

agent where there were formerly three, the innocent farmer is less likely to have machines forced upon him which he does not need. It is not probable that the Massey-Harris company will be done any serious injury by the adverse comment passed upon it, if the managers of the new company make use of the great advantages which they now possess to the benefit to any considerable extent of the purchasers of their goods.

### NEEDED LEGISLATION.

The presence of the provincial legislature of Manitoba in session in Winnipeg, calls to mind some of the subjects upon which legislative enactment is desirable. There is the very important matter which has been discussed previously in these columns, regarding the spread of noxious weeds. In a grain country like Manitoba, it is of vital importance that the spread of weeds should be prevented. Sufficient care has not been given to this matter in the past, and weeds have been fast gaining a dangerous foothold in some sections of the province. The measures in existence to provide for the destruction of weeds, have been found altogether impractical of enforcement, and stringent regulations are now absolutely necessary. Legislation upon this subject should not only be of the most stringent character, but means should be also provided for the vigorous enforcement of the same.

Another matter upon which action should be taken by the legislature, is that of inaugurating a comprehensive and systematic system of drainage for the province. This matter has been pressed upon the government by the Winnipeg board of trade, and it is understood, as is also the case in the matter of weeds, that the government proposes taking some action on these points. In the matter of drainage, as also in the case of weeds, it seems clear that efficiency can only be obtained through a provincial system. The government should take these matters in charge, instead of leaving them to the municipalities. The drainage question the municipalities cannot deal with effectively, because many drains would require to be continued through two or more municipalities to be of value, and joint action by different municipalities can seldom be secured.

The attention of the legislature might also be drawn to the advantages which would be derived from a more comprehensive and thorough system of securing information about crops, live stock, and other statistics. In the United States the work of gathering statistics has been carried to a great state of perfection by the federal and state governments. Canada has no federal system whatever, and it is a matter for regret that such is the case. An efficient system of gathering statistics for the whole country, under the direction of the federal government, would be a great advantage. The absence of this only renders it the more necessary that the different provincial governments should endeavor to secure reliable information of this nature. Manitoba has done fairly well in the past in securing agricultural statistics, but there is room for improvement in several respects. Instead of depending entirely upon crop correspondents, the government might provide for obtaining considerable valuable information from

municipal officers. In the state of Minnesota, the municipal assessors provide the state with much information of this class. Municipal assessors visit all farms in their divisions, and they could at the same time procure a great deal of information about crops, live stock, etc., to be furnished to the government. In information gathered by assessors should be more accurate than from crop correspondents. The assessors could of course only make one return each year, and the correspondents would have to be relied upon for other returns.

There is need of some change in our lien laws which, as they now stand, are not alike fair to all classes of business men. As a rule, merchants in ordinary store lines, are at a disadvantage in the matter of liens. They cannot obtain liens upon the goods they sell, for the reason that the goods are either quickly consumed, or are so changed as to be beyond identification, and valueless if they could be identified. Merchants are also at a disadvantage in compelling payment of accounts, for after going to the expense of seizing they may find that the articles taken are covered by a lien, there being no registration to show that the liens existed. Along with liens is the system of exemptions, which it is about time to reform, with a view to total abolition in the future, if not at once.

Another item in which the towns are particularly interested, is the grant of a considerable sum of money yearly to the rural municipalities, from the consolidated revenue of the province. These grants are intended for local improvements, but are expended at the option of the municipalities. It is not difficult to see that the system of paying provincial grants to certain municipalities while excluding others, is wrong in principle. It is questionable if the necessary expenditure of rural municipalities is proportionately greater than that of incorporated towns. Nor are the latter more able as a rule to bear the expenditure, though perhaps more willing to bear it. Special grants to rural municipalities is clearly an injustice to the towns. The urban population of Manitoba, however, are liberal enough to let this pass without objection, were the grants so made expended in the way contemplated, for local improvements. From the experience of the expenditure of these grants in the past, it is evident that they should be withdrawn. The money equal in amount to these grants, may still be applied to the advantage of rural municipalities, but it should be under the control of the government. If expended in the latter way for the carrying out of valuable work in municipalities, it is not likely that the people of the towns would object, because they were not getting their share of the expenditure.

### POSTAL FACILITIES.

It is to be hoped the post office department at Ottawa will see fit to grant the many requests for increased mail facilities between Winnipeg and the Pacific coast. There is a daily express train service between Winnipeg and the coast but there is mail service on six days only. There seems to be no good reason why there should not be a mail service along the line every day, as all the facilities exist for providing this convenience. The important

trade interests between Winnipeg and all points west along the main line, demand every possible convenience in the matter of postal accommodation. Trade interests between Manitoba and Pacific coast points have increased steadily, until now they have assumed great importance, and a daily mail service between the coast and Manitoba points, would be greatly appreciated. In many ways, serious inconvenience is felt on account of the present arrangement, and it is hoped the defect will be remedied at an early date.

### United States Crop Report.

The March report of distribution of wheat and corn by the statistician of the department of agriculture for the United States makes the stock of wheat in growers' hands 17,000,000 bushels, or 23 per cent. of the crop; 63,000,000 bushels of spring wheat and 103,000,000 bushels of winter wheat, much of the latter in States which have practically no commercial distribution, but entering into local consumption for bread and seed. This is the largest reserve ever reported, that of the largest previous crop (of 1884) being only 69,000,000 bushels. The exports from July 1 to March 1, were 161,000,000 bushels, the fall seed 34,000,000 bushels, the consumption apparently 200,000,000 bushels, but a larger proportion is taken for consumption in the fall and winter, and the actual consumption is proportionally greater than in the spring and summer. The assumed consumption from March 1, 1891, to March 1, 1892, is 300,000,000 bushels, for a population of 64,300,000; the exports 200,000,000 bushels; the seed 56,000,000 bushels, a distribution of 562,000,000 bushels. With 41,000,000 bushels visible and 171,000,000 bushels invisible, 27,000,000 bushels are not directly accounted for previously, which came in the unprecedented squeezing of all sorts of reserves, mainly from the always unaccounted stock of flour between mill and mouth, and from small unaccounted stocks between the farmers' granaries and the visible supply. The average weight of wheat is 58.5 pounds per measured bushel, which is the estimated weight of the crop of 1887, and is nine-tenths of a pound above the average of eight previous years. The estimated quantity of corn in farmers' hands is 860,000,000 bushels, or 41.8 per cent of the crop. This is the largest proportion ever reported.

### Raw Furs.

Muskrat is very much lower, and at prevailing prices the article proves attractive to many. We hear of large sales; at the same time low values for muskrat must have a depressing effect on furs that are at times used as substitutes, noticeably such as sheared and half sheared, black, brown, French and Belgian coneys; it is strange, in view of this fact, that the largest manufacturer of Belgian coney has advanced his tariff for half sheared black skins. There is a good local demand for skunk, opossum, gray fox, lynx, bears and well furred coon. In imported furs the articles heretofore used will be in favor again; other fancy articles will find some favor. We advise great caution in handling fancy articles that depend almost wholly upon the whims of fashion.—*New York Fur Trade Review.*

It is only at occasional intervals that attention is directed to the enormous mass of the population of British India. The final revised figures of the Indian census of 1891 place the population of that colony at 238,159,692. This is a total amounting to between seven and eight times the total population of the United Kingdom. The country has now a density of 188 persons to the square mile, as against 165 persons to the square mile ten years ago.