

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MARCH 23, 1896.

AGRICULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS.

The Commercial has received from the Consolidated Stationery Co., Winnipeg, copies of the two volumes authorized by the advisory board of Manitoba, for use in teaching agriculture in the public schools. The Commercial was one of the journals which advocated teaching agriculture in the public schools of Manitoba, but we must say that we are disappointed with the books which have been prepared for the purpose. The course of agriculture is, as stated, divided into two volumes. The first or primary course is called "Our Canadian Prairies." A brief examination of this book indicates that it might more correctly be termed "An Introduction to the Study of Botany." Nearly half of the book is taken up with descriptions of "Thirty Notable Plants." In a perusal of a number of these we find nothing of practical value to the student, and very little which would appeal to his memory.

Considerable space is given to weeds, about ten pages being devoted to a report of a convention to consider the question of noxious weeds and the best means of exterminating them. This is the most practical portion of the book. The closing pages are devoted to tree planting and kindred matters.

This little volume would be very useful as a reader to take the place of the regular readers to some extent, in the schools, but it is doubtful if it could be used to advantage as a close study for young students. The school days of the young people in the country are often curtailed, and every effort should therefore be made to make the best use of the time at their disposal, for the imparting of practical information. The range of studies is already too great, and we doubt if it will prove an advantage to introduce a primary course in botany in the schools.

The second volume is called "Prairie Agriculture." This is intended for more advanced pupils. We have not been able to examine this volume very closely yet, but from a glance at its contents it appears to be a very valuable and practical work. The introduction of this work into our public schools will undoubtedly do much good to the rising generation of agriculturists, in teaching proper modes of farming. With this book thoroughly studied in the schools, the next generation of native Manitoba farmers should be a very superior class. The book treats of plant growth, formation of the soil, drainage, composition and improvement of the soil, cultivating the soil, under the various heads of breaking, plowing, harrowing, etc., rotation of crops, varieties of crops grown and their cultivation, weeds, diseases of crops, insects, breeding, feeding, and management of live stock, mixed farming, farm buildings, fences, trees, etc. Altogether a most useful and practical work.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE federal minister of public works has announced that a new survey of the St. An-

drew's rapids in the Red River will be made at once, with a view to improving the navigation of the river between Winnipeg and Lake Winnipeg. A previous survey placed the cost of the proposed work at about \$1,000,000, but city engineer Ruttan, of Winnipeg, claims that this estimate is much too high. Hence the advisability of having another survey made. It is to be hoped that this will mean something more than a political move, previous to or concurrent with a political campaign.

It is reported from Ottawa that the leader of the liberal party, Mr. Laurier, has been asked to accompany a member of the government to Winnipeg, to confer with the Manitoba government on the school question. This may be taken as complimentary to Mr. Laurier, or it may be that the government wish to bind the opposition party, as well as themselves, to any arrangement which may be effected with Manitoba. It is very doubtful, however, if the Liberals would forego the possibility of being able to make political capital out of the question, with the elections so near at hand, by joining hands with the government in this move to secure a settlement of this difficult problem.

THE Interstate Commerce Commission has just been considering a case of freight rates on wheat in Oregon, which may be of interest in Manitoba, where the freight rate on wheat is such an important question. A complaint was made against the Union Pacific and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Co. that they charged \$1.70 per ton, or 23½ cents per 100 pounds on wheat from Walla Walla to Portland, a distance of 246 miles. The contention was that \$2.46 per ton, or 1¢ per ton per mile, would be a reasonable charge for the service. After the complaint was filed the rate was reduced to \$1.25 per ton, equal to 21½ cents per 100 pounds. The Commission decided that rates based on 1¢ per ton per mile, namely, \$2.46 from Walla Walla, as contended for by the complainants, would be unjust to the road under present conditions. On the other hand, upon all the facts and considerations before them, the commission held that the reduced rate of 21½¢ per hundred, or \$1.25 a ton, put into effect in August, 1894, was still somewhat too high for the service rendered, and it ruled that the rate from Walla Walla to Portland, distance 246 miles, on wheat in carloads should not exceed 19½¢ per hundred pounds, or \$3.90 per ton.

NOW that seeding time is at hand again, it would be well for the press of Manitoba to call special attention to the necessity for bluestoning all seed grain. The loss from smut in wheat, in the crop of 1895, will run up to an enormous amount. The damage from frost is greatly exceeded by the damage from smut. It is estimated that it will cost only about one cent per acre to bluestone the seed, which is a mere trifle. On the other hand, wheat free from smut is worth from 8 to 15 cents per bushel more than a smutted sample, according to the amount of damage from smut. Some farmers still seem to doubt the value of bluestone as a preventative for

smut, but the proofs of its complete ability to eradicate smut have been so abundantly demonstrated, that it seems that no reasonable person should entertain a doubt on this point. Some have failed to learn the value of bluestone because the work was carelessly done, and it should be understood that every seed should be thoroughly wet with the solution, of a proper strength to secure the desired result.

THE papers south of the boundary are frequently speaking these days about the large movement of settlers from the north eastern and central western states to the north western states. The principal movement of the population in the United States at the present time appears to be in the direction of Manitoba and Western Canada, but they do not come this far. They stop in the states just south of the boundary. Canada might be getting quite a share of this movement of population, were it not that our live stock quarantine regulations present an almost insurmountable barrier to the crossing of the boundary into Canada. These people bring their live stock and effects along with them when they move, and so long as the quarantine regulations remain as they are, there is very little use in trying to induce them to come to Western Canada.

THERE is quite an active demand throughout Manitoba this spring for horses, and the old trade of bringing in horses from Ontario has revived to quite an extent. The cause of the increased demand may be explained in the following way. Owing to the very heavy crop last year, followed by an early freeze-up, farmers did not get much fall plowing done. It was late before they got through with the work of sowing their crops, and as the winter set in earlier than usual, they had very little time for plowing. Some farmers did not get a furrow turned last fall. In order to overtake their work this spring, they are preparing to make a big push by putting on extra teams, hence the demand for horses. It is hoped that these purchases of eastern horses will turn out better than in past years. A few years ago a large trade was done every spring in bringing in horses from Eastern Canada, and financial difficulties were brought upon many a Manitoba farmer by the purchase of these horses. The horses were expensive in the first place, and many of them died in a short time after they were purchased. In fact this horse question was one of the leading causes of the difficulties of Manitoba farmers. It is to be hoped the business will not be overdone again, as it undoubtedly was in past years. Various causes have been ascribed to account for the great mortality among horses brought in here from the Eastern provinces. While it is not the purpose of The Commercial to discuss this feature of the case, attention might be directed to the western range as a source whence to procure horses more suited to conditions here. Those western horses are hardy and already acclimatized, we may say, here, though we believe there is some objection to the western horses on the ground that they are often not well broken and are difficult to handle. In speaking of