

railways. The time will come when the country will be covered with a network of railways, and when railways will be regarded as necessary to every section of the country as wagon roads now are. Heavy trunk lines would not be necessary in every case. In fact the more economical way would no doubt be to have a few trunk lines, with innumerable light roads as feeders.

A comparatively level prairie country like Manitoba offers special advantages for the construction of light railways to fill in and act as feeders to the trunk lines already established, or that will be established in the future. A large part of Manitoba is already sufficiently supplied with trunk lines, but as population increases no doubt many light railways would prove profitable as feeders to the main lines in the districts.

The application of electricity in operating railways has no doubt drawn increased attention to the value of light railways. A network of these railways throughout the rural districts would greatly improve the social as well as the commercial side of country life. It would have the effect of improving the conditions of rural life to such an extent as to perhaps check the tendency of the day to leave the farm and crowd into the cities.

### THE FREIGHT RATES' QUESTION.

Elsewhere in this issue we give a condensed report of the evidence presented by the Winnipeg board of trade before the freight rates commission. The case as submitted by the board was a very full and complete one. Under the different headings a great mass of tabulated evidence was submitted, which must have entailed a great deal of labor in its preparation. Everything was as complete as possible, and the greatest care was taken to have abundant proof for every statement. Thus in the numerous tables of comparative rates which were presented, care was taken to specify the exact tariff from which the comparisons were made. This puts beyond question the correctness of all statements made in the evidence. If there is any doubt as to any rate quoted, the actual freight tariff can be procured and referred to.

Those who have not seen the complete case as submitted by the board will have little idea of the amount of labor involved in its preparation. The great bulk of the work fell upon Mr. Ashdown, chairman of the freight rates committee of the Winnipeg board of trade and Mr. Bell, secretary of the board. Mr. Ashdown represented the board before the commission and gave a great deal of oral testimony, besides submitting a great mass of evidence in the form of tables and statistical compilations. The thanks of the members of the board as well as of the entire community are due to Mr. Ashdown and the secretary of the board, for the able manner in which they have handled this matter. There has been no shirking of the responsibility on the part of Mr. Ashdown at least, and whether or not just recognition of his service is accorded him, he will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that he has done his duty in this matter.

### IMPORTING POULTRY.

Manitoba has done nobly this year in her export trade. We have been steadily and rapidly reducing our imports and increasing our exports in such lines of produce as this country is adapted to produce. This year our exports will be the largest on record, while our imports will be decreased. Several lines of commodities which the province was formerly obliged to bring in to meet local requirements, are now produced here in excess of home demand. There is one line of produce, however, of which there is still a deficiency here, which should be produced at home in abundance. We refer to poultry. Several carlots of poultry have been brought in from Eastern Canada already this winter for the Winnipeg market. We should produce all this right here in Manitoba. Poultry is undoubtedly a very profitable product of the farm and the money which is sent out of the country for poultry should go to our farmers.

Chickens and ducks are produced here in sufficient quantities, but the local supply of turkeys and geese is insufficient. Very few geese appear to be raised in Manitoba, while the turkeys marketed this year locally have been of a very poor quality as a rule. They have been small and altogether a very inferior class of birds when compared with those brought in from the East. Those who raise and prepare poultry for the market in Manitoba, evidently require to exert themselves to improve their products. The birds should first be well fattened, then picked dry, so as to give them a bright and clean appearance. Then the heads and feet should be removed, and the birds should be packed neatly before they are frozen. Birds that come to market frozen in all sorts of awkward shapes, present an uninviting appearance, even though they may be of good quality.

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is reported from Brussels that in consequence of the detection of contagious pleuropneumonia among Canadian cattle landed at Antwerp on Nov. 6 and Dec. 2, Belgium has prohibited the importation of cattle from the Dominion. The imports in course of transit will be allowed only in sealed trucks. The animals shipped prior to Dec. 10 or landed between Dec. 6 and 9, will undergo five days quarantine.

THE COMMERCIAL has lately referred to the business Winnipeg houses are doing in the Kootenay district of British Columbia. Winnipeg houses have been gradually extending their business operations in British Columbia and now reach into nearly all sections of the interior of the province. Mr. Fred Chilcott, a well known Winnipeg knight of the grip in the grocery line, and one peculiarly fitted to do a successful business in the mining regions, reports a successful trip into the remote Cariboo region—the old stand-by gold district of British Columbia. Heretofore the Cariboo country has not been worked by Winnipeg houses, at least in the grocery

trade, though business has been done there for some years by a Winnipeg clothing house.

THE financial trouble in Newfoundland appears to be quite as bad as was represented by first despatches. The fact, as noted in The Commercial last week, that the banks were owned largely by the business men of St. John's, has proved quite as disastrous as might have been expected from such conditions. Later reports tell of large sums loaned by the banks to its directors, who were engaged in mercantile business in Newfoundland. The immediate cause of the Newfoundland failures is attributed to the failure of an English house which transacted business for a number of large St. John's firms. The trouble, however, seems to have been brewing for years, owing to a series of unsatisfactory business seasons.

ANOTHER great railway scheme has been sprung upon the public. This time the report comes from St. Paul, Minnesota, and is to the effect that the Duluth, Missabe and Northern railway will be extended so as to become a great trunk line, competing with the three great northern trunk lines—the Canadian Pacific, the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern. According to the report, one arm of the road will be built westward to the Red river, thence on westerly through Dakota. The other arm will reach out in a northwesterly direction to Winnipeg, and thence away to the North Saskatchewan. At present the Duluth, Missabe and Northern is a comparatively short line of railway, extending in a northerly direction from the western end of Lake Superior. It is purely an iron road at present, built to open up the great iron districts in the north eastern corner of Minnesota. By extending the road westward toward Winnipeg, it would open up the most valuable white pine country now left in the United States, and which at present is not tapped by any railway. The road is in very strong hands, being the property of the great Rockefeller crowd, who count their money by millions and not as ordinary mortals do by dollars and cents. However, regardless of the wealth of the owners of the little iron road, we will not figure very much on the rumored extensions, at least until something more definite is learned.

### Newfoundland Banks.

The latest report from Newfoundland says: The committee of shareholders of the Commercial bank report the bank's liabilities are about \$2,600,000. The assets are about \$2,000,000, which will probably depreciate one-third through realization. It is estimated that the noteholders and depositors will obtain about 59c on the dollar. Seven provincial trustees, appointed for the present shareholders have made application to the supreme court to wind up the banks affairs. It has been discovered that Mr. Pitts was paid six months' interest on his money held for him in the bank. The legislation committee makes a report very favorable to the Union bank. It is thought that this bank will be able to pay depositors, noteholders and shareholders in full if given time.