

styling themselves Shaw & Simpson began business in Montreal a short time ago, and advertized freely for consignments of produce from farmers, guaranteeing, of course, much better returns than local dealers could pay. Consignments of produce soon began to pour in, and the firm did a large business, but the unfortunate farmers never received anything for their goods. The produce was sold off quickly at low prices, for cash, and the money pocketed. The members of the firm, who it is said were working under assumed names, have disappeared. This is not a single experience of the kind in the produce commission trade. Such incidents have occurred before, and will occur again.

If anything further is needed to demonstrate the great value of water communication, it will be found in the completion of the Manchester ship canal. This is one of the greatest undertakings of the age. It has been carried out by the expenditure of a vast sum, but great as the expense has been, there is every prospect that it will be a profitable work. Notwithstanding the great progress made by railways, and the great reduction in freight charges, compared with what they were some years ago, water communication is still to the fore. Indeed, when it comes to the cost of moving heavy commodities, the railways cannot compete with water routes of transportation. The lesson from this is that there is a great future for our inland water-ways here in Western Canada, which are destined to become principal arteries in the commerce of the country. The Manchester ship canal will be opened, it is announced by cable, on the first of December. The canal is now receiving water, and it will take about two weeks to fill it to the required depth.

The absurd results which are frequently obtained from trials by jury, received a striking illustration at Winnipeg this week in the trial for murder of one Riley and an alleged accomplice named Le Blanc. A man was found dead, supposed to have been murdered and robbed. The parties named were held for trial charged with the crime. The evidence indicates that Le Blanc had only taken a passive part in the crime. He is supposed to have stood on guard some distance away, while the actual felony is alleged to have been committed by Riley. Le Blanc's trial came on first, and to the surprise of many who had followed the case, he was found guilty of murder by the jury. People began to say: If Le Blanc—the supposed passive accomplice—committed murder, what in the world will the jury find the other man guilty of? But still another surprise, greater than the first, was in store for the public, for the jury, in the trial of Riley—the alleged principal in the crime—returned a verdict of not guilty—practically an acquittal. Oh, Justice! how peculiar are your renderings.

Thos. Thompkins, contractor for the four Canadian Pacific depots, at the towns of Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Regina, and Calgary west of Winnipeg, and a dining hall at the latter point, has completed his work and yesterday the buildings were taken over by the railway company. The total cost was over \$100,000. All the buildings are great improvements upon the structures which they replace.

WINNIPEG MARKETS.

[All quotations, unless otherwise specified, are wholesale for such quantities as are usually taken by retail dealers, and are subject to the usual reduction on large quantities and to cash discounts.]

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, November 11.

Before the last COMMERCIAL reporting wintry weather had gone into circulation, there was a decided change in the atmospheric conditions. The wintry weather disappeared, and it has been very mild all this week. The hopes of dry goods and clothing dealers, which were bright a week ago, in expectation of a continuance of cold weather which then prevailed, have been brushed away. A brisk parcel trade was done in clothing, following the cold snap, but it soon flattened out with the return of mild weather.

There has been a heavy movement of grain by rail eastward the past two weeks, the movement being the heaviest on record in Manitoba. The movement of wheat eastward to date this season is larger than in any previous year, and particularly large this season in proportion to the crop. Early in the season the idea prevailed that farmers would not sell on account of the low prices, but the result shows differently, as nearly all the wheat going forward is out of farmers' hands. Business men outside of the grain trade do not seem to realize this, and talk about farmers holding their wheat. Country merchants write to wholesale dealers and report that farmers are holding their grain, giving this as a reason for inability to make prompt payments. There may be a few points where farmers are holding their grain, but it is not true of the country generally, and the statement that they are holding is either done to mislead, or is made through lack of information. The fact is, that farmers will sell when prices are low and hold when they are high. This is the general rule, as can be proved by comparing high and low price years. This year prices are the lowest on record, and farmers have sold very freely.

The statement that farmers are holding their grain, is something of a chronic remark in this country during the first half of the crop year. It is made a song of by those who are slow pay, as the most of us are just now. But it is true that a large part of the wheat crop has passed out of farmers' hands already. Farmers' sales, however, have been much smaller this week, as they have been busy plowing, and prices have dropped, which has also checked sales, while roads are bad in the eastern districts, from the melting of the heavy snow storm of last week.

The winter promises to be a dull one in grain, as prices will be very low for wheat after the close of navigation, when winter freight rates come in, unless there is an advance in foreign wheat centres in the meantime. On the present basis of prices, the price of wheat in Manitoba will be horrible to contemplate, when winter rates come into effect, and this is giving rise to a strong feeling in favor of a reduction in all rail freights. The Winnipeg board of trade has been communicating with the Canadian Pacific people in the hope of obtaining a reduction in all rail freights eastward for grain. As we have said, wheat will be so low when winter freights come in, that what wheat the farmers have left will likely be held

for a while, in the hope of higher prices, consequently the early winter will be dull, especially as there is but a limited quantity of coarse grains to market this winter, crops of oats and barley being very light. Those who talk about cash being slow because farmers are holding their grain will therefore find their mistake, for the heaviest cash of the season is now over. The balance of the crop promises to dribble out slowly.

Outside of wheat, prices are high for most lines of produce. Eggs are high, butter is very firm and high, and cats are high, while poultry is also high. In these lines of produce prices are higher here than in Ontario markets.

A feature of local interest only is the decline in the price of bread. THE COMMERCIAL was the first paper to ask for a reduction in the price of bread in Winnipeg, pointing out in a strong article that bread was out of proportion to the price of flour. At that time Winnipeg bakers were selling fourteen two pound loaves for \$1. Immediately upon the publication of the article in THE COMMERCIAL, the bakers held a meeting, and reduced the price to sixteen loaves for \$1. But this reduction was not satisfactory to the consumer, especially as the price of flour continued to decline, and more recently some of the other city papers took up the question. After much agitation the price was dropped to eighteen loaves, and this week a further cut was made to twenty loaves for \$1. Only those who pay cash, the bakers say, are to get the twenty loaves, and eighteen will be given when the item is back. This is the recognition of a principle which THE COMMERCIAL has long contended for. Let those who pay cash have their goods on a cash basis, which means that they should not be charged for losses in credit business. Winnipeg bakers have perhaps not made a great deal of money, but they would make a great deal more were it not for their losses in credit transactions. It is not justice, however, to charge a high price to cash and credit customers alike, in order to cover credit losses, as it is simply taxing the cash customer to make up for the bad accounts, for which he is in no sense responsible.

There is plenty of grumbling about slow payments. All reports, however, are not so black. Two of the largest wholesale houses in Winnipeg reported their payments for October better than for the same month of last year, and October is about the heaviest month in the year for mercantile paper. A good deal of paper falls due on November 4, but not so much as during October. November payments seems to be rather poorer than October. Altogether paper appears to be not as well met as at this season a year ago, though collections are probably being pushed harder this year than last.

FISH AND OYSTERS—A larger trade is doing in country orders. B. C. salmon is not now coming forward, but there is plenty of cold storage stock, brought in earlier in the season. Prices are higher. Some Pacific coast fresh herring were in the market this week, but not in wholesale quantities. Haddies are firm. Prices are:—Fresh fish—White fish, 6 to 6½¢; Lake Superior trout, 9¢, and lake herrings 30¢ per dozen; B. C. salmon, 15¢; halibut, 12½¢.