

travellers to avoid drinking the water of any country they may be visiting. This no doubt gave rise to the idea that Manitoba water was universally bad. There is a good deal of water of an alkali nature in the country, and the general tendency of the water here is to have a laxative effect upon new-comers. Travellers on the prairies in the unsettled districts have often been obliged to use surface water from sloughs or swamps to a great extent, and of course much of the water obtained in this way is not good. Notwithstanding this belief in the bad quality of the water, good water can generally be obtained with ease in nearly all parts of the country. In many districts natural springs of pure cold water abound. Within eight and ten miles of Winnipeg springs of pure water, of almost an icy temperature, can be found in the warmest weather. Water, pure and cold, can be obtained by boring in most sections. In the Winnipeg district pure water can be obtained at a depth of 40 feet and upward, and many of these wells give forth a continuous stream of excellent water, thus making it unnecessary to use pumps or other apparatus to raise it to the surface. Water can be obtained from shallower wells, but it is not always of as good quality as the wells that are bored down to the rock, where there appears to be an unlimited supply of pure, cold water. In fact the supply has been so abundant that in Winnipeg the city council has been considering a plan of supplying the city with water from artesian wells, for domestic purposes, fire protection, sewer flushing, etc. The present water supply of the city is taken from the Assiniboine river, though a large number of the citizens depend upon the artesian wells, which are numerous in the city, for their supplies. Many who have the river water in their residences, use the water from the wells for drinking and cooking.

THE SOUTHEASTERN.

Elsewhere in this issue we publish in full the reply of the provincial government to the petition of the Manitoba and Southeastern railway projectors, for aid to their road. This reply is lengthy and in some respects a remarkable document. Indeed, it reads as though it had been carefully prepared for the benefit of the electors, rather than a simple answer to the Southeastern people. It seemed to be a foregone conclusion from the start that the government had no notion of doing anything for the Southeastern, and this lengthy document now made public is a sort of attempt at justification of the course which apparently the government decided to adopt from the beginning.

It is quite true, as set forth, that the government should scrutinize very closely any contemplated expenditure of this nature. Most, if not all of the grants to railways made by the province, have turned out rather disappointing in the matter of practical results. This is an additional incentive to greater care in the future. The government, however, has not announced an abandonment of its policy of granting aid to railways, and if this policy is to be continued, the Southeastern

is undoubtedly the most deserving enterprise now before the people. It is moreover in the hands of good men, who have large commercial interests in the country. It is in no sense a speculative or "boom" scheme, and there is every reason to believe that the guarantees offered would be faithfully carried out. The object of the projectors of the road is plainly to operate the road and make it a profitable property. Their only interest would be in the continuous operation of the road. They are not charter-mongers, and it would be against their general commercial interests to dispose of the road. The plea of the government as to the limited revenue of the province might be taken by some as to mean the abandonment of the policy of aiding railways, but it is not likely that such is the real intention. It is no doubt intended for the electors.

Coming to the financial question, it seems the determination of the government not to grant any aid to this road, either the amount asked for or any less amount. The letter plainly says in conclusion that "the government does not see its way clear to extend any assistance to the enterprise in its present form." This seems to show clearly that the government is set against the road, no matter what guarantees are offered or how liberal terms could be made. There is something about this attitude of the government which seems difficult to fathom. If the government has decided to abandon the policy entirely of giving grants to railways, there would be no harm in stating so plainly. On the other hand, if further grants are to be made, it will take a much stronger document than the one now published, to prove to the people that the government has acted fairly in entirely refusing to aid to any extent whatever this enterprise, which is by all odds the most valuable local railway project ever presented to the people of Manitoba.

The letter endeavors to show that there is no reason to believe that the company would be able to pay any portion of the interest which the government is asked to guarantee. The company, it may be stated, offers to transfer its entire land grant of 6,400 acres per mile, to the government, as security for the guarantee of interest. Valuing the land at 80 cents per acre, the amount would about cover the liability assumed by the government. All the revenue derived from the sale of lands and timber would go to the government to offset the guarantee of interest. For the first few years the government would perhaps be called upon to meet the interest; but inside of a few years the revenue from the land should certainly be sufficient to repay the government in full. A considerable portion of the land is suited for settlement, and the balance is valuable for its timber resources.

In addition to the security named, the company offers certain guarantees as to freight rates, etc., which would prove very beneficial to the country. It guarantees to carry lumber at 8 cents per 100 pounds from the lake to Winnipeg, which is one-half of the rate now charged by the Canadian Pacific railway. This concession would prove of inestimable value to the farmers of Manitoba.

We hear much talk about mixed farming, but farmers must have buildings for stock before they can go into mixed farming. The great requisite is cheaper lumber, and the rate of freight offered would materially reduce lumber prices in Manitoba. The company also guarantees to carry other freight at from 15 to 50 per cent lower than rates now current in Manitoba. In case of a connecting line being built to Lake Superior, the company agree to carry grain over its portion of the road at a rate equal to 12½ per 100 pounds from Winnipeg to Lake Superior, or 15 cents per 100 pounds taking Brandon as a basis. The company also guarantees to transport 30,000,000 feet of logs to Winnipeg annually, and build mills to manufacture these logs into lumber at Winnipeg. These are all valuable guarantees, and there is every reason to believe they would be faithfully carried out. There is every probability that the road would eventually become a link in a through line to Lake Superior, and in such case the guarantee as to through rates might prove valuable.

To put this matter in a nutshell, the promoters of this road are prepared to place themselves, so far as this project is concerned, entirely in the hands of the Government, to give any guarantees deemed necessary, to keep the road independent, and to be operated for all time to come in keeping with the guarantees offered. The Government, in reply, simply refuse to aid the undertaking.

A refreshing part of the Government reply is furnished in the little lectures on sound and safe business principles it contains. But the wonder to many is, where the great business ability of the Local Government exists. From past experience, the lawyers of the outfit, in making contracts, have not made them very binding, where provincial interests were at stake; and those who have had any commercial experience have not furnished the brilliant record, which would enable them to lecture and instruct the crowd of successful business men, who have supported the promoters of this project, and who have implicit faith in its practicability and great value to the province. Evidently the lengthy reply is the production of one or more conceited obstructionists, intended to reason out principles about which he or they know practically nothing. To any man of reasonable business attainments, the attempt of the local government to measure its business capacity against that of the deputation which last pressed for aid to this project, must savor strongly of the old fable of "The frog and the bull." But then the reply was not meant for shrewd business men, but to appeal to the voters. Perhaps the multitude of business men and others, favorable to this undertaking, may also combine and appeal to the voters at the next provincial election. It would only be a justifiable reprisal if they did so, and should they adopt such a course, the parallel of "The frog and the bull" might be carried to completion, at least so far as the fate of the frog is concerned.

EARLY CLOSING OF STORES.

The early closing by-laws have at last been passed by the Winnipeg city council, and after August 15, grocers, boot and shoe dealers, (Continued on page 1147.)