

this the farmers had to pay from \$12.00 to \$14.00 per hundred pounds and content themselves with being thankful for such blessings at the hands of a clean and honest Government.

A FRESH START IN THE GAME.

Taking up the year 1899, the output of binder twine at the Kingston Penitentiary was the same as in former years, namely, one million pounds which cost an average of \$6.25 per hundred pounds including raw material and manufacture. The history of the binder twine business for this year is somewhat shorter and simpler than the two preceding years for the obvious reason that the manipulators of the combine namely, Coll Bros., The Hobbs Hardware Co., and H. N. Bate & Sons, had each had their turn at fleecing the farmers, and of course there must now be a fresh start in the game. This time public notice was given and tenders invited. Three tenders were put in, but strange to say all by the members of the old combine. It would seem, however, that things were not so harmonious this time as they had been in the past, there being a disposition to crowd Coll Bros. out, which caused a little family jar, from which the public purse did not suffer, as will be seen by the following tenders.

H. N. Bate & Sons an average price of \$5.06 per hundred lbs.

Hobbs Hardware Co. first tender, an average price of \$6.00 per hundred lbs.

Coll Bros., an average price of \$6.47 per hundred lbs.

Hobbs Hardware Co. second tender, an average price of \$6.51 per hundred lbs.

It will be seen at a glance that Bate & Sons' tender was a mere blind, the twine having cost \$6.25 per hundred lbs. and their tender being only \$5.06 per hundred pounds. The Hobbs Hardware Co's. first tender as will be seen was also below the cost of the twine, and Coll Bros. who were to be

put aside this time, put in the only tender above the cost of the twine, namely, \$6.47 per hundred pounds. It is quite evident that the Hobbs Hardware Co. had the pull this time, but they had been outbid by the dissatisfied Coll Bros. by 47c per hundred lbs. amounting on the whole transaction to \$4,700.

A QUEER TRANSACTION.

Now, the interesting part of the transaction comes in. How did the Hobbs Hardware Co. find this out? But there can be no doubt that they did find it out and at the last minute put in their second tender in the name of another party as has been disclosed by the correspondence. They advanced their offer over Coll Bros. by the mere shadow of 4c per 100 lbs. making an advance on the whole transaction of the beggarly sum of \$400, as against Coll Bros.' advance of \$4,700. The Hobbs Hardware Co., as was intended, of course got the twine at their second offer at an average of \$6.51 per hundred pounds. This whole transaction has jobbery so plainly stamped on its face that comment is unnecessary. But one thing is quite certain, namely, that the farmers had to pay from 14c to 15c per pound and in some cases even higher for this same twine, and perhaps should be grateful for having escaped so well.

This is shortly and plainly the story of the binder twine deal commencing in 1896, a few months after the Laurier Government took office, and ending with the fiscal year 1899. As for this present year 1900 there has been perhaps considerable advance in the cost of the raw material used for making twine, which of necessity would cause a corresponding advance in the price of binder twine. But of that nothing can be said as nothing is definitely known either as to the cost of the raw material or the price at which the binder twine has been sold to jobbers, the Government having sternly refused to give any information, alleging that such information might injure the