

law in the United States have been greatly encouraged to persevere in their efforts to regulate the railways, by the adoption in Great Britain of a very extensive set of regulations for the official control of the railways in that country. The wisdom of following up the principle contained in these measures, can hardly be questioned. The question of transportation is one of vast importance to the people. Compare the situation right here in Manitoba for instance. The cost of transporting our surplus products to the seaboard is a matter of financial life or death to us. So elsewhere the transportation question is one of vast importance, and it is but right that transportation matters should be so safeguarded by our laws as to prevent possible injustice to individuals and communities.

THE WATER-POWER.

Last week reference was made in these columns to the value of the water-power of the city of Augusta, Georgia, which was constructed at a cost of \$1,750,000. This expenditure is considered by the citizens of that place to have been a very profitable one, and it is looked upon as having been the direct means of making Augusta the most prosperous city in the south. THE COMMERCIAL pointed out that Winnipeg could secure as valuable a water-power as that owned by Augusta, for considerably less than one-third of the expenditure, the cost of utilizing the Assiniboine water-power here being estimated at \$500,000. We may now explain that the estimated cost of \$500,000 includes a lock to provide for the navigation of the river. As our readers are aware, a movement is now on foot to urge the government to allow of the construction of the works necessary to utilize the water power, without building locks for purposes of navigation. The river has not been navigated for ten years, and without a large expenditure for improvements, it is of no certain value as a navigable stream. By the utilizing of the water-power which it affords at various points, the Assiniboine can be turned to far more valuable use than it is likely to be for any purposes of navigation. Should the government grant the request to allow of the construction of works to utilize the water-power, without compelling the building of locks, the cost would be greatly reduced. At Winnipeg, for instance, the necessary work without the lock would cost only \$300,000 to \$350,000. There is every reason to believe that the government will accede to the proposals to do away with the construction of locks, in which case the water-power can be utilized at a trifling expenditure, in comparison with its value. This would reduce the cost of constructing the work here to about one-sixth of the cost of Augusta's water-power, which expenditure is considered to have been such a splendid investment for that city. If an expenditure of \$1,750,000 has proved such a good thing for Augusta, how much more valuable would an expenditure of \$300,000 to \$500,000 be to Winnipeg, when it is understood that the smaller expenditure will give as great a return as the larger?

CREDIT IN THE MEAT TRADE.

The butchers of Grand Forks have organized an association and decided to sell for cash.

We mention this for the information of Winnipeg butchers. Though the butchers of this city have good, big profits upon their goods, as a class they do not appear to be making much money. A few have done fairly well, but many of them have hardly been able to keep even. The difficulty is not hard to discover. It lies in the one word "credit." Credit is given very extensively in the meat trade here, and the losses from bad accounts are correspondingly great. Hear what the Grand Forks butchers have to say on this point:—

"Owing to the credit system we are obliged to charge high prices for our meats, and the consequence is that those who do pay have to pay for those who do not."

THE COMMERCIAL has pointed this fact out more than once. The cash and good pay customers are obliged to make up the losses of the dead beats and others who beat the butcher. What right has the cash customer to be asked to help pay losses which he has no part in making? Here is a grievance which the cash buyers in the cities and towns have to put up with, which is quite as serious as other grievances, which have led to agitations, yet very little is heard about it. Cash and good pay consumers are quite as much to blame for this state of things as are the dealers. There are many good pay customers, who are always ready to pay their bills at reasonable intervals, who would be annoyed if they were refused credit, even if they were offered much lower prices for spot cash. This is one of the difficulties in the way of doing strictly cash business. If the dealers would offer reasonable inducements for cash, and consumers would recognize the advantage of making their purchases in this way, business would soon be placed on a vastly better basis. One good reason why the meat business particularly should be done on a cash basis is, that dealers are obliged to pay cash as rule, or very short terms of credit, for their goods, and they should sell as they buy.

ONE CAUSE OF HARD TIMES.

Writing about hard times in Dakota, a Minneapolis paper says:—

"It seems that all the farmers of Dakota do is to raise wheat to get more money to buy more land to raise more wheat, and thus it continues until it develops from an industry into a land or wheat fever. Another reason that the Dakota farmer pleads so much the existence of hard times is his disability to keep money, and no matter how good a crop or how much he gets for it he does not have it long, and has to run his business on tick until the next crop comes along. The Dakota farmer has lots to learn yet as well as the rest of us."

There is no doubt considerable truth in the above paragraph. A party who called the attention of THE COMMERCIAL to the item, and who has a good knowledge of Manitoba, says it will apply to many farmers nearer home than Dakota.

MORTGAGING CROPS.

By the report of the proceedings of the Winnipeg board of trade, which will be found in another column, it will be observed that the board has been discussing the question of chattel mortgages. The point of most interest in the report is the decision arrived at by the

board to urge the provincial government to withdraw the right of any person within the province to give a chattel mortgage upon a growing crop. It is understood that this proposal met with some opposition, but was nevertheless carried. At present the law permits the mortgaging of growing crops and even crops before they are sown. This, it is claimed results in injury to individuals and the country at large. The board, it will be observed, does not object to a mortgage upon a growing crop, when it is given in order to obtain seed grain. It is also proposed to ask the government to exempt growing crops from seizure under execution. This is no doubt intended to protect the farmer until he is in a position to realize upon his crop. The seizure of a crop before it is harvested and ready for the market, would result in great loss to the grower, as it would mean the sale of the crop at a sacrifice. If protected until harvested and ready for the market, the crop is in shape to realize a fair price.

Clock and Watch Cases.

W. F. Doll, formerly connected with the jewellery trade in Winnipeg, is a vigorous writer. His correspondence is always spicy reading, and if in the nature of a controversy, is sure to make the situation uncomfortable for his opponent. He is now out with a pamphlet, called "Karat and Business Morality," which is "Respectfully Dedicated to the Canadian Jewellers, and all Interested in the Prosperity of Canada." This pamphlet is worth reading by every jeweller and many who are not jewellers. If half what Mr. Doll says is true, the Canadian manufacturers of watch cases have many sins to answer for, in the way they are gulping the public. There certainly seem to be some abuses in the clock and watch trade under the cover of a 35 per cent. duty. Mr. Doll claims that one watch case, guaranteed filled, which he had assayed, showed only 9 1-5 cents worth of gold. In Mr. Doll's pamphlet, W. K. McNaught, who is said to be engaged in the double capacity of conducting a jewellery trade paper and manufacturing cases, is handled in a way which should make his ears tingle. Mr. Doll encloses the following form of petition in each pamphlet, for the signature of jewellers:

To His Excellency the Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada, in Council:
Your petitioners, the undersigned, humbly show as follows:

1. That the ad valorem duty on clock and watch cases—namely, 35 per cent.—is very high, greatly increasing the cost to consumers and ineffectual to encourage bona fide manufacture within Canada. Some three factories in all have been started within the past fifteen years for the manufacture of clocks or clock cases, but none of them are now in existence. Only two firms or companies are now manufacturing watch cases in Canada, one of which is making only one line of cases in a very small way. The other, the American Watch Case Company, of Toronto, is apparently prosperous, simply on account of the similarity of its name to that of one of the largest, oldest and most reliable watch and watch case manufacturing concerns in the world; and because a large portion of the products of the Canadian factory resemble in everything but quality those of the United States manufacturers.

And our markets being in consequence flooded with spurious goods—to the detriment of honest traders and to the disgrace of our country: Your petitioners would therefore pray:

That your Excellency may be pleased to submit to Parliament proposals for the reduction of the duty on said articles to an amount not greater than 10 per cent. ad valorem, the same rate now collected on watch and clock movements.

(Signed)