

NORTHWEST LETTER.

At the time of writing there was still an insufficiency of snow for sleighing in Manitoba, and consequently grain deliveries have not been very large for some weeks back. It is now well on to the first of February, and only a couple of inches of snow on the level, which makes things look as though we were not going to have any sleighing at all this winter, though some of the oldest inhabitants predict heavy falls in March. Prices for wheat have been higher at Winnipeg for the past few weeks, and are now 3c. above quotations at the close of navigation, namely, 65c. for No 1 hard, and 62c. for No. 2 hard and No. 1 northern. These are the prices paid to farmers. There has been pretty keen competition for the grain at many provincial markets, and in some instances prices were run up above 70c., but as such quotations were above export value, they could not long remain at such high figures. The keen competition at some points gave rise to schemes which would enable buyers to obtain the start over others in securing the wheat, some of which were not of a legitimate trade nature. For instance, one buyer devised the plan of throwing in a meal ticket with the price of each load of grain.

There is considerable speculation going on here as to the amount of exports in wheat from the province, and it seems to be the general opinion that the total exports for the crop of 1886 will fall something under those for the crop of 1885. Up to the time of writing there has not been much difference in exports over those of the previous crop year, but a year ago there was a heavy movement of grain in January and February, whilst this year the outgoing movement has already slackened up considerably. It was known that the crop of the province as a whole was rather on the light side for the past year, but it was thought that the better quality of the grain, which would lead to a more thorough export, together with the increased acreage sown, would prevent a falling off in exports. This, however, would seem not to be the case. Those who are in the best position to know, say that fully two-thirds of the crop of 1886 has now been marketed, and if this estimate is nearly correct, there will be a falling off in exports, in comparison with the crop of 1885. However, the crop of the latter year was an exceptionally heavy one all over the province. Then there is also the very greatly increased milling capacity of the province which must be taken into consideration in estimating the exports of wheat. A very much larger quantity of wheat will be ground at home this year than in any previous year, which will account for part of the falling off in wheat exports. Still there is no doubt but that the total crop for last year was much lighter than the previous year, for whilst some districts had a fairly large yield, others were decidedly light. The Brandon market returns will show this to be the case, where wheat deliveries have fallen off to one-half what they were last year. Railway extensions have taken some of the wheat which formerly went to Brandon to other points; but in conversation with a gentleman who has travelled over that region, I was informed that the main reason for the falling off was that the wheat was not in the district tributary to the town named. A year ago at this time Brandon was crowded with teams from early morning till late at night, owing to the press of wheat deliveries, and on several occasions a complete blockade of the streets in the neighborhood of the five elevators occurred. Perhaps such scenes were never before witnessed in connection with the grain trade in any town in Canada. This year, however, there is no trouble in handling all the grain that comes in. Another reason for a shortage in eastern exports is, that considerable wheat and flour is going west to the territories and British Columbia.

There seems still to be some disposition to grant bonuses in aid of flour mills, and in several rural municipalities parties are agitating in favor of such bonuses. This bonus business has undoubtedly done injury to the milling business in Manitoba. Several mills which were started with the aid of bonuses have already passed through several hands before being completed, and others have been constructed in such a way as to make them unfit for turning out first-class work, thereby injuring the whole flour trade of the province. There are now in course of construction some seven or eight roller mills at different points in the province, varying from 75 to 300 barrels capacity, every one of which have been assisted with bonuses. One of these mills, which was to have been completed in September last, has remained in an uncompleted state for nine months. The parties who commenced work have abandoned the job; the men who worked on the building have not been paid, and mer-

chants who advanced material are just out that much. Several parties claim the ownership of the property, and additional bonuses are asked for to complete the work. This is only one instance in which speculators have taken advantage of these bonuses to perpetrate a scheme upon the public. Other instances have occurred of a similar nature.

In connection with mill building you will probably already have heard of the project to establish a 1000 barrel mill at Keewatin. Keewatin is located on the Lake of the Woods, about 135 miles east of Winnipeg, and 3 or 4 miles west of Rat Portage. A considerable lumber manufacturing industry is established at both of these points. At Keewatin the waters of the Lake pass through a narrow channel, forming the entrance to the Winnipeg river, and the falls at this point furnish excellent water power. This water power has often been referred to, and it has long been considered that the place would yet become famous as a large manufacturing centre. One of the drawbacks is the exceedingly rough and rocky nature of the surrounding country, which renders building rather difficult. However, the country furnishes plenty of building material in the shape of stone, and the lumber tributary to the lake could also be supplied at a low cost. There is also the drawback in regard to freight rates, for whilst Winnipeg and other western centres will undoubtedly become railway competing points in time, the nature of the country and the location of Keewatin will be a hindrance to railway construction toward the latter place. Of the water power at this place, Professor Macoun says: "There is no question as to the possible milling facilities there. It possesses water-power and natural facilities second not even to those of Minneapolis." The mill above referred to will be the first movement toward utilizing this great water power, and is probably the commencement of what may yet prove an industry of great magnitude at that point. Mr. John Mather, of the Keewatin Lumber Co., is one of the movers in the establishment of the mill, and those who know him will understand that the undertaking is in good hands. Montreal capitalists are also said to be interested in the scheme. A large elevator will be erected in connection with the mill, and the work will be commenced at once, and completed in time for the crop of 1887.

Aside from milling, the manufacturing interests of the prairie province are not yet of a very extensive nature. A number of lumbering companies have their headquarters at Winnipeg, but there is now only one mill which saws in the city. The logs for this mill are procured from tributaries of the Red River, which flow into the river from the east side. Supplies of timber from this source are pretty well exhausted. The companies represented here have their mills at Keewatin and Rat Portage, on the Lake of the Woods, and some on Lake Winnipeg. There are also supplies of timber on Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis, and on the streams and tributaries of the head waters of the Assiniboine, in the northern portion of the Province, but these have only been available for local purposes. The great central portion of the Northwest is devoid of timber to a great extent, though the Wood mountains and Cypress Hills supply some timber districts. In the Cypress Hills there is a saw mill which does a considerable trade in supplying the stations along the C. P. R., in the central parts of the territories with lumber. The lumber is hauled to Maple Creek, on the C. P. R., 600 miles west of Winnipeg, from which the mill is about thirty miles distant. Calgary promises to be a centre of the lumber industry of considerable importance, and will likely be the chief supply depot for the far-western country. Already several companies have their headquarters there, and a large mill is now in course of erection. There is plenty of timber tributary to the Row river west of Calgary, whilst the mountains furnish almost an unlimited supply.

The lumber trade has been demoralized here ever since the boom days of 1882, and is only now being placed on a firm footing. At that time anything in the shape of lumber was bought up immediately on arrival at exorbitant prices, and the mills were unable to keep up with the demand. In the following year, however, the business was greatly overdone. Stocks became excessive, and prices were demoralized by a course of cutting, which was vigorously indulged in by all the firms. Surplus stocks have now been reduced and during the present year there is every indication that the trade will be a satisfactory one. The log crop in the district tributary to Winnipeg will be somewhat larger than last year, but will not be excessive, and dealers expect to do a paying business for 1887.

TORONTO BAG WORKS.

Dick, Ridout & Co. are the proprietors of these works, recently removed from Dundee, Scotland, to Esplanade

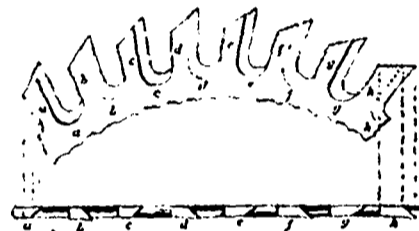
St., Toronto. The proprietors have made a new departure in the Jute bag trade, by introducing special lines of Jute bags made from the pure fibre and guaranteed unadulterated with any kind of starch or dressing, and with the threads in their natural round state. They finish their cloth so as to remove, as far as possible, all loose or fixed "stuff" which might come off and mix with the flour or other contents of the bag, but they avoid all heavy calendering or mangling which might crush or weaken the fibre. Nearly all the Jute bags supplied in this market hitherto have been heavily finished with the object of making the cloth look coarse and heavier than it really is, but this crushing weakens the yarns so that the sewing thread tears them and causes many a burst, which is blamed erroneously on the sewing.

The trade has appreciated Messrs. Dick, Ridout & Co.'s efforts to such an extent that they have for several months past been unable to fill many of the orders offered as promptly as they desired, and they have therefore been fitting up a new wing which was opened a few days ago, and which gives them increased facilities for printing bags in several colors and for finishing the cloth; and as the firm have large stocks and immense shipments of raw material on the way, they will hereafter be able to fill all orders with unprecedented speed. They are in the habit of finishing, sewing and shipping bags on the day ordered, which proves a great convenience to millers or others who often require special sizes at short notice.

Latest Canadian Patents.

No. 352,624.

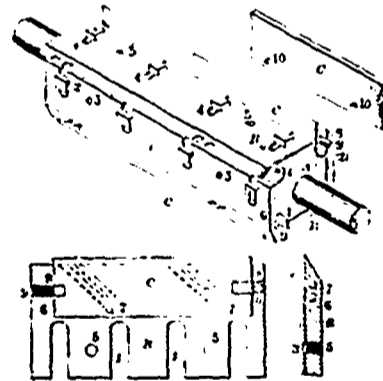
Terrence O. Loughlin, Spanish River, Ontario, Canada. Filed June 19, 1886. Dated Nov. 16, 1886.



Claim. A circular cross-cut saw constructed with teeth having a knife edge on the front of each tooth, and terminating in a beveled gullet at the base of each tooth, and the face of the tooth running in a line to a point behind the center of the saw, each alternate tooth having the cutting edge beveled in one direction, and the cutting edge of the intervening teeth in the opposite direction, the teeth which act on the end of the board being without set, and the teeth which act on the part being cut off having a small portion of set only.

Bit-Holder for Cutter-Heads.

353,509. Samuel J. Shimer, Milton, Pa. Filed March 22, 1886. Dated Nov. 30, 1886.



Claim 1. The combination, with a cutter-head stock, a holding-plate removably secured to the said stock and having a knife-seat formed thereon, and a knife provided with studs to move in diagonally-arranged grooves in its seat, of adjusting-screws let in the ends of the holding-plate, whereby the knife may be moved forward or backward in its seat.

2. The combination, with a cutter-head stock and a holding-plate detachably secured thereto and formed with a knife-seat, and diagonally-arranged grooves across the knife-seat, of a knife formed with studs to set within the said grooves in the knife-seat and adjusting-screws let into the ends of the holding-plate, whereby the knife may be adjusted to any desired cut.

3. The combination, with a cutter-head stock formed with counter-sinks on its faces, a holding-plate secured to the stock and provided with set-screws to set within the countersinks of the head-stock and having a knife-seat formed with diagonal grooves across its face, and a knife formed with studs to set within the grooves of the knife-seat, of adjusting-screws let in the ends of the holding-plate to move the knife backward and forward.

4. The cutter-head knife consisting of a plate of steel formed or provided with studs to project from its face, near opposite ends of the knife, and arranged to set in and traverse parallel guiding-grooves in the cutter-holder plate of a cutter-head.

5. In combination with a cutter-head and a knife thereof formed with studs on its face disposed in diagonal grooves in the holding-plate, of adjusting-screws let into the head from both ends parallel to the knife-bed and engaging with the ends of said knife, whereby the knife may be moved forward and backward and set at any desired cut.

Variety Molding Machine.

353,510. Samuel J. Shimer, Milton, Pa. Filed May 13, 1886. Dated Nov. 30, 1886.

Claim 1. The combination, with the lower tool, the main table, and the upper tool arranged in the hinged arm E, of the intermediate detachable and adjustable table, D, formed with a too