

the situation, by which the official effort to prevent a correct exhibit was defeated. This alleged effort to reduce the crop estimate was attributed to the influence of the Farmers' Alliance and other influences, with the object of enhancing the price obtained. However this may be, it is difficult to see what lasting benefit could be gained by misrepresenting the quantity of wheat. Higher prices might be obtained for a short time, but eventually prices would be depressed as the wheat came into sight, and the average would be reduced on the next crop, so that the situation would be balanced. It is well known that the low prices prevailing this year are due to some extent to underestimates of previous crops. An underestimate of the crop therefore cannot in the end prove of any benefit to the producer.

The *Price Current* bases its belief that the crop has again been under estimated, to some extent upon the fact that where crop reports have been prepared by state officials, they are invariably higher than the report of the Washington bureau. Thus in six States, the Washington report is about 22,500,000 bushels less than the aggregate of the several reports prepared by the State authorities. If the same difference were maintained in the case of the remaining wheat States, which do not collect crop statistics, the estimate of the Washington bureau would be increased by about 75,000,000 bushels, on the basis of the official estimates by State authorities.

In the case of the northwestern wheat states, it is certainly evident that the Washington report is decidedly too low, as is shown by the quantity of wheat already marketed. The figures are: Minnesota, 30,695,000; North Dakota, 26,438,000, South Dakota, 20,521,000—total for the three states, 77,654,000 bushels. This is the total crop of these states as estimated by the Washington bureau. The *Minneapolis Market Record* says that it is well authenticated by the facts now at hand, of the movement of the crop, that the yield in the three states named is at least 100,000 bushels. More than 52,000,000 bushels have already been received at Minneapolis and Duluth, no less than 12,000,000 bushels have been ground at interior mills, more than 3,000,000 bushels have gone out through channels south of Minneapolis, without being taken into either the Minneapolis or Duluth reports of receipts; 7,000,000 are now in country elevators and 12,000,000 bushels are reserved for seed, making 86,000,000 bushels. Few dispute now that farmers in the three states have for sale 14,000,000 bushels which would make the 100,000,000 bushels claimed. So far as the three northwestern states are concerned, it is therefore evident that the Washington bureau has made a serious mistake, and if the estimates all the way through are as far astray, the Cincinnati paper may not be far wrong in placing the final estimate at 52,000,000 bushels under the mark.

✱ ARBITRATION VERSUS LAW.

A great deal is being said and written these days in Manitoba about the great expense attending the collection of debts by process of law. A number of instances have been given where the expenses in connection with the

suit for the collection of a small amount, has reached a sum in excess of the original claim. Any one who has had anything to do with law in Manitoba (and we presume the condition is much the same elsewhere), knows from experience that the cost is enormous, and the result usually unsatisfactory to all concerned. In fact, the collection of debts by means of the law is almost a farce, and it would be little loss to any one but the lawyers if the whole process for the collection of minor debts were entirely swept away. The lawyers and court officials are about the only class who gain anything by law, and in fact the law seems to be framed pretty much for their special benefit. A Winnipeg merchant stated to *THE COMMERCIAL* some time ago that he undertook to collect a number of accounts by law, and when he got through he found that the legal expenses had amounted to more than he collected from all the suits. Business men are often heard to say that it is useless to go to law to collect accounts, owing to enormous legal expenses and the risk of being unable to compel payment after judgment. Really, as it stands, the law is little benefit to any one, and generally the result is unsatisfactory to all concerned.

The expenses in connection with a suit even in the lower courts, sarcastically called the poor man's court, are enormously out of proportion to the amount involved and to the service rendered. When it comes to the higher courts, expenses multiply even faster. We hear much talk about reducing the cost of legal procedure, but what seems to be necessary is a radical revolutionizing of the whole system.

In a great many cases, a settlement could be made by arbitration much more satisfactorily than by law. The *Winnipeg Grain Exchange* furnishes an example in this direction which might well be studied by all who have the best interest of the country at heart. The Grain Exchange is the most important trading body in Manitoba. Its members handle almost the entire wheat crop of Manitoba, and do a business amounting to millions of dollars annually, and they do all this without ever engaging in a law suit. During the grain season they are rushed with business. Transactions are made in a hurry, and misunderstandings and disputes frequently occur, but the public generally knows nothing about them. The members of the exchange have a plan of settling all such difficulties among themselves. They have a "Committee of Arbitration" for the special purpose of settling any trade difficulties between members. When the services of the arbitrators is required the committee is called, the case presented and a decision is rendered with neatness and despatch. Unlike the usual result of a suit at law, the finding of the committee is generally satisfactory to all concerned. At any rate, the decisions of the committee have always been respected and accepted in every case by an immediate settlement in accordance with the decision given. No member has ever been known to object to the finding of the committee. Cases that would have cost hundreds of dollars if taken to the courts, and which would have given no end of trouble to the parties con-

cerned, besides probably requiring months to secure a verdict, have been settled in a few minutes by the committee of arbitration.

Altogether the success of the plan adopted by the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, would seem to indicate what might be done by arbitration generally, if the proper machinery existed for employing this means of settling cases which usually go before the courts.

In speaking with a member of the Winnipeg exchange about the arbitration committee, he thought that the system could be made to apply to the country at large, by the appointment of a board of arbitration, whose decisions should be made as binding as that of a court, though appeal might be allowed from the arbitrators to a judge; but in such case no new evidence should be submitted, and no lawyers should be allowed to plead.

There is one favorable feature about arbitration, that it is freed from the maze of technicalities usually woven about a case by the lawyers, sometimes to the exclusion of common sense and justice.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

An effort is being made to secure an Imperial subsidy for the Canada-Australian steamship line. The Marquis of Ripon, secretary of state for the colonies, has received a deputation consisting of Sir Charles Tupper, Mr. James Huddart, of the steamship line, and the agents general of Tasmania, New Zealand and Victoria, upon the subject. The deputation urged the Imperial government to subsidize the Canadian-Australian steamship service to the extent of £25,000 yearly for ten years, the company agreeing to build a new steamship of the Admiralty pattern, which would be available as an armored cruiser in time of war.

The act of the territorial legislature providing for greater control over separate schools has become law. The Dominion Government was pressed to disallow the act by the Catholic clergy and others, but it has refused to interfere, and the time has now expired in which the federal authorities can interfere. This is as might have been expected, and is in a line with the policy pursued by the government in the past. Certain Protestants of Ontario fought hard for interference with provincial legislation when they demanded the disallowance of the Jesuit Estate's bill passed by the Quebec legislature. The federal authorities refused to interfere, and the wisdom of their policy is now apparent, in view of the demand for the disallowance of legislation relating to the schools, passed by the Manitoba and the territorial legislatures. Had the Dominion interfered in provincial matters in the case of the Quebec act, a dangerous precedent would have been established, which would probably have led to interference with Manitoba and the territories in their school measures. The more rampant Protestants who worked themselves up to a high state of excitement because the Quebec act was not disallowed, must now admit that the Dominion government has taken about the wisest course in these matters. They can just set the Manitoba and territorial school acts against the Jesuit Estate's act and call it equal.