

on consumers by peddling farmers, not one of which contained over seventy-five pounds, while the purchaser believed he was receiving the regular bushel and a half. The old flour sack, which contains ninety-eight pounds of flour, when closely packed, holds only about seventy-five pounds of potatoes, and these are sold to consumers, who are always looking for bargains in goods with a price like wheat.

Many other points might be cited, in which this practice of disregarding the standard weight or measure opens the way to fraud in the commonest every-day transactions, so that the consumer, and in some instances the trader, can find his only safety in being guided in his purchases entirely by the standards, which are fixed by law; that is when the law has fixed any standard.

It is well that the Ottawa authorities take a liberal and business view of the provisions of the law above referred to. A rigid view would compel us to drink our milk, lemonade, beer or wine not by the glass but out of stamped measures, when we purchased any at a place of public refreshment. But no such narrow view of the law is taken, and so long as it is enforced, simply to protect the unwary from fraud, the general public should inquire into its provisions, and as far as they can, aid the Government and its inspectors in its enforcement.

VANCOUVER BOARD OF TRADE.

The annual report of the Vancouver Board of Trade, a copy of which has been received at this office from the secretary, Mr. A. H. B. MacGowan, is quite a bulky pamphlet of its class, and from its contents we are led to judge that the Board is a live institution, which looks carefully after the interests of the City of Vancouver, and at the same time does not forget those of other portions of the Dominion that come within the scope of its consideration.

As might be expected from the Board of a young and ambitious city like Vancouver the annual report is taken up largely with matters affecting local interests only, such as the improvement of roads leading to the city, the deepening of waters for local transport and other subjects but imperfectly understood by the outside world. But in many points the report shows that the Board is not ready to sacrifice the interests of Canada at large for those of another nation, while it has great and praise-worthy aims connected with spreading the foreign trade of the Dominion at large.

The Board's action in asking the Minister of Customs to rigidly enforce the order in council, compelling the carrying of all Canadian bonded goods in Canadian bottoms, ought to satisfy the most urgent clamor for Canadian retaliation, that Canadian shipping interests will be carefully guarded at, at least, one of our Pacific ports. Indeed the action of the Board shows a jealousy of local rights such as might be expected from a city in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or Prince Edwards Island.

As might be expected the Board is loyal to Canada on the question of the British mail route to Australia, and the expected subsidy connected therewith, and has no hesitation about contradicting and condemning the comparisons which favor the United States route.

With such a mail route properly subsidized, Vancouver would very likely be the Canadian port from which the Pacific voyage would begin. Of course we cannot blame the Board for displaying an interested patriotism on this point.

In looking over the work of the Vancouver Board as meagrely outlined in the report, the reader becomes impressed with the fact that there has been quite too large a proportion of it expended upon matters looking seaward, and too little attention paid to the view inland. That rugged backbone of our continent, the Rocky Mountains, divides British Columbia from a vast prairie country, which once fairly settled will call for more of the products of British Columbia than all the foreign export markets that province is ever likely to secure a footing in. Then that same prairie country can produce cheaply what British Columbia wants, and what it can only produce under difficulties, or not produce at all. We may be pardoned, therefore, for hinting that the Board can further the best interests of Vancouver by giving a little more attention in the future to the nursing of this valuable interprovincial trade.

WAR ON CANADIAN RAILWAYS.

During the past week or two there has been considerable excitement in railroad circles of the United States over the hope, that Congress might do something to bring a cessation of the unequal competition which United States trunk roads are trying to keep up with the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk roads in Canada. The report of the U. S. Senate Committee appointed to consider advisable steps, for the protection of National railway and shipping interests against Canadian competition has suggested, that a discriminating tax be made on Canadian vessels using the Sault Ste Marie canal: that Canadian vessels entering United States ports be subjected to the same discriminating tax as is placed upon United States vessels entering Canadian ports; and that Canadian railways entering the United States be subjected to a special license fee, that while hampering Canadian roads will not be injurious to the general trade of the United States. That some sort of legislation based upon these suggestions may be introduced into Congress is not at all unlikely (although, it is much less likely to become law), and even its becoming law is not impossible. As matters now stand in the United States Congress, there is no telling what might become law soon, if it is only legislation calculated to annoy Canadians.

The threatened legislation has not caused any great scare in Canada, but the report, that there is being formed a combination of all the United States trunk lines to fight the competition of the C. P. R. and Grand Trunk for through business, has caused quite a little excitement among Canadian railway men, especially when it is considered what would be the effect of such a combination at this time, when in the United States the administration in power is ever ready to favor any movement that is anti-Canadian.

The railroad men of the United States are certainly feeling very keenly the competition of Canadian lines at present. A glance at the

map of North America shows how the C. P. R. by its Sault connection furnishes a shorter and better route to the Atlantic from the great wheat fields of the northwestern states than is furnished by any other road or roads in the States, while from Chicago eastward both the Grand Trunk and C. P. R. have advantages in carrying through freight to the Atlantic, such as no United States roads possess. Starting with these natural disadvantages, United States railways were in no condition to undertake the burdens, and submit to the hampering conditions placed upon them by that most clumsy and unworkable of all pieces of hayseed legislation the Interstate Commerce Act. The United States is a great and powerful nation, but it is not powerful enough to enforce its blundering legislation on a neighboring commonwealth, and thus Canadian trunk lines possessing natural advantages in route, and immunity from this stupid law, are in such a position that their opponents south cannot successfully compete with them for through traffic. The latter have fought the battle bravely, and now have to own their inability, and endeavor to secure such legislation based upon national prejudice and cupidity, as will curb the present competing power of their Canadian rivals.

It would be wise to weigh carefully this cry of the United States roads for bolstering legislation, before accepting it as a sincere expression of their desires. In making their complaint they are careful to make their cry against the Interstate Commerce Act loud and bitter, and it is more than likely that some mitigation of its provisions, so as to leave them in better shape to compete with their Canadian rivals, would be much more acceptable, than any retaliatory legislation they are likely to secure. The Granger politician is too powerful in the United States at present for the railroad interests to secure much bolstering legislation, and if such bolstering means any increase in the cost of carrying the farmer's produce to an export market, as it doubtless would, then the opposition of the whole granger element of the west would be united and determined, and it would be backed by the millers and other manufacturers of the Northwestern States. It may therefore be assumed that if any retaliatory railway legislation is passed by Congress, which is not at all unlikely, the railway men might find, that while it might injure Canadian interests slightly, it would not benefit their own. Rather than look for such legislation, they would gladly accept a repeal of some clauses of the Interstate Commerce Act, which would take away at least the artificial barriers in the way of their competing successfully with Canadian roads.

It may be in the United States, that the feeling toward railway interests there is still so strong, as to preclude all hope of their getting justice in legislation, and it does seem as if they have in many respects been made the object of persecution by this Interstate Commerce Act. That repressive legislation should be so much desired in their case by the general public, is no doubt due in a large measure to the manner in which they, the railways, abused the power they possessed before the passing of the Interstate Commerce Act. The public were no doubt in a state of irritation at the