

in Western Canada. Now the opportunity is before the Canadian government to give the Western Grain Grower free access to the Minneapolis market and the advantage of that 5 cents per bushel. Winnipeg prices have been sagging steadily, and One Northern is now bringing just over 78 cents, which means that the Saskatchewan farmer is getting 68 cents per bushel and the Alberta farmer about 65-66 cents. There are not many farmers in Western Canada who can grow wheat profitably at such prices. The best market must be secured and the cost of production must be lowered. British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces are not interested in the American market for wheat. It is purely a question which concerns the farmers of the Prairie Provinces and we do not know of a single Grain Grower who is opposed to getting 5 cents per bushel more for his wheat. No legitimate excuse can be given for refusing to assist the Western farmers in this respect, as the general tariff will not be affected and the annexation bogey is not now so fearsome. The first bill put through the House of Commons, when Parliament meets this winter, should be one to open the American market to Canadian wheat, and if the West had fair and just representation in the House of Commons it would be done.

### THE OCEAN COMBINE

A valuable contribution to the discussion on the ocean freight rate question is the series of letters written to the London Times by a correspondent who signs himself "A Canadian." In his last letter "A Canadian" lays bare some startling facts with regard to the shipping conference and shows that the traffic between this country and Europe is absolutely in the hands of a gigantic combine. The facts as stated by "A Canadian" are as follows:

1. There is a steamship "combine" operating in passenger and freight traffic between Europe and North America.
2. The "combine" or conference agreements were signed by the contracting steamship companies, not in New York or London, where the parties would have left themselves open to legal proceedings, but on the Continent, where the law could not touch them.
3. The parties prepared a schedule of rates and also agreed to avoid competition.
4. The territorial sphere of action of the companies was fixed and the stevedore rate was raised from 80 marks from the Continent to North America to 140 and again to 170 marks. And this was done just after German lines had signed contracts with their principal agents agreeing for five years to a rate of 80 marks.
5. The contracting companies agreed to assist in eliminating non-conference lines from British ports that were quoting a lower rate to emigrants than the combine rate.
6. Following their success in carrying out this program, the stevedore rate from British ports to North America was increased to \$32.50.
7. Continental emigrants to the United States have paid to the "combine," since 1900, 160,000,000 marks (\$40,000,000) in excess of the rate prevailing before the conference was established.
8. British and Continental emigrants to Canada have paid during the same period \$17,500,000 over and above the rate that was available in pre-conference times.
9. The "combine" has increased the freight rates between the United Kingdom and the United States and Canada from 100 to 150 per cent. as the result of conference agreements.
10. The increases in the rates on grain and flour during the last two years (taking last year's imports as a basis of calculation), yields the "combine" and costs Canadian exporters \$4,750,000 annually.

"A Canadian" bases his estimates of the total sums of money extorted by the Atlantic shipping combine on immigration and on grain and flour on the government figures of immigration and of grain and flour exports from this country to Great Britain. He sums up by saying:

Canadian trade with the Mother Country is now being forced to pay interest on the \$120,000,000 of watered stock that was issued to carry through the "Morgan deal" of 1902, and to reimburse the "combine" for the exorbitant figures paid in eliminating competition and to furnish the annual bonus to be paid to Continental lines to keep off the Canadian routes.

The Canadian government undertook a tremendous task when it announced its in-

tention of subduing the combine and controlling ocean freight rates. Public owned steamships may be necessary to create competition. When reason prevails and insane naval rivalry ceases, the nations of the world may build useful cargo and passenger ships instead of the much more costly vessels of destruction.

### COST OF PROTECTION

With millions of bushels of wheat pouring through Winnipeg on their way to world's markets, flour made from this wheat costs 82 cents a barrel more in Winnipeg, and 92 cents more in Montreal, than it does in London, England. That is to say, Canadian millers, after paying freight to Fort William or Montreal and shipping rates from the Canadian port to London—after all these transportation charges and dealers' profits are added, Canadian flour is sold 82 cents cheaper to the Londoner than to the farmer whose wheat is used by the mill and who drives up to the very door of the mill with a load of wheat and takes back a barrel or two of flour. The following, for example, were the prices for flour in Winnipeg, Montreal and London, England, on September 12, as given by the Montreal Telegraph, the unit of quotation being the Canadian barrel of 196 pounds:

Grade	Winnipeg	Montreal	London
Top	\$5.00	\$5.10	\$4.18
Patents	4.80	4.90	4.06
Bakers	4.00	4.10	3.60

Nor is there anything exceptional about these figures. Canadian flour is cheaper in London than anywhere in Canada all the year round. The spread between London and Winnipeg prices has widened since the above comparison was made. Only last week an official of one of the large milling companies informed The Guide that some Manitoba farmers drive in with their wheat to the Winnipeg mill as far as 40 miles. "We are charging them \$5.70 a barrel," he said, "unless they get at least five 280 pound bags, in which case they get a reduced price of \$5.40 a barrel."

The weekly Northwestern Miller, the leading flour authority on the American continent, in its issue of October 8, gives the London price of Canadian spring patent flour on that date as 23 shillings and 6 pence to 24 shillings and 6 pence for a 280 lb. sack. This figures out to \$5.64 to \$5.88 for 280 pounds. For a 196 pound barrel, the prices would range from \$3.95 to \$4.12. The same issue of the Northwestern Miller quotes the Winnipeg price for best patent as \$5.40 per barrel of 196 pounds. The previous issue quoted \$5.60 per barrel. Can anyone tell us why Manitoba flour should cost \$1.28 to \$1.45 per barrel more at the door of the mill than it costs in London, after being transported 5,000 miles?

But that is not the worst. Not every farmer can drive up to the mill with his wheat and take back flour. For the great consuming public, the only way to supply their household needs is through the ordinary retail channel. The largest retail grocery store in Winnipeg, for instance, charges \$3.00 and \$3.10 for a 98 pound bag of the best household flour. A barrel would, therefore, cost at least \$6.00. Canadian grain growers and consumers generally are hit just as hard in the case of bread as in the case of flour. Two directors of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, while visiting in Winnipeg last week, expressed surprise that a pound and a quarter loaf of white bread should cost 5 cents or more in the heart of the wheat growing prairies, whereas the finest bread retailed in Glasgow, claimed to be the superior of Canadian bread, costs only 6 pence for a 4 pound loaf, or 3 cents a pound. The editor of Wallace's Farmer, who visited Great Britain last summer states that much better bread than American bakers furnish costs only 3 cents a pound loaf on the other side of the Atlantic. What is the explanation of these wide spreads?

Either the Canadian and American milling companies are philanthropists and are supplying the English consumers with flour at little or no profit to themselves, or else the Canadian people are being held up to pay them exorbitant profits. There is no doubt which of these explanations is the true one.

W. F. Cockshutt, M.P., is no more enthusiastic over the "wider market" for agricultural implements than Sir Lyman M. Jones, President of the Massey-Harris Company. What's the use of having Hon. George E. Foster scour the whole world in search of wider markets for Canadian manufacturers if they get cold feet when a market of ninety million people is opened? Protection, as a means of making our industries robust, is a failure.

Sixty thousand residents of Toronto signed a petition to save the life of Charles Gibson, a young man convicted of murder. Preachers preached, newspapers got excited, politicians circulated petitions and influential men took the trouble to go to Ottawa—all to save one man's life when his guilt was in doubt. Would Toronto make as much effort to avert a war which would be sure to destroy thousands of lives, of whose innocence there could be no question?

Sir Henry Pellatt, whose new million-dollar palace is one of the sights of Toronto, with its marble stables, its \$60,000 organ and other costly appointments, has appealed against an assessment of \$250,000. There's the true plutocratic spirit for you. The millionaire colonel would push up the tax rate for all Toronto, which already presses heavily on thousands of householders, rather than pay his proper share of the city's expenses.

One hundred and ten members of the Mexican Parliament were seized by soldiers and cast into jail because they showed a little too much independence to please President Huerta. The troops surrounded the chamber of deputies while in session, loaded the members into automobiles and street cars, and locked them up behind prison bars. Here we see new proofs of the civilizing and ennobling effects of war.

The Winnipeg Telegram on October 17 strongly condemned the Greater Winnipeg Water District Board for holding its meetings in secret and advocated the public transaction of public business. We entirely agree with the Telegram. Meetings of the Dominion and Provincial Cabinets would be especially interesting if they could be attended by the general public and representatives of the press.

The Western freight rates case is to come up for final hearing at Ottawa on Monday, November 24. It sounds too good to be true, but Chairman Drayton has given his word that this will be absolutely the last, final, ultimate, concluding sitting. The lawyers ought to be satisfied. The case has provided at least a dozen of them with nice fat fees for nearly two years now.

If every farmer who wants the duty taken off wheat and flour, so as to open the United States market to Canadian grain, will write and tell his representative at Ottawa and Premier Borden, the bars will be lifted as soon as Parliament meets.

The farmers of the West look to Hon. Arthur Meighen to have agricultural implements placed on the free list this winter. We hope he will not disappoint them.

The farmer who sells young cattle or breeding stock at the present time is killing the goose that lays the golden egg.

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