

COMPLAINTS have been heard from several quarters of late, in regard to the mode of giving tenders for supplies for the Northwest Mounted Police and Indians. Grain and provision dealers who have been in the habit of tendering, think that the particulars of the accepted tender should be made public, as a proof that no favoritism has been shown. In one instance it is stated that the successful tenderer on a contract to supply oats, has purchased his grain at a higher figure than the price stipulated in some of the rejected tenders, and this gives rise to the assumption that the tender had not been awarded fairly. Rejected tenders are usually returned with the remark that the price is too high, and dealers think that the price at which the award has been made should also be given.

THE railways in Minnesota and Dakota are still experiencing great inconvenience from too much snow. Scarcity of water is also proving a great drawback. A report from Minneapolis says that all along the railways large numbers of cars of wheat are "hung up," owing to the inability of the engines to haul more than a few cars and that by the time the trains arrive at Duluth or Minneapolis, there is not much left but the caboose, as cars have to be dropped along the road. At some points in Dakota no water can be obtained within a distance of fifty miles. By our report of the local wheat market it will be seen that the great disadvantage to a more active grain trade in Manitoba, is owing to an absence of sleighing. If some of the surplus snow of Minnesota and Dakota could be transferred to this province, it would greatly facilitate the delivery of grain.

THE railway commission, appointed at the last session of the Dominion Parliament, for the purpose of investigating railway matters and hearing evidence or charges against the companies, with a view to future additional railway legislation, will probably meet in Winnipeg early in the new year. The commission have already met in several eastern cities, and a large amount of valuable information has been gleaned on the important subject of greater legislative control of the railways. Numerous complaints have been made before the commission in regard to the various forms of discrimination indulged in by the railway companies. No doubt a good deal of evidence will be taken here, and those who have any charges to make against the railway companies should prepare them for presentation. It is said that the evidence so far heard before the commission is favorable to the establishment of the proposed court of railway commissioners for Canada.

THE *Montreal Trade Bulletin* a short time ago referred to a case of over-rating by a mercantile agency, whereby serious loss had been entailed to parties furnishing credit to the over-rated firm, on account of the standing as represented by the mercantile agency. Now the same paper relates a case where a trader has suffered injustice and loss by being under-rated. Mercantile agencies are not by any means infallible, and though as a general rule they furnish a great deal of valuable information to the mercantile community, yet in the very nature of things they must frequently be astray.

There are doubtless many instances in which their advices would not be reliable, as in the cases referred to. Under-rating is perhaps of more frequent occurrence than over-rating, as it is the safer side to err upon, but it would seem but fair that where injury results to a trader from the former cause, he should be able to recover from the agency for any loss sustained through such misrepresentation.

THE United States government is at a loss to know what to do with its surplus revenue. It has been argued, and not without a show of good reason, that the internal revenue tax should be entirely done away with. It does seem strange that a nation complaining of too much revenue, should place a tax upon certain home industries. If the tax be levied on the ground that such industries require a certain amount of government control, why not turn them over to the States or municipal corporations where these industries are located. Regarding this internal revenue, there is good ground for the contention that taxes so collected properly belong to and should be applied for local purposes. Whilst the federal government wants a reduction in the revenue, the states and municipalities require more, the revenue derived from the manufacture of spirits, tobacco, etc., turned over to the municipalities where these commodities are consumed, would be placed where it would do the most good, and where it would seem to properly belong, at the same time considerably lessening the pressure upon the federal treasury.

THE *Louisville Courier Journal* adopts a most unique line of argument in favor of reducing the duty on pig iron. It starts out with the astonishing assertion that what is wanted to develop the iron interests of the South is low prices for iron. From what school of commercial economy could reasoning be brought to uphold such a statement? But circumstances alter cases; and the arguments produced in this instance at least have an air of plausibility about them which is strangely at variance with the generally accepted laws which are supposed to govern commercial development. The style of argument used is, that iron can be produced more cheaply in the South than in the old furnace districts of Ohio and Pennsylvania, but so long as prices are kept sufficiently high to yield a profit, manufacturers will continue to work their old furnaces. When depression comes and prices go down to below a profitable basis of manufacture in the North, these furnaces will have to be closed, and capitalists will invest in the South, where they will still be able to manufacture at a profit. The *Courier Journal* says every advance in the price of iron, one dollar per ton, reopens a furnace in the North, to the disadvantage of investment in the South. The tariff, the *Journal* argues, therefore retards the development of the iron industry in the South, by keeping up prices. Now that prices for iron are advancing, Southern manufacturers are selling low to try and keep down values, lest prices should reach a point that it would make it profitable to reopen the high-priced furnaces of Pennsylvania and Ohio, and thus lessen the value of the iron and coal fields of Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee,

North Carolina and Virginia. This is certainly a remarkable line of reasoning, and we give it for what it is worth.

THE *Montreal Star* has discovered as a reason why the C.P.R. should not oppose the construction of the Hudson's Bay railway, that anything which tends to hasten the settlement of the Northwest must increase the traffic of the former railway. The *Star* thinks the Hudson's Bay railway would prove a valuable feeder to the C.P.R., whether the sea route should turn out successful or otherwise. This is an argument which has been frequently used here in regard to the Hudson's Bay railway, and perhaps the C.P.R. authorities have adopted the same view of the case, as a reason for the friendship which they have manifested toward the former scheme of late. However, if the principle enunciated by the *Star* were entirely correct, it would also be in the interest of the C.P.R. to encourage the extension of railways from the south of the boundary, into the Northwest, as such railways would certainly hasten the settlement and development of the country. That the C.P.R. authorities will accept the argument presented by the *Star* it is not at all probable, and so long as they can retard the development of the Northwest by the enforcement of the monopoly provisions, we may expect the disallowance policy to be strictly adhered to.

THE proposed Imperial Institute scheme, which was to succeed the Colonial Exhibition, as a sort of permanent museum for the exhibition of the products of the British colonies, has been abandoned for the present. The Colonial Exhibition has no doubt been of great benefit to the colonies, and particularly to Canada. Our country has not suffered by the comparison of our products and manufactures along side those of the other colonies, but the effect produced has been rather the opposite and has tended to show the great natural resources of this country, and the commercial development which it is capable of reaching. The colonial exhibition, in so far as it has set forth the advantages to be derived from more extended trade relationship between the colonies and the United Kingdom, has been in a measure successful, and from this the desire for a permanent exhibition has been manifested. The project for the establishment of a permanent exhibition at one time gave evidence of a successful accomplishment of the desired end, but it seems that it has since been stifled by the odor of flunkeyism which surrounded the Colonial Exhibition, under the presidency of the Prince of Wales. The commercial element desired a greater share in the management of the proposed permanent institute, and the display of less red tape and a corresponding decrease in official control, as compared with the Colonial Exhibition. This the official element were not willing to allow, and after several disagreements the scheme was dropped. The expense incurred in carrying on the late Colonial Exhibition, under the management of the Royal Commissioners is said to have been enormous, and charges of extravagance, if not of mistrust are hinted at. It is not unlikely that the project of establishing a permanent museum for the exhibition of the products of the colonies, may be revived at some future date, more directly under the control of the commercial interests.