

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 24, 1888.

BENEFITS OF RAILWAY COMPETITION.

Shortly after the opening of the R.R. V. railway into Winnipeg, some of the eastern champions of C.P.R. monopoly sneeringly remarked, that the only advantages it secured were to Montana sheep raisers, who could now rush their dressed mutton into the Winnipeg, and undersell the local producers of the same. The freight rate on grain and other articles of export and import were the same as those offered by the C.P.R., so these monopolists stated, and consequently Manitoba could receive no advantages from the new outlet, for which the province was paying so heavily.

Of course such advocates never took into consideration, that from the time when the province of Manitoba took the bull by the horns, and commenced the construction of the R.R. V., to the opening of that road into Winnipeg, a period of less than two years, grain freights to Port Arthur over the C.P.R. dropped over twenty-five per cent, and the drop was a gradual one, sliding downward just in proportion as the overbearing and bull-headed management of the C.P.R. were forced to the belief, that a united province must win in a fight for its just rights; the last concession of three cents a hundred pounds being made only about three weeks before the opening of the R.R. V. route to Duluth. Thus it was sought to make a virtue out of a necessity, but it is folly to look for a genuine virtue from an organization with an existence dependant upon what it can extort from the public purse, and how much it can over-ride the rights of one half of this Dominion. Manitoba has never received anything from the C.P.R. that was not forced, and any freight rate reductions received during the past two years are due to the threatened competition, which is now a fact in Winnipeg, and will soon be in other portions of this prairie province.

But to return to the mutton argument. Seemingly our local sheep raisers are not wiped out of existence yet, for mutton carcasses are still held at nine cents a pound in the Winnipeg wholesale market, and it is less than a month since the two figure quotation of ten cents was broken for the first time this year. At these figures we believe Manitoba sheep

raisers can still make a profit, especially when the home market can swallow up double or treble what they yet produce. It is just possible however, that a plentiful supply of mutton from Montana may be a barrier in the way of eastern Canadian butchers shipping into this province their inferior meat at fancy prices, as they have in the past, and that eastern selfishness and not solicitude for Northwestern sheep farmers brought this mutton argument to the surface.

But we are gradually finding out that railway competition is conferring a great many benefits upon Manitobans, and one generally appreciated is the frequent opportunities afforded to our settlers of visiting their former homes in the east, at a moderate cost. In the old monopoly days we had a fight once a year to get an excursion rate to the east, and did not always succeed. Already we have had two opportunities of going east and returning for \$40., although the monopoly came to an end only in October last, so that we may look for such chances frequently in the future, and for their frequency we will be indebted to railway competition with the C.P.R.

But there are several other benefits which Manitobans have already received through railway competition, and one of no small value is a system of freight rates on California fruit on the same footing as those enjoyed in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The reduced prices on fresh fruits of that kind have been very marked, and now dried fruits are coming in from the same source, which are making quite a difference in the price of those coming from Southern Europe, from which the former supply came entirely. In this northern latitude when fruit raising must always be limited in variety, this is a really substantial benefit we have received through the opening of railway competition.

But in the regulation of the local market, Winnipeggers have this winter found the R.R. V. railway and its Northern Pacific connection a great benefit. Two months ago the wood dealers of the city found the local fuel market in a position, easy to corner, and prices were gradually raised until tamarac wood was quoted close to, if not actually at \$8 a cord. But by the R.R. V. and N.P. roads good oak and maple soon came pouring in, and were delivered to the consumer at \$7.50 a cord and in some cases lower. As a natural result, the local fuel dealers, who were

bound to hoist tamarac to \$10 a cord had to let go, and now it can be had in car lots on track for half of that price. It requires a Manitoban to fully appreciate the value of the service thus rendered in the breaking up of a fuel combination. Our severe winters teach us their value, and the gratitude we owe to those who accomplished the good work.

Our people who are importing and exporting, and paying heavy sums in freight rates, should remember, that in proportion to the encouragement given to this new competitor for our traffic will we derive advantages therefrom. Freight payers in this province have never received any favor from the C.P.R. management, and they are consequently under no obligation thereto. They have however a long record of suffering under the overbearing insolence, and insulting abuse received in the past from the C.P.R. personages from the president of the company downwards, and now that ordinary business courtesy can in some instances be had, it is because competition compels it. A policy of reprisal may not always be the correct one, but Manitoba freight payers are wise when they pursue one towards the C.P.R. They can deal a heavy blow to that corporation, by refusing to patronize it in any way, unless when they have no alternative. Assuredly every blow so struck is a blow in the interest of commercial freedom. Yes and a blow in the direction of cheaper and better freight facilities between this country and the east, for the offspring of monopoly, when they find a people prepared to resent injuries, will be compelled to offer greater inducements to regain the confidence they have lost by tyranny and injustice in the past.

DAIRYING IN MANITOBA.

A meeting of great importance to Manitoba was held in Winnipeg last week. Reference is made to the annual meeting of the Manitoba Dairymen's Association. This association has been formed for some time, and a few dairymen have worked hard for the progress of the association, and for the development of the dairying interests of the province. President Wagner is worthy of special mention in this connection. But while great progress has been made in dairying in Manitoba within the past few years, it is felt that the industry has not been given that assistance and encouragement from outside sources which its importance would demand. From the na