

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 4, 1895.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is reported that petitions have been presented to the government in France protesting against the importation of cattle into France from the Argentine Republic and Canada. The petition sets forth the general belief that cattle from these countries were infected with pleuro-pneumonia. If the French government decides to shut out Canadian cattle, we will know where to place the blame for this result, for it will certainly be due to the unreasonable action of the British government in persistently maintaining its contention that Canadian cattle were infected, while at the same time refusing to receive the proofs submitted to the contrary. However, as our cattle trade with France is very limited, we will not lose very much by any action that country may take in the matter.

THE Winnipeg street railway company is having some trouble about enforcing a system which it has introduced for the collection of fares. Under this system the conductors are not permitted to handle the fares. An ugly looking box, with a small aperture in one end, about large enough to receive a one cent piece, is unceremoniously shoved into the passenger's face, and he is expected to deposit his fare in this. At times, with the jolting of the car, it is by no means an easy undertaking to get the fare into the box. Many of the passengers refuse to deposit the fares in the box, and instead tender the fare to the conductors. On the other hand the conductors are ordered not to touch the fares, so that there is a sort of deadlock. The system may have a great deal to recommend it from the standpoint of the company, but we see nothing nice about it as viewed by the passenger. In fact, to say the least, the system is a rude one, and we do not wonder that many passengers resent it. If the street car company will consult the wishes of their patrons, they will do away with this uncouth mode of collecting the fares and introduce a plan which will be based on common notions of good taste and civility.

THE air is full of talk of mining "booms" these days. From British Columbia to the west come wonderful reports of magnificent finds, while the mineral country to the east of us, from the Lake of the Woods to Lake Superior, seems also to be attracting greatly increased attention of late. There can now be hardly any doubt of the fabulous wealth of the great Kootenay district of British Columbia. If half that is told is true, this is one of the richest districts in the world. Vast sums have certainly already been made in the district, and it is only yet in its infancy. In the Lake of the Woods district to the east of us, we hear of many "deals" of late, by which new capital is being secured to develop the country. The reduction works at Rat Portage passed into new hands this season and are said to have now been finished

and placed on a paying basis. This will materially aid in the development of the district. The expansion of the mining industry in the districts both east and west of us will be a material benefit to the wholesale trade of Winnipeg and the Manitoba producers, as the supplies required for the mining territories particularly in produce will be drawn mainly from the prairie country.

THE Neopawa Register wants to know why a bushel of wheat can be shipped from "a western point in the United States" to England for 17 cents, if it costs over 30 cents, as shown by The Commercial, to ship a bushel of wheat from Manitoba to a British port. We do not know to what "western point" the Register refers. Wheat could be shipped from Duluth to Liverpool at about this cost—more or less, according to the season and the rate of lake and ocean freights ruling at the time. But this is not a parallel case. To get a parallel case it would be necessary to take a North Dakota point, as far from Duluth as Manitoba is from Fort William, and in this case the cost would be found to be as high or higher than from points in this province. The Register says that a United States paper made a calculation that a bushel of wheat could be shipped to the Old Country, from a western point, for 17 cents. Now we say that no such calculation was ever made, to apply to any point which could be used as a parallel from Manitoba points. If the Register will submit the "calculation of the United States paper," we think there will be no difficulty in showing where the mistake lies.

THE editor of the Toronto Globe made a short visit to the West recently, and recorded his impressions of the country in a series of letters to his paper. These letters were reproduced in a special issue of the Globe, and it is reported that a large number of copies of this special issue have been purchased by the Dominion and provincial governments and the Canadian Pacific Railway for distribution abroad. Of course it is not the intrinsic value of this issue, so much as the general reputation of the Globe, which has led to these purchases. Many publications giving far more valuable and more accurate information about this western country, have been published right here, by persons whose long experience enabled them to speak with authority, without having received any recognition from the government. Mr. Willison is certainly a good writer, and he has a great paper at his back; but the information which he could gain about this great country, gathered in a brief visit, was necessarily of a more or less superficial nature. As a matter of fact, there were some serious errors in his letters, some of which were positively damaging to this country. The Commercial took occasion to point out some of Mr. Willison's mistakes at the time his letters were first published, and we note that his remarks were considerably modified as they appeared for the second time, in the special issue. The circulation of the Globe special, however, will certainly be of value to the country. It is handsomely illustrated, and on the whole Mr. Willison has obtained a better grasp of the situation here than could have been

expected from the brief visit he was enabled to pay the country.

THE most important reduction in cost to importers by the new French treaty is upon high-priced champagnes. The ad valorem duty of 30 per cent. has been removed and only the specific duties are imposed, viz: \$3.30 per dozen on quarts, \$1.65 on pints and 82 cents on half pints. The duty of 20 per cent. on the package is retained. The cost of champagne is now reduced fully \$3 per case to the importer. On low-priced non sparkling wines, such as clarets, up to, say, \$6 per case, the difference is small, about 50 cents per case. The cost of importing French and other soaps is also reduced. Under the tariff common laundry soap was taxed 1c per lb., but now only $\frac{1}{2}$ c is imposed under this treaty, while the charge on fine Castile soap is reduced from 2 to 1 cent per lb. Prunes is another important line. They can now be imported for $\frac{1}{2}$ c per pound less than they were. Nuts of all kinds are reduced. Shelled nuts were subject to a duty of 5c per lb. They will now pay only $\frac{3}{4}$ c per lb. Almonds paid 3 cents per lb; but now will be only 2c, and walnuts, which also paid 2c, are now charged $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound. By the "favored nation clause" the following countries have to be accorded the same privileges as France: Argentine Republic, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Bolivia, Chili, United States of Colombia, Costa Rica, German Empire, Muscat, Russia, Salvador, and Sweden and Norway. Similar goods from these countries will be subject to the same reductions as has been accorded to France by the treaty.

THE old difficulty experienced by Manitoba grain exporters of securing handling facilities for the exportation of wheat is again looming up. While navigation remains open grain goes forward in cargo lots, the identity of each cargo being preserved. After navigation closes export shipments will go straight through to New York in car lots, and it is impossible to preserve the identity of different shipments. Rail shipments for export are therefore handled on grade, and all wheat of the same grade is thrown in together in the New York elevators, regardless of ownership. But even this plan does not remove the difficulties of exporters. We have in all some fifteen or twenty different grades of wheat, besides other grains. Of course, only a limited quantity of wheat goes into some of the grades, but after knocking off half these grades, there would be still a larger number left than the railways can handle separately. In fact, the railways running into New York have already given notice to the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, that they will provide accommodation for only three grades of Manitoba wheat for export via New York, after the close of navigation. The grain has to be shipped in bond, and is stored in bonded bins at New York, and facilities can only be had for storing three grades. The matter was considered at a meeting of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange last week and an effort will be made to secure accommodation for five grades of wheat. It is possible that considerable wheat will go forward for export all rail after the close of