

Now, the cash customer receives no benefit from the business done on credit. And it is very unfair to force him to help to make up losses on credit business. The man who buys on credit is the person who receives the accommodation, and therefore he alone should be charged a price which will allow a margin sufficient to cover the expense of credit business, in addition to the usual profit. When goods are sold for the same price either on cash or credit, the cash customer, though he receives no accommodation, is obliged to pay his share of the cost of interest and inevitable losses from bad debts, which are connected with credit business. Nothing can be more evident than that there is nothing equitable in the system of having one price for both cash and credit customers.

The difference between cash and credit business should be sufficiently marked to make it an object to buy for cash. If a farmer were raising a small, short time loan on chattel security, he would be obliged to pay 2 per cent. per month. Accounts between country merchants and their customers probably stand on an average for fully six months, and the merchant seldom has any security whatever. If the farmer pays 2 per cent. per month to the broker who is secured, why should he not pay the same rate to the merchant who is not secured, on store accounts, for the accommodation afforded. This rate of interest would appear to be a fair distinction between cash and credit business, at the present rates of interest in this country, that is; to add about twelve per cent. to the "cash sale value" of goods, when selling on credit, in order to cover the cost of carrying for six months and providing for bad debts. Even with this difference in favor of cash business, the losses through bad debts would no doubt frequently exceed the margin allowed to provide for such losses.

ADDING TO OUR RESOURCES.

What the prairies of Western Canada require as one of the greatest considerations, is diversity of production. The country is largely confined to agriculture, and in a northern climate, the variety of profitable crops is limited. The country is yet new, and it is safe to say that the full extent of its capabilities in this direction have not been reached. Only a few leading crops have yet been tested in the country. From time to time no doubt it will be found that other forms of vegetable life may be produced to good advantage here. In this connection it may be noted that the experimental forms which have been established by the Dominion Government, should be able to accomplish a great deal, by testing and discovering what new crops may be grown to advantage.

It is pleasing, to note that already the list of crops grown here is increasing. Flax, for the manufacture of the fibre, has been experimented with to some extent; with very satisfactory results, and this is likely to prove an important crop in a few years. In Southern Manitoba flax has been grown quite extensively by the Mennonite settlers for some years, and it has proved a good crop. It has, however, been grown only for the seed in Southern

Manitoba. This, however, has proved a considerable advantage to the country, and has led to the establishment of a linseed oil mill in Winnipeg. Thus it may be shown how the extension of production in one direction leads to the establishing of other industries.

Last summer flax was grown successfully on some of the farms of the Kays Company in the Territories, for the purpose of experimenting with the fibre. These tests are believed to have proved very successful, and it is understood that 500 acres of flax will be sown on each of the farms of the company this year. This will be prepared for the market, and may eventually lead to quite an extensive industry in the manufacture of the fibre, and goods therefrom.

Another crop which it has been shown may be grown to good advantage in the West, is chicory. Some experiments have been made with this plant, near Whitewood, Assiniboia Territory, with excellent results, and last year quite an extensive crop of chicory was raised at that place. This, too, has led to the establishment of an industry, in the direction of preparing an article of coffee and chicory for the market.

Probably the most important experiments, however, have been made with the sugar beet. Several tests have been made with this vegetable in different sections of the country, and some satisfactory results have been attained. An effort is now being made to induce a number of farmers in a western district to undertake to grow a number of acres each of the beets, and if the requisite acreage is sown, the parties interested in the matter say that they will establish a sugar refinery at once. The necessary capital, it is said, is guaranteed, and all that is wanted is a sufficient acreage of the beets to ensure a supply to the refinery. All those interested in the development of the country, will hope for the success of this enterprise. If, as is claimed, the sugar beet is so well adapted to the climate of the country, there should be no trouble in securing a sufficient number of farmers to plant the beets to supply, not only one, but several refineries.

Such experiments as these are of great value to the country. It is in this way that the resources of the country may be increased. Every new variety added to the list renders our farmers less dependent upon the old crops, and also leads to the establishing of other kindred industries. As the resources of these great prairies become more fully known, we may expect many new discoveries of great importance in the same line, until our agriculturalists will be able to grow such a variety of crops each year that there will be little fear of a crop failure all around.

ATTACKING THE FARMERS!

The COMMERCIAL has been accused of making an attack upon the farmers because this journal has stated some plain truths concerning the credit system in Manitoba, and the relation of the farmers thereto. THE COMMERCIAL believes thoroughly that the credit system as followed here is a curse to the farmers of the country, and any movement to remedy the evil should be in the interest of the farmers rather than an attack upon them. If there are

two evils greater than any others, inflicted upon the farmers, these are "protection," and the credit system. These THE COMMERCIAL has always striven to remove. Formerly we had monopoly, which this journal always constantly opposed. The farmers of Manitoba form the backbone of the country. This is a farming country above everything else, and if our farmers are not prosperous, the commerce of the country, which depends upon them, cannot be prosperous. It is therefore the interest of all to endeavor to remedy any evils to which the farmers are subjected. The present credit system as carried out here, is ruinous to the farmers. It is the cause of endless trouble and injury to this class of the community. A leading farmer of Southern Manitoba stated to the writer recently that credit was the curse of his district. "Formerly," he said, "we were obliged to pay cash for what we purchased, and we got along all right. If we had not the money to pay for some things we might want, why, we just did without them, and we were the better off in the end. But new stores were opened, competition became keen among the merchants, the credit system came into vogue, and now the farmers are all loaded up with debts." These are the words of an intelligent farmer, and they express the condition of things very forcibly. The cash system is an incentive to economy. Under this plan people will not live beyond their means. They will gauge their expenses according to the length of their purse, and will look more to providing for the future. Under the prevailing reckless credit system the farmer does not buy what he can afford, but whatever he thinks he should have, and "hopes" to be able to pay for it some time in the future, with the result that he is usually kept heavily in debt, and when a poor crop overtakes him, he is unable to meet his obligations, thus causing serious inconvenience and loss to his creditors. A reform in the system of doing business would certainly be in the interests of the farmer as much as the merchant, and would besides elevate the farmer from that position of dependence in which he is often placed, and which often causes him to be regarded by the country merchant almost as a subject of charity.

MANITOBA, through her boards of trade, in a moment of simplicity, asked for an advance in the duties on flour. The Government has graciously condescended to acknowledge these petitions by placing an extra 25 cents per barrel on flour. At the same time the Government has added enormously to the tariff burdens of Manitoba, by placing heavy duties upon fruits and other commodities which we are obliged to import. Any slight advantage which the most ardent supporters of the duty upon flour can see in the recent advance in the tariff on that article, will be vastly overbalanced by the increased cost of fruits, etc. Manitobans, however, must be consistent in this matter and not find fault with the recent changes. If we are going to make the British Columbians pay 75 cents per barrel more for their flour than it otherwise would cost them, we should also be willing to pay high prices for fruit, in order to encourage fruit growing in the Pacific province. The thing is as broad as it is long. To be sure the West is at a disadvantage with the east in this tariff question; but then the principle is the same all around, and if we get more than we bargained for, we will just have to grin and bear it. Some of those who are now denouncing the increase in the duty on fruits, etc., should remember that consistency is considered a great virtue.