

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 2, 1896.

INSPECTION OF MEATS

At a recent meeting of the Winnipeg health committee, one of the aldermen brought up the question of the inspection of meats. It was pointed out in reply to the alderman, by a health officer of the city, that a public abattoir would have to be provided before any satisfactory system of inspection could be put into effect. This fact has been pointed out in *The Commercial* on several occasions. Only a few weeks ago, when discussing the need of a system of inspection of meats, etc., *The Commercial* said:

What is required in order to provide a proper inspection, is a central station, where all slaughtering for the city should be done. With a central station provided, and slaughtering there made compulsory, it would be an easy matter to provide for an efficient inspection of animals before slaughtering.

Besides the facilities which it would afford for inspection, a central abattoir would do away with the present objectionable system of having slaughter houses scattered about the outskirts of the city. Aside altogether from the question of inspection, these slaughter houses scattered about the suburbs of the city, are not at all desirable institutions.

The *Commercial* regards the inspection of foodstuffs, and meats in particular, as a very important and urgent question. It is a matter which this journal has repeatedly urged upon the attention of the civic authorities. Complaints have frequently come to our knowledge of the sale of fish, poultry, meats, etc., which were unfit for food. The winter season will soon be on, when frozen stuff is offered on the market, and in this form it is very difficult to detect damaged stuff. Many persons are in consequence imposed upon through the purchase of fish, poultry, etc., which, when thawed out, is found to be in a partially decayed condition.

Complaints have recently been made that a large number of lump jawed cattle are being slaughtered and sold for food in the city. We were informed that one party alone slaughtered eight of these diseased animals in one week recently. Animals afflicted with this disease are generally regarded by experts as unfit for food. The slaughter of such animals for food is prohibited in some cities. If animals afflicted with this and other diseases, or badly wounded or bruised, are unfit for food, their slaughter and sale for food should be prohibited. Unscrupulous persons will always be ready to handle this class of stuff. In fact they can make more money out of these animals than they can by handling healthy ones, the diseased or bruised animals can often be bought very cheap, sometimes for only a few dollars per head, while the dressed meat from them is sold at only a moderate reduction from the ruling market price.

The inspection of live animals can be carried out to much better advantage than in the case of dressed meats. In the case of live animals, an expert would have no difficulty in detecting any that were unfit for food. Animals which would be readily detected as unfit for food while alive, would, no doubt, sometimes pass inspection in a dressed form. An inspection of live animals is, therefore, of the greatest value from a sanitary point of view, and in the summer season an inspection of this nature would cover almost everything offered for sale in the city. In the winter season, when frozen stuff is being shipped into the market from outside points, a closer inspection of dressed meats, etc., is necessary. In order to establish an efficient system of inspection, a public abattoir, as before stated, is necessary.

THE WHEAT SITUATION.

There is no question but that the wheat situation is a strong one, and indications have not for years been so favorable for higher prices. The late advance in wheat in its early stages was a legitimate one, and was based on actual conditions favorable to an advance. Then came a few days of wild excitement and a very rapid advance, which produced a top heavy condition and led to the inevitable collapse. This wild excitement and rapid advance was the worst thing the market could experience, as in the reaction which followed, prices were carried down to below what the market conditions would warrant. Prices were coming along very nicely. The market was advancing quite fast enough and might have kept on slowly appreciating for some time, if the "boom" which started on Saturday, October 17, and kept up during the early days of the following week, had not set in and unsettled every thing. At the time of writing the market has not yet shown much evidence of recovery, but we believe it will recover and we look for a firm market on this crop. The great political contest in the United States, which has now almost reached a crisis, draws attention from wheat for the present, but it cannot alter actual conditions, and when things have cooled down a bit, there should be an improvement in wheat.

America is in a position this year to compel importing countries to pay fair prices for wheat. All the wheat which this continent has to spare, will be wanted this year. Of course if prices are "boomed" too much, consumption will be turned to other commodities and the amount of wheat consumed will be greatly reduced; but at fair prices the surplus carried over will be very small. Times are good in Great Britain and Europe, and on this account the people there will be willing to pay fair prices. On this continent the outlook for good times is also favorable. If the silverites are beaten in the United States, as it is now believed they will be, we may look for a great awakening of industrial activity in that country. Factories have been closed or running on short time for a long time, and purchases of raw material have been of a hand to mouth order. With the political situation settled favorably, active buying and general business activity may be

expected. This will help further to strengthen the cereal markets.

Of course the main point in wheat, as in other products, is supply and demand. The world's supply of wheat, which reached enormous proportions in 1893 and 1894, has rapidly declined since the latter date, and is now believed to be smaller than in any year since 1890, and the outlook at present would indicate a considerable further shrinkage in the supply for the present crop year. The last wheat crop in India was a small one, amounting to about 175,000,000 bushels, compared with 232,000,000 in 1895, and 252,000,000 bushels in 1891. The estimated home consumption of India is 300,000,000 bushels. The present growing crop in India is expected to prove very poor, and the prospect for the future, together with the poor crop last year, has advanced prices to such an extent in India, that it has been found possible to ship wheat from California to that country. The shipment of California wheat to India is one of the causes which led to the recent "boom" in the wheat markets here.

Australia has never been a large producer of wheat, but that country has usually had a limited quantity for export. The last Australian crop, however, was so small that Australia has been obliged to import wheat and flour from America. Even if the new Australian crop, which comes to market in January, turns out an average one, it will not cut any figure, as supplies have been reduced very low in that country by the failure of the last crop, and there will not be much for export from the new crop. India, and possibly Australia, will be out of the list of exporting countries for the next year, and both are importers at the moment, to a limited extent.

Russia, the principal exporter of wheat in Europe, has a small crop, but is supposed to have large reserves of old wheat, but Russia is not expected to be a large exporter of wheat during the present year. On October 1st this year European visible stocks were 80,000,000 bushels less than a year ago, and smaller than in any previous year by 20,000,000 to 25,000,000 bushels since 1890.

Stocks in Argentina are not large and even if the new crop in that country, which comes to market in January, is an average one, it will not be sufficient to depress the markets to the point of low prices.

The wheat crop in the United States is undoubtedly somewhat smaller than any year since 1890, being probably a little smaller than the crop of 1893. With the reduced supplies elsewhere, there is sure to be a larger demand than in recent previous years, upon this continent. In fact this is already apparent, as during the past three months, July, August and September, exports from this continent were equal to 41,500,000 bushels, flour included, compared with about 27,000,000 bushels for the corresponding period of last year. This large demand for American wheat is likely to continue for some time, and there is apparently every reason to believe that all our surplus will be wanted at fair prices.

Robt. Smith, harness maker, of Neepawa, contemplates opening a harness shop at Dauphin.