

The future of wheat will depend, as The Commercial has already stated, largely upon the result of the harvest in the countries of the southern hemisphere, who harvest their crops in our winter season. Of these Argentina is the most important. We saw it stated recently in a Winnipeg paper that the wheat area in Argentina was 15 per cent. less than that harvested the previous year. This is a mistake. The area is estimated at 15 per cent. greater than last year, according to the most reliable advices, and the crop is expected to exceed last year's by about 8,000,000 bushels, giving a surplus of about 50,000,000 bushels for export. The Argentine crop is not cut yet, however, and might receive a serious set back at any time. The harvest time is now drawing near in that country.

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

As predicted in The Commercial a few weeks ago, the announcement has been made that sheep imported into Great Britain from Canada and the United States will have to be slaughtered at the port of landing. This order will go into effect on January 1. This is owing to the presence of the scab disease among several lots of American sheep landed the past season at British ports.

THE railways are giving a halt rate on ear loads of cattle and hogs from St. Paul and Minneapolis to points in Minnesota and the Dakotas. This is to encourage farmers to buy stock to feed, so as to dispose of their coarse grains and potatoes in fattening the stock, the price for these being so low as to be unprofitable. It would be a fine thing if Manitoba farmers could secure a lot of live stock for feeding, in order to dispose of a lot of their rough grain.

THE COMMERCIAL advised merchants throughout the country to look sharply after their collections, and an exchange replies that this journal is urging the merchants to turn the sheriffs and bailiffs loose upon the farmers. The Commercial said nothing about sheriffs or bailiffs and we did not even advise the taking of legal proceedings to compel payment. Thanks to our provincial laws, farmers who wish to evade payment of their debts are amply protected from the sheriff and bailiff. The Commercial affirms all it said in advising country merchants to look sharply after their collections. The country merchant, as a rule, has no security, while loan agents, bankers, horse dealers, implement firms, etc., have security for their claims against the farmer. Because merchants have no security and because the farmers are sheriff-proof, it is the more necessary that the merchants should keep close track of their credit business.

THE local newspaper is quite a necessity in every thrifty town community. It can be of great assistance to the enterprising merchants, as a medium through which to make their announcements. A good local paper will also draw trade to the town or village in which it is published. Do not disparage your local paper, but try to assist it. People will sometimes compare their local papers with the large city dailies and wonder why the local publisher cannot turn out a paper like them.

This is very unreasonable. It would be just as reasonable to expect the village blacksmith to convert his shop of two forges into a mammoth factory employing men by the hundreds. The large city daily has its particular sphere of usefulness, and so has the smaller country weekly. There can be no comparison between the two, for the circumstances governing them are totally different. Because the local publisher cannot turn out a great sheet containing all the news of the world, is no reason why he should not be supported and encouraged. Do what you can for the local paper and by aiding it merchants will in many cases be helping themselves.

THE state of New York has declared by popular vote in favor of improving the Erie canal. The appropriation of \$9,000,000 named by the state legislature has been endorsed by the vote of the people. This amount is appropriated for the canals of the state generally, but nearly all of the amount will likely be expended on the Erie, which is the great artery of commerce between the lakes and the Hudson river. The Chicago Grain Trade Journal says: "The improvement of the Erie, together with the use of electricity for towing the canal boats, which, according to the reports of the recent experiments, was an unqualified success, means a material reduction in the freight on grain from the western lake ports to New York City. A reduction of 40 per cent. seems reasonable, for with a deeper channel larger boats can be used and all can be loaded to their full capacity. Mechanical experts who have investigated the matter claim that the use of electrical tow will reduce the expense of towing from Buffalo to Albany 82 per cent. Taking everything into consideration the friends of the Erie and low freight rates to the seaboard should have glad hearts. The railroad pool has been so remarkably successful for many years in inducing the state government to ignore the needs of the Erie that the announcement of the change in the state's policy seem almost too good to be true."

MUNICIPAL politics are already waxing warm in Winnipeg, at least so far as the mayoralty contest is concerned. Several aldermen are also in the field. The Winnipeg Retailers' association and some of the labor associations are taking a hand in the contest. For mayor, D. W. Bole, of the wholesale firm of Martin, Bole & Wynne Co., and Alderman Jamieson, of the legal firm of Nugent & Jameson, are in the field. Both gentlemen have served the city in the capacity of aldermen, Mr. Bole having served a term in the city council in 1893-94, and since that time he has taken an active interest in civic matters, particularly in the question of the reform of civic government. In fact, Mr. Bole was instrumental in starting the present movement in favor of civic government reform. This question will enter largely into the present contest. Both candidates for the mayoralty are members of the civic reform committee, but Mr. Bole has taken a more active interest than his opponent in the question, and we believe is more in earnest in the matter. If elected he will undoubtedly do all he can to further the interest of civic govern-

ment reform, though not, we think, in an arbitrary manner. He is desirous that any or all such schemes of civic government reform should be submitted to the electors for their approval or rejection. Winnipeg is a commercial city and it would seem fit and proper that the city should be occasionally represented by a leading business man in the person of the mayor. Heretofore, our leading business men have refused to devote much time to the service of the city, and when we have an opportunity of securing the services of any of them it would be well to avail ourselves of the advantage of their extended experience. Certainly the city shows the need of business capacity in the management of its affairs. From our personal acquaintance with Mr. Bole we feel sure that he would not offer himself for the position unless he had fully determined to devote a large share of his time to civic matters.

### Grain Trade Gossip.

Last week we gave the new grain freight rates on all rail shipments through to Atlantic ports. The new rates were shown to be 80 cents per 100 pounds to New York or Boston, and 88 cents to St. John, the latter the Canadian winter port. This makes an apparent difference of three cents per 100 pounds in favor of the United States ports, as against the Canadian port. The difference however, is more apparent than real. The rate to the United States ports does not include terminal charges which grain is always subject to, while the terminal charges are included in the 88 cent rate to St. John. Reduced to bushels the rate to United States ports, from Fort William, is 18 cents, while the rate to St. John is 19-10 cents per bushel. If we add 1½ cents for elevating, storage, etc., at the United States ports, it would bring the cost up to 19½ cents per bushel, which we may say is practically the same as the cost of shipping by the Canadian port, as such terminal charges are included in the rate named via the latter port. In other words, grain shipped via St. John will be elevated and stored free of any charge, until shipped forward by steamer. With good elevator facilities at St. John and the new line of steamers lately arranged for to run from that port, some of our grain might be handled to advantage by our own winter port.

The Dominion government has at last replied to the request of the Winnipeg grain exchange for the appointment of a weighmaster at Winnipeg and Emerson. The exchange has been advised that David Horn, grain inspector at Winnipeg, has been appointed the official weigher for the inspection division of Winnipeg, which includes the inspection point of Emerson. Cars of grain shipped to these two points can now be weighed by a government official, and the weight duly certified to, so that in any claims for shortages there will be something official to go by. The fee for weighing is 25 cents per car. Grain shipped out to Duluth is all inspected at Emerson, hence the desire to have a weighmaster there as well as at Winnipeg.

A series of resolutions have been passed by the farmers of Melita, Manitoba. They want the grain standards board abolished, and permanent standards fixed by act of parliament. Grain men would agree with most that they say in this connection, except as to the manipulation of the samples sent in for the guidance of the standards board. There is no reason to believe that there has ever been any manipulation of the samples, but at the same time it is quite true that the

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