

treasuries do not suffer by reason of the vacant lands. The belief that owners of vacant lands are holding these lands at prices which retard settlement, is not true. Most holders of vacant lands in Manitoba are willing and anxious to sell, at very moderate prices. In many cases the lands are offering at much less than their original cost. There is hardly an owner of unoccupied land in Manitoba who would not be willing to sell out at a loss. Holding land has been anything but a profitable business, and there is no reason for the disposition shown in some quarters to establish a discriminating tax against such lands. The fact is that most holders of wild lands are more to be pitied than legislated against. They are not holders from choice, but because they cannot sell.

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE announcement of the decision of the government to push the work of deepening the St. Lawrence canals, will be received with general favor in the West. It is now the intention, we are told, to have a fourteen feet waterway throughout the St. Lawrence system by the spring of 1899. The deepening of the St. Lawrence canals is a matter of the utmost importance to the West, as upon the improvement of this route, more than any other, depends the cheapening of transportation to and from the West.

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THE Manitoba legislature has very wisely prohibited the granting of bonuses by municipal corporations. When it is desired to give a bonus, a special act has to be obtained from the legislature to legalize the municipal by-law. At the last session of the legislature a strong disposition was shown to oppose the legalizing of bonus by-laws. The bonusing evil has been held in check in Manitoba by these restrictions, and so long as the legislature is inclined to refuse to sanction bonus measures, municipalities will be protected from the folly of granting bonuses, which as a rule result unsatisfactorily to all concerned.

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A Calgary paper is strongly urging the ranchers of the territories not to accept the prices now being offered for cattle, on the ground that prices will be higher later on. Last fall and winter, when wheat was selling at comparatively high prices, many Manitoba papers urged the farmers to hold, as wheat was sure to reach \$1 per bushel. Those who took this advice are heavy losers, prices being now 20 to 25 cents per bushel less than in the early part of the season. Giving advice is seldom a safe thing to do. As a rule it is best to let people judge for themselves, and then you will make no mistake.

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Hon. Mr. Fisher, Dominion minister of agriculture, has very wisely negatived a motion which proposed that the government should fix an export bounty on butter and cheese. The granting of bounties cannot be considered otherwise than a vicious application of a vicious system, whether applied to agriculture products or manufactures. It

is to be hoped this form of bonusing will not gain a footing in this country.

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It is to be hoped that the introduction of the alien labor bill in Parliament at Ottawa, does not mean the beginning of a legislative war between Canada and the United States. It is true that our southern neighbors were the aggressors in this matter. It is also true that the new United States tariff bill possesses some features, which cannot but be exasperating to Canadians. At the same time, matters are not likely to be improved by the passing of retaliatory measures, but rather the contrary. If this thing keeps on, it will result in the declaration of absolute non-intercourse between the two countries. What a fine spectacle this would be to the civilized world. It will be an evil day we fear, when Canada begins copying the selfish legislation of our small-souled neighbors.

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Mr. McLennan, M. P., has introduced a bill at Ottawa to compel railway companies to sell second-class return tickets at the same percentage of reduction as is allowed in the case of first-class return fares, upon trains carrying first and second-class passengers. The penalty for infringement is placed at from \$5 to \$50 for each offence.

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THE proposal to extend the franchise of the Winnipeg Gas Co., has called forth considerable opposition from citizens. The matter is certainly one which should be dealt with with care and deliberation by the council. In return for an extension of the monopoly of the company for twenty five years, it is proposed to reduce the price of gas to \$1.80 net for lighting purposes, and \$1.50 net for cooking purposes. The period named is a long time, during which to grant a monopoly. All civic franchises should be kept well in hand, in case the citizens, through the municipal rulers, should see fit to undertake these enterprises on their own account at some future day. The price offered by the company may be low now, but a year or two hence it might be very much too high, owing to possible cheapening of material or of the process of manufacture.

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The suggestions made by the Winnipeg Free Press and The Commercial regarding the control of elections by the courts, have been very favorably received by the more independent newspapers of the West. Our Qu'Appelle exchange says: "The Winnipeg Commercial and the Free Press have just made some very sensible suggestions for conducting elections which will be free from the taint of political crookedness and ballot-stuffing and party dodges adopted. These journals urge the government to place the conduction of the elections in the courts, and thus free them forever from the control of any political party. It would be very refreshing to the moral sentiment of the country to have our elections conducted fairly and in purity; for there is certainly no more degrading influence at work at present than the disgraceful tactics employed by

unscrupulous, professional politicians of all parties—for none of them are free from guile—who resort to anything from buying votes to stealing ballots in order to achieve a party advantage. If the Liberals act now on these suggestions they will earn the gratitude of everyone who has the spark of true patriotism in him."

Winnipeg Board of Trade.

The quarterly meeting of the board was held Tuesday afternoon.

The president reported on all the acts of the council since the last general meeting, giving explanations of the steps taken by the council in various matters and the position in which the several orders of business now stood.

The following were elected as members of the board: G. H. Rodgers, Geo. Plaxton, J. E. Ruby, C. A. Baskerville, D. D. Ward, S. B. Ritchie, W. J. Hammond, L. A. Mans, A. E. Barro, Ben. Gordon, A. B. Galt, J. B. Hargrave, John Stovel, W. A. Black, G. H. Stovel and Ald. C. H. Wilson.

The following resolutions were passed: Resolved that this board should most strongly urge on the attention of the honorable, the minister of public works, the extreme advisability existing that the supplementary estimates should provide a sum for the construction of the St. Andrew's Rapid improvements; and that active operations should be commenced this spring.

Resolutions were passed for submission to the honorable, the postmaster-general, in connection with improved mail services on the line of the Dauphin railway, and also on the Manitoba and Northwestern railway west of Minnedosa.

Instructions were given to the council to press these matters on the attention of the minister.

A committee was appointed to take up with the post office officials the necessity of providing new post office boxes of a large size than are now situated there. It was complained by several members of the board that the capacity of the present boxes was entirely inadequate for their mail matter.

This committee will also take up the matter of the hours now marked on the postal letter boxes throughout the city. From a letter received from the post office inspector, Winnipeg, it appears that letters are not collected from the boxes in the city at the hours printed thereon.

A motion was passed requesting the council to watch any legislation in regard to the legal rate of interest that might be introduced into the house of commons at Ottawa during the session.

The president and secretary were authorized to sign the petition of the Volunteer Veterans' association for the issue of a general service medal to Canadian volunteers who have been on active service during Fenian raids in Canada.

Silver.

The tone of the London market for silver has been heavy on small balances. Eastern demand is quiet, and there is nothing in sight to stimulate speculation. The New York market has followed London, and has been equally dull and inactive. Silver prices on April 9 were: London, 25 1/2; New York, 61 3/4.