

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MARCH 29, 1897.

FREE FISH.

It was reported from Washington the other day that the new tariff bill would likely be amended so as to admit Canadian fresh water fish free of duty. This may look like a concession to Canada, but it is nothing of the kind. It is really a concession to United States fish companies which carry on operations in Canadian waters. United States waters are well fished out, and a number of large United States companies are now obliged to operate in Canadian waters to secure supplies. Of course these companies have to conform to our fishery regulations in order to operate here, but while they are nominally Canadian companies, their capital comes from the United States, and a considerable portion of the profit from the business goes to the United States. These companies have brought pressure to bear upon Washington to secure the placing of fresh lake fish upon the free list, and according to reports they are likely to succeed in this effort.

NO RETALIATION.

Some journals are demanding a retaliation policy against the United States on account of the tariff policy of the latter country. It must be acknowledged that the new United States tariff bill hits this country very hard, but at the same time it must be admitted that the United States has a perfect right to arrange its tariff according to the desires of the rulers there. The Commercial does not entertain the belief, urged by some journals, that the framers of the new United States tariff bill tried particularly to hit this country. The protectionist party was returned to power by the people, and having come into power they proceeded to frame a new high tariff bill. We do not believe they took Canada into consideration at all in the matter. They simply regulated the duties upon the different commodities according to their own wishes, regardless of the country whence such commodities are usually imported.

Canada enjoys the same liberty to regulate her tariff according to the desires of her people. If we find it necessary, in order to protect our own interests, to increase our tariff upon some commodities which come principally from the United States, we will do so. This, however, is not retaliation, but protection. It is the use of the word "retaliation" which The Commercial objects to. This talk of retaliation is all wrong. We will not increase our tariff out of any spirit of retaliation, but simply as a matter of protecting our own interests, the same as the United States has done in increasing the tariff upon most commodities imported from Canada.

The new United States tariff bill greatly increases the duties upon agricultural products, such as are imported from Canada, and the avowed object of keeping the home

market for the home producer. A large quantity of agricultural products from the Pacific coast states are consumed in British Columbia. If we cannot sell to the United States, we might protect our own interests by holding our British Columbia market for our home producers. This should not and would not be done in any spirit of retaliation, but simply with the object of furthering our own interests. This talk of the hostility of the United States to Canada, and of the propriety of retaliation on our part, should be dropped. So far as the United States is concerned, it is simply a matter of trade policy, and the same view of the question should be taken here.

THE BALLOT BOX.

In order to prevent ballot-box-stuffing and other crookedness in connection in elections, the Winnipeg Free Press proposes that the elections should be held under the direct control of the courts. The Commercial would second the motion. In fact this journal made exactly similar suggestions in discussing this question some time ago, but we are quite willing to second the efforts of the Free Press now. By all means let us have the elections carried out under the authority of the courts. If our new reform government really means to carry out reforms in the matter of elections, here is a question which is very simple of solution. Under the present system, we would not expect better results with a Liberal government in power, than we have had in the past, with the Conservatives in control. Party men, whether Grits or Tories, will twist everything to their own advantage, and probably there are just as many unscrupulous men in one party as in the other. We say therefore, take the control of the elections out of the hands of the parties entirely. It seems a burlesque to talk about our advanced system of constitutional government, while the papers are full of reports of ballot-box stuffing and election frauds. The ballot-box should be regarded as an almost sacred institution, and it should be removed from the reach of the unscrupulous of either party. Instead of being allowed to fall among thieves, as it sometimes evilently does. If the Liberals continue the system of party control of the ballot-box, it may be set down as a fact that they continue this policy in order to gain as much as possible from such control.

THE ABATTOIR PROPOSALS

The citizens of Winnipeg have before them proposals for the establishment here of a large slaughtering and cold storage establishment, with the object of engaging in the shipment of dressed meats, and we presume also, of slaughtering for the local trade. The principal cause of interest in this matter is the fact that the promoters ask for a large amount of assistance from the city in the way of a bonus, as well as a further large expenditure on the part of the city, in the interest of the said industry, which could not be considered as a direct bonus.

While the importance of the proposed industry is fully realized, the general impression seems to be against the proposed

large civic expenditures by way of assistance to the industry.

The Commercial has for many years advocated the establishment of a large slaughtering industry here, with the object of shipping dressed meats and doing a packing business. The advantages which Winnipeg possesses as a centre for such an industry, are unsurpassed by any point either in the Western States or in the Canadian West. Our export trade in live stock has now grown to considerable proportions. Winnipeg is the natural point for feeding and sorting over animals for shipment. All live stock shipped east is handled over in the yards here, before the trains are made up for shipment eastward. Animals sometimes sustain injuries which render them unfit for shipment, but not such as to injure them for the local market. Every load coming in contains some animals which it would not be desirable to ship, consequently even for the live stock export trade alone, an abattoir and packing business here would prove a valuable adjunct.

The exportation of dressed meat instead of shipping live stock, has been vigorously advocated of late years by different persons. From the humanitarian point of view it certainly has everything in its favor, while the cost of exporting dressed meat, as compared with live stock, would be vastly in favor of the dressed meat trade. The only question seems to be as regards the demand for chilled or refrigerated meats in Great Britain. It is claimed by some that there is such a strong prejudice there against meats of this class, that it cannot be made profitable to export fresh meats to British markets. Other persons who have studied the matter, claim that by the adoption of certain methods in introducing the trade in British markets, this prejudice could be overcome. The Commercial has long been an advocate of the dressed meat trade, and we still believe that sooner or later the shipment of dressed meats will largely supplant the export live stock trade.

Another matter which The Commercial has advocated for some years, quite independent of the dressed meat trade, is the establishment of a public abattoir in Winnipeg. We have advocated this mainly from sanitary motives. At present slaughter houses are scattered about the outskirts of the city. These small local slaughter houses have not proper facilities, such as sewerage connections etc., to ensure their cleanliness and healthfulness. Another important point is the inspection of meats for local consumption. The Commercial has reason to believe that animals have been slaughtered and sold which were not fit for food. What we have advocated on several occasions in the past, is a public abattoir, where all slaughtering should be done, under proper supervision as to inspection, etc. Under such a system animals could be inspected by a civic official, and anything unfit for food would be rejected. The animals can be examined and inspected to better advantage than after slaughtering and dressing for market.

In connection with the recent proposals to establish a large slaughtering house here, The Commercial has already on many