likely that the outcome will show less than 1,500,000,000.

Spring wheat information encourages higher estimates of yield than have heretofore prevailed, displaying much in this direction similar to the developments concerning winter wheat. If the wheat crop should in fact reach 500,000,000 bushels, which appears within the range of possibilities, and 10 per cent. of it (which is a full calculation) should be absorbed by animals, there would be remaining enough, with the surplus of previous production, to furnish usual domestic requirements and afford 135,000,000 bushels or more for exportation during the year, by reducing supplies to a low or minimum point.

THE PATRONS' TWINE.

Considerable discussion has taken place in the papers regarding the binder twine deal of the Patrons. This association undertook to supply its members with twine purchased by the executive to the association, expecting no doubt to be able to supply the members at a lower price than they could otherwise procure the twine for. As it turned out, however, the Patrons' twine has been about the dearest in the market, the price the members have had to pay being considerably higher than the prices of the regular dealers. The Patrons bought there twice from a factory in St. Paul, Minnesota, which made it subject to the import duty of 12½ per cent.

To show the high price of the Patrons' twine, comparison may be made with some other brands in the market. We will take for instance the "Maple Leaf" brand of twine manufactured at Kingston. This twine has sold at 8½c per pound, in car lots, delivered, in Manitoba. We understand the Patrons' twine cost 8½c delivered here. This is 3c per pound in favor of the home twine; but the difference does not stop here. The Patrons' twine is a lower grade than the Maple Leaf, and measures about 500 feet to the pound. Thus 600 feet of the Patrons' twine would cost 10½c. The Maple Leaf measures 600 feet of high quality twine to the pound, thus showing it to cost 8½c per pound, of 600 feet, as compared with 10½c for the same quantity of the Patrons' twine. The home twine is therefore really 2½c per pound cheaper than the Patrons' twine, or \$45 per ton cheaper. As the Patrons' brought in 200 tons, it follows that they paid \$9,000 too much for their twine. The other high class brands of Canadian twine, such as Blue Ribbon, Manitoba Extra, etc., would occupy about the same relative value to the Patrons' twine as the Maple Leaf.

Another point, worthy of note, is the margin charged by the Patrons' executive on their twine. The twine costing 8½c net, was sold

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