

library during the past year. The library is frequently sought by members of the board, and citizens generally, for the information which it contains. Except for a small sum spent on binding, the additions this year have been made without any expense to the board. Many requests have been received from government departments, public libraries, business associations and individuals for our annual report.

Letters are received almost daily by the secretary, requesting information on a very wide range of subjects connected with this country, its possibilities, development and the opportunities afforded by it to settlers, and for the exchange of business. The fullest information possible is cheerfully supplied to all inquirers.

ELECTRIC AND GAS LIGHT.

The following is a copy of the resolution passed by the council on the 13th December, 1899:

"Whereas the present position of the electric and gas lighting in this city is most unsatisfactory and the rates are much in excess of what it is considered they should be,

Resolved that a committee consisting of Messrs. J. H. Ashdown, D. K. Elliott, E. L. Drewry, John Russell and A. Strang be appointed to look into the whole question of electric and gas lighting as furnished by the present company, the charges for same, the difference of the cost of lighting as compared with the past, and between the present cost and what would be a fair figure for the services rendered and as to what remedy is to be found."

The committee have been actively engaged since their appointment in securing information from many cities and towns in Canada and the United States and they are now in communication with the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway company, who supply both gas and electric light in Winnipeg, and expect soon to be in a position to make a report to the board.

POST OFFICE MATTERS.

A standing committee was appointed by the council to take up all matters in connection with the post office service. The committee had an interview with the superintendent of the railway mail service in connection with the delay of mails from eastern Canada, owing to the fact that they were frequently carried on the second section of a train which arrived here in sections. The superintendent informed the committee that this matter had already been brought to his attention but he would again take it up with the railway officials. The committee have reported that this was done, and that no complaints are now made of the delay in mails from this cause.

The committee conferred with the post office inspector in regard to the complaints that were made that the city staff was inadequate to properly handle the mail matter in the post office. He promised to investigate the matter and do all he could to remedy this state of affairs, but it was subsequently reported to the committee that the postmaster maintained that the staff employed was ample to meet all demands. Some changes were made and with additions to the staff the service given the public was more satisfactory, but recently complaints of inadequate service at the general delivery have been made and the committee is now pressing the matter on the attention of the department.

A year ago the council had represented to the department of public works the urgent necessity then existing that more space should be given to

the lobby of the city post office, with the public. The alterations were made and have afforded increased facilities.

The committee, at the request of residents of Minto Centre, urged the post office authorities to give a more frequent service to that district, as people there were sending their letters out via Minnesota on account of the inadequate service. During the summer, at least, the service was improved.

Late in December, at the request of some residents of Fort Francis, the post office officials were urged to arrange for a mail service to the Rainy River district by sending the mails out via the Southeastern railway to its present terminus and thence overland.

The committee have since had a conference with the general superintendent of railway mail service, and both of them are now enquiring into the feasibility of sending mails via the Southeastern railway and across from the terminus at Warroad river to Beaver Mills P. O. on the Rainy river, a distance of thirty-five miles in United States territory.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

The report concludes with a review of the board's attitude on the Douglas grain bill, an exhaustive report by Mr. D. W. Bole, who was a delegate to the International Congress of Commerce at Philadelphia.

Mr. Bole says: "Owing to the fact that there was no organization of Canadian delegates, Canada got very little prominence during the first few days, but this was partly corrected later on, when a meeting of Canadians was held and a programme formulated. Hon. R. R. Dobell, member of the Canadian government, was chairman, and Mr. Willis, of the Toronto Board of Trade, was secretary of this meeting. The following resolutions were proposed and submitted later to the congress, as opportunity offered:

"1. That in the opinion of this congress the transportation problem is of the greatest importance to the western agriculturist, miner and lumberman, and with the completion of the canal system of Canada to a uniform depth of 14 feet, which can be used on equal terms by the ships of the United States and Canada, and in view of the large consumption of American products by Canada, and the community of interest growing between the two countries justifies the reasonableness of a request that the inland waters and canal systems be extended to the shipping of both countries, including the right to trade between any ports."

"2. Whereas expression has been given at earlier meetings of this congress favouring closer trade relations with other countries,

"And whereas the free exchange of the national products between the United States and Canada would tend to a mutual advantage,

"Therefore be it resolved that this congress recommends the appointment of a commission representing both countries, to meet for the purpose of formulating a plan which could be submitted for the approval of their respective governments."

"3. That in the opinion of this congress the world's commerce would be benefited by the United States extending to other countries the same freedom of trade that those countries extend to the United States."

The first and third resolutions were readily adopted by the congress, but the second occasioned considerable discussion, many of the foreign delegates taking the ground that it was too local and did not come within the scope of pertinent discussion. The resolution was, however, finally adopted, many of the foreign delegates, especially representatives of foreign governments, declining to vote.

I think, on the whole, the congress should be voted a success. The aim, according to prospectus, was to promote international trade, and I have no doubt the many excellent papers and speeches and the accompanying discussions, will have that good result. The governor of the state of Pennsylvania, in concluding his speech of welcome, made use of these words: "Gentlemen, I hope the congress will result in great pleasure to you and great profit to us." The remark was made in the best good humor and received in the same spirit, but I don't think the audience was less sensible of its aptness than the speaker himself, who was candid as well as brilliant and humorous, and acquitted himself worthy of a great and generous people on a really great occasion.

At the meeting of the Canadian delegates already referred to, the question of re-organizing the Dominion Board of Trade was talked over, and it was finally agreed that the Toronto Board of Trade should take the initiative. When this matter comes before the Winnipeg Board of Trade, as I think it will in due course, I bespeak for the proposition your best consideration, and if reasonable and practicable, your final sanction. A central trade organization, properly organized and conducted and qualified to speak for commercial Canada, would be of great service to the country. The need of such an organization was forcibly illustrated at the congress of commerce, when Canadian delegates assembled without definite concerted purpose, and when a splendid opportunity was lost of bringing to the attention of the commercial world the resources of our country. A Dominion Board of Trade would also, I believe, have great influence with the government. I believe the department of trade and commerce at Ottawa should be the premier department of our government, instead of a bureau of statistics as at present. The products of our forests, fields, ranges, mines, fisheries, and factories should be pushed beyond the borders of our own country, where there are millions of people ready to use them if intelligent effort was made to place them in new markets; but this cannot be done by private enterprise. It is a duty that should be assumed by the government.

I made it a point to meet privately delegates from countries whose foreign trade showed large increases in recent years, especially Germany, Japan and the United States, and from their statements and from official documents some of them have been kind enough to send me since, it is plain the tremendous increase in their foreign trade is due almost wholly to foreign commercial agents of their respective governments. I feel sure one hundred live pushing men sent out to carefully selected parts of the world would more than double our export trade in a very few years.

The council acknowledged receipt of the above report from Mr. Bole and tendered him the thanks of the board for his services as delegate of this board.

DEATH OF MEMBERS.

The members of the board were quite shocked when they heard of the death of Mr. R. W. Jameson, member of parliament, for the city of Winnipeg, and a member of this board, which occurred within a couple of hours after he left a general meeting of the board, held on the 21st of February last. A resolution was passed by the board and sent to the late member's family.