

ists did not deem necessary to make public. The Commercial is interested only in the business aspect of the case, and has no desire to make political capital for anyone. If the Northern Pacific Railway Company wishes to build lines in Manitoba, they will find a way to do it, regardless of the refusal of the legislature to extend their charter. In fact, it is understood that the company now has power to build in Manitoba, under another charter, though this charter may not be as satisfactory as the one for which an extension of time was desired. The people of Manitoba will not, however, quietly submit to any attempt to prevent railway competition, especially among companies which do not seek a bonus. Possibly the legislative committee was so taken by surprise at the request of a railway company to be allowed to build a road without first asking for a bonus, that they concluded to put the matter simply to a vote. The bill, and accordingly they rejected it.

FARMING IN NORTHERN ALBERTA.

In a recent article we showed the danger that faces the farmers of Northern Alberta, if they continue to depend mainly on oats. Oats cannot be shipped eastward from Alberta points at a profit, on the basis of average prices. The rapid settlement of the territory during the past year or two has led to a large increase in the demand, which now exceeds the requirements of the local and British Columbia markets. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the farmers of Northern Alberta should turn to other sources of revenue, instead of depending so largely upon oats. It is quite possible that the price of oats will sink back to its normal value by the time another crop is ready for market. In fact, the high price of oats during the past year is likely to stimulate production of this cereal during the present year, in which case it is quite possible that the oats market at prices below the average next fall. With prices falling at or below average values, oats will not stand the long rail haul from Alberta for export.

Taking into consideration the geographical position of the territory and the necessarily high cost of freights, the study of the residents should be to concentrate their products. Oats and barley, grown extensively for feeding at home, could no doubt be made profitable crops, while at the same time it might be altogether unprofitable to export the raw grain. The plan, therefore, should be to convert these coarse grains into beef, pork, mutton, poultry, butter, eggs, etc. Thus concentrated, the grains could be profitably grown and exported. Fortunately a good start has already been made in the manufacture of butter in the districts referred to, and this can be done profitably enlarged upon. A grain called speltz, lately introduced into Manitoba, has proved very successful as a feed grain, and this could be added to the list of coarse grains for home feeding no doubt with satisfactory results in Alberta also. To depend largely upon crops of any coarse grain for export will certainly bring disaster. These grains cannot be grown in Alberta profitably for export, on the basis of average prices in past years, no matter how large the yield proves to be.

While concentration of products secured a profit, it should not be followed. It is also possible to increase the number of crops grown. In this

connection we would refer particularly to flax. Undoubtedly flax would prove as safe a crop as oats in northern Alberta, so far as soil and climatic conditions are concerned, and it would also be a safer crop to grow for export. The growing of flax would also add variety, and would be one more egg in the market basket of the farmers. In case of the failure of one crop, or prevalence of very low prices for one class of grain, it is well to have something else to depend upon. The following shows the range of prices for cash flax seed at Chicago for the month of December, for a series of years, per bushel:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------------------|
| Year. | 1901 | | \$1.38 to \$1.61 |
| | 1900 | | \$1.53 to \$1.71 |
| | 1899 | | \$1.39 to \$1.51 |
| | 1898 | | \$0.98 to \$1.19 |
| | 1897 | | \$1.04 to \$1.22 |
| | 1896 | | 71½ to 79½ |

The prices in 1896 were the lowest quoted in twenty years. In fact the Chicago market has seldom gone below \$1 per bushel.

Flax is generally considered as a good crop to grow on new breaking,

increased to such an extent that exportation is necessary, wheat should be given a more important position as to area than it has attained in recent years.

Along these lines we think lies the hope for the success of northern Alberta. Concentration of production, by growing coarse grains for conversion into beef, pork, etc., at home, and more diversity in the cereal and other crops produced.

IMPERIAL LIFE.

On another page will be found in condensed form the annual report of the Imperial Life Assurance Company of Canada, which shows a result for the last year gratifying to both its officials and policy-holders. During the year, applications were received for nearly four millions of insurance, making a total of \$11,230,700 of insurance in force, a gain of 22 per cent.; the cash income was \$448,672, a gain of 26 per cent.; its reserve increased to \$798,785, a gain of over 33 per cent.; and its assets have reached \$1,339,804, a gain of 22 per cent.



Manitoba Farm Homes—Residence of Thomas Jasper, Bradwardine.

and this is an important feature in a district where so much new land is being put under cultivation each year. At the last annual meeting of the Winnipeg grain exchange, retiring president Wm. Martin spoke as follows about flax:

"Another crop that is beginning to command attention is flax. This is a crop that is deserving of more attention than it has received in the past. It is a crop that is considered the money-making crop in North Dakota and Minnesota. Hitherto it has been grown chiefly in the Mennonite settlements of Manitoba, but during the past year it has been introduced into other districts by our people who have come from the United States to settle here. Flax is the only crop that can be grown successfully on new breaking, and on that it often gives results equal to the best crop from older cultivated land. It is one of the staple crops in all climates, doing equally as well in India and Argentina as in America. It commands a price almost double the price of wheat, and is likely to continue for some time to hold its value."

While wheat has not taken an important position in northern Alberta as a cereal crop, compared with the eastern portions of our great prairie region, we believe that as the land is brought under more careful cultivation, this grain will be found to do well in Alberta as in Manitoba. Wheat is, of course, a much more profitable crop to grow for export than any of the coarse grains. On account of the wonderfully successful oat crops secured in the east, wheat has been somewhat neglected in northern Alberta. But now the production has

This sturdy young company began business a little over four years ago, with the motto, "Absolute Security to Policy-Holders." They were the first Canadian company to start business on the strong reserve basis of 3½ per cent, with still further reserves for (a) suspended mortality, and (b) immediate payment of death claims; and despite the competition of older companies, such has been the confidence of the insuring public in its undoubted stability, that in a little over four years its management are able to report over eleven and a quarter millions of insurance in force, a result not elsewhere achieved in the history of Canadian life insurance.

The report justifies the position taken by its president, Sir Oliver Mowat, when he said at the annual meeting: "All the essentials to the upbuilding of a strong, progressive and substantial company are embodied in the Imperial Life," and we trust the Company will continue to achieve the high ideals its promoters had in view when organizing the Company.

NOT THIS YEAR.

The last matter discussed in the Manitoba legislature before the House was prorogued on Saturday, was the report of the committee on the Grain Act. During the session a committee was appointed to consider the grain situation. During the sittings of the commission, evidence was taken from various parties connected with the

grain trade. The result was that a report was submitted to the House, recommending various changes in the Grain Act, the requisites to be submitted to the Dominion government by memorial. The report of the committee was still under discussion when the Lieutenant-Governor arrived to prorogue the House, so that all the work of the committee fell through for this year. The report having been presented too late to secure adoption. The unfortunate conditions which have existed in the grain trade this year, owing to the lack of facilities for handling the large crop, have caused much dissatisfaction throughout the country. These conditions, however, will quickly disappear with the opening of navigation, and it may be many years ago before we have anything like the same difficulties to contend with. By the time the Manitoba legislature meets again, there may not be much disposition to further interfere with grain trade matters.

PROHIBITION DISUNION.

The temperance people in Manitoba appear to be split up somewhat on the policy to be followed regarding the referendum. The convention of prohibitionists in Winnipeg, led by the Alliance, decided to ignore the referendum and advise the temperance people to abstain from voting. If the prohibitionists could have followed up this policy vigorously and successfully, it would have made a farce of the reference of the Liquor Act to the people, and at the same time place the provincial government in a very awkward position. It was reported that only a very small minority at the convention were opposed to the policy decided on of ignoring the referendum. This minority, however, appears to have been an active and implacable one, and those composing the minority have refused to be bound by the decision of the convention. They have organized the "Manitoba Prohibitory League," with the object of endeavoring to draw out the temperance vote on the referendum. Thus we have the prohibitionists split into two hostile camps, working on directly opposite lines. The result of this policy is not known, but it is not difficult to see through. The majority of the temperance people will no doubt follow the decision of their convention and abstain from voting. The opposition minority may succeed in getting out a sufficient vote to make the referendum vote all right, but it is practically impossible that they will be able to carry the measure. The prohibitionists will, therefore, succeed only in defeating themselves.

MILLING MANITOBA WHEAT.

Minneapolis millers have discovered, after investigation, that they cannot grind Manitoba wheat in bond under the existing law in the United States governing manufacturing in bond. Manufacturing in bond must be done apart from manufacturing for the home trade, and this would require the establishment of separate mills for grinding bonded wheat. All the product of such bonded material must also be exported, and in the case of wheat, the bran and shorts as well as the flour would, and this would require. While the flour could be profitably exported, the bran and shorts could not be so handled to advantage. The problem of separate mills, however, is alone sufficient to kill the business. The millers have, therefore, set themselves to agitate for the removal of the duty, and in this they appear to be energetically assisted by the press of Minneapolis.