

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 12, 1884.

GRAIN STORAGE.

It does seem as if the people of Winnipeg were at present in a state of torpor or at least drowsiness upon this all important matter of storage of the coming crop of grain. They are simply resting and watching the opportunity of becoming one of the greatest grain centres of the World slipping from their grasp, without making the slightest effort to avail themselves of the great advantage. For nearly two years the value of storage elevators to this city and province has been made plain by the press of the city, and still no move in the direction of their construction has been made. Winnipeggers, with few exceptions, are evidently satisfied that the handling of the grain products of the Northwest should be managed in some eastern town or city, and that this whole country should be what eastern monopolists wish it to be, simply a huge grain field, whose products should be manipulated for their special profit, and in which a big business in eastern manufactured goods can be done.

The mercantile community of this city know well how in the business of European imports they are at the mercy of the last, and recently they have had a taste of how the greatest of Dominion undertakings, the C.P.R., can be used to maintain this pressure from the east. The state of affairs in connection with the country's imports should serve as a warning not to let its exports get under a similar control. But for want of a little enterprise, and a matter of \$100,000 of capital, the whole drift of our grain trade, what must ever be the only item of any magnitude in our exports, is being allowed to go steadily and surely out of our own grasp, and into the hands of those who know well how to manipulate it to their own gain and our loss.

To again call attention to the advantage this elevator storage would be to Winnipeg, seems like the most unpardonable reiteration on our part, so often have we done so. The first and greatest of these is the holding of Manitoba's grain trade in the hands of Manitobans. Another is the creation of a central local market, whose daily quotations will form a basis for intelligent trading between

farmer and buyer, in which the one can have no advantage of the other. Another is the retaining of the grain, the basis of value, in the country, during several months of the year, for which period its storage here would be as good at ninety per cent. of its value in circulation, all of which we lose by allowing our grain to find winter storage in another province. Lastly, there is the advantage of having the grain of the Northwest stored here where it will be under the influence of, and consequently enhanced in value by three markets being opened to it, those of Minneapolis, Duluth and Eastern Canada, whereas, stored on the Ontario shores of Lake Superior, it is for ever beyond the influence of either of the two United States markets above-named. It is then at the mercy of a few eastern monopolists whose interests and those of the great railway monopoly are identical.

The above advantages should be sufficiently alluring to draw the paltry sum of \$100,000 from the pockets of those in Winnipeg who have spare funds, especially when the money is asked for what must prove one of the most profitable investments that has ever been made in the Northwest.

But the question of duty as well as profit appeals to the people of this city on this elevator question. They owe a duty not only to themselves but to the whole of the agriculturists of the Northwest in this matter. As the leading city of the great wheat region, Winnipeg is bound, if it does its duty to the agriculturists of this country, to furnish sufficient means for handling the country's grain products, and when the city fails to do so, it fails in fulfilling an obligation which the links between commerce and agriculture impose and make binding upon it. In this question they have in their hands a great trust from the farmers of the Northwest, and their failure to guard it removes the last barrier to monopoly rule in this vast country. The time is now short in which to prepare for the storage demands of the coming winter, but there is still time to do so if a movement is only made at once. Arrangements are being made for grain inspection in this city, but inspection without storage would be something like a display of china dishes set before a hungry man. Without storage the utility of inspection would soon become so apparent, that even the Dominion Government, which granted the right to

Winnipeg could be easily persuaded to take it away. With the power of inspection removed from this province to one further east, the voice of the people of the Northwest in the management of their own grain affairs would be for ever silenced, and they would, for all time to come, be in the grasp of eastern men, to whose profit it is to pay as little as possible to the agriculturist for his grain.

There may never be another opportunity of preventing this drifting of our grain affairs into eastern hands after the present season passes. Ere the crop of 1885 is ready for the market, the clutch of eastern monopoly and manipulation may be tight upon the throat of the Northwest. Should such be the case, the whole country would have to suffer, but Winnipeg only would be to blame for having lost the rights it should have held through its own combined apathy, stinginess and shiftlessness.

DATING FORWARD.

The practice of supplying goods to customers months before they are wanted by them, and dating them forward so as to make payment due at the same time, as if they were bought when required, is one of the evils of trade which is undoubtedly an importation from the other side of the Atlantic, and, like a few other items of immigration, could be dispensed with here, and allowed to remain at home. It is astonishing to what an extent this unbusiness-like practice is carried on all over Canada, and how great have been the evils that have arisen therefrom. Even in the Northwest, where a system of short credits is a necessity for business safety, the practice has gained more headway than it ever should have, and not a few of the evils of last year's overstocking were attributable to it.

There are different circumstances under which this system of dating forward is carried on, and one is decidedly less objectionable than the other. The first is the case of the travellers who only call once in two or three months, and with his customer calculates a probable future demand, and fills it on the understanding of goods being dated a month ahead. This is most common in lines of goods in everyday consumption, and rarely does the dating ahead exceed one month in extent. This, although introducing the thin edge of the wedge of the bad principle, is after all a mild symptom of the evil,