

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

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farmer. The farmer might just be given a rest for a brief time by these outsiders, and leave the matter of advice giving to those who have made a practical study of agriculture, and who can speak with knowledge born of experience and experiment. No doubt the advice to farmers to diversify their operations as much as possible, is right from a general standpoint. There is a great deal of harping about going more into stock; but many of those who advise raising more stock do not stop to think that it requires time and money to get into stock on any considerable scale. The farmer must have buildings before he can go into stock, and buildings are expensive in this country. Then he must have money to make a start with in stock, and as the most of our farmers could only start in stock on a very small scale, owing to need of buildings and the wherewithal to buy seed stock, it will take years to make the country a heavy exporter of stock. Altogether the progress made in stock raising is perhaps quite as great as could have been expected. Then as to wheat, there is a great deal of talk about too much wheat being grown here. Now, what would the Manitoba farmer grow instead of wheat? If he had more stock he would grow more feed grains to consume it at home, but in the absence of the stock wheat is a more profitable crop than feed grains. There is no other grain which is so well adapted to the soil and climate of this country as wheat, and certainly no other grain which can be produced as profitably for export. More than this, there is no other grain which can be safely grown on a large scale for export in this country. When it comes down to fact, wheat is and must continue to be the staple product of the country. With improved modes of agriculture, learned from the experiences of the last few years, cheaper and better machinery, and the generally improved conditions under which the farmers are now situated, as compared with the earlier years of settlement in this new country, it will be found that Manitoba will be able to produce wheat at a profit, even on the basis of rock bottom prices. With a moderate crop and the lowest prices on record, some farmers say they have made good money this year. At a meeting of farmers in a western Manitoba town lately, a practical farmer said "he had known considerable profit to be made out of wheat-growing, and in his opinion farmers who have farms better adapted for wheat-growing than mixed farming should not throw overboard wheat for stock. Better try to make our land grow more and better wheat per acre by better cultivation." This man probably understood what he was talking about better than those outside of agriculture who are always advising the farmer what he should do.

At a joint meeting of a committee of the Winnipeg city council and the board of trade, to discuss the improvement of the Red river, it was resolved to ask power from the legislature to give a bonus for the improvement of the Red river to the extent of \$100,000, a by law to be submitted to the people, and to be carried if voted for by thirty per cent. of the resident

vote, the number so voting for it being three-fifths of the number voting altogether. It was also decided to urge the local government to make a grant for the same purpose. The object of a grant from the city of \$100,000, is to induce the Dominion Government to undertake the improvement of the Red river between Winnipeg and Lake Winnipeg, so as to allow of lake steamers passing up the river to Winnipeg. At present there are obstructions in the river which prevent this, except at high water in the spring. The improvement of the river is a matter of great importance to Winnipeg especially and the country in general, but THE COMMERCIAL has already demurred from the work being done partly at the expense of the city. It is a work lying solely with the Dominion Government, and should be done by the government alone. For all Manitoba receives from the Dominion, this work might be undertaken by the government alone. The city is not flush of funds at present, and there are many civic necessities now under consideration which will require a larger expenditure than the city is capable of undertaking. Under the circumstances, it does not seem right that this expense should be thrown upon the city. The federal government of the United States has improved the Red river from Fargo northward to the Manitoba boundary, and a slight expenditure on the obstructions between Winnipeg and Selkirk would make the river navigable from the boundary to the lake. The portion of the river in Manitoba is of far more importance than that portion in the United States for navigation purposes, and it is a small matter for the Dominion government to draw upon the city for a portion of the funds to carry out the needed improvements. The government has done practically nothing yet in improving western waterways. In fact about the only public works we have had in the West is the erection of a few post offices or other buildings in the cities and towns. This little work might readily be undertaken by the government alone, and we believe will be. It would be simply mean to accept aid from a city in the position that Winnipeg occupies, for this work, even if the city votes the money. It is very doubtful, however, if the by-law can be carried to grant the sum specified.

THE Manitoba Legislature opened on Thursday last, and after reading the opening address the house was adjourned until Monday. The address at the opening of Parliament or the legislatures is not now days looked forward to as an important document, and they are now generally more conspicuous for what they do not say than what they say. After several indifferent paragraphs, the system of immigration is touched upon in the following words: "For several years past large sums have been expended in advertising our province, and the time has now arrived when the expense in that connection may, with propriety, be materially curtailed and more attention given to the requirements of our own people, so that a more rapid internal development may be assured." In this connection it may be stated that the declared policy of the government to curtail immigration work will be received with disappointment by many,

while at the same time there are many who will approve of the course. Just at the present time there is considerable difference of opinion upon the question of engaging in active immigration work, notwithstanding which the announcement from the Government will be received with surprise by many. It has been understood for some time that measures would be introduced in response to an agitation in favor of an extension of the exemption act. Nothing definite is said in the address on this point beyond the announcement that "You will be asked to consider some measures which will tend to the improvement of the condition of the agricultural portion of our population." It is believed the legislation will take the form of increasing the amount of property owned by farmers which will be exempt from execution, and also that farmers will be prevented from mortgaging or otherwise giving liens upon exempt property. As the law now stands, certain property is exempt from execution, but the farmer can give a chattel mortgage upon such property, thereby destroying the exemption. The question of chattel mortgages, especially as regards chattel mortgages upon crops, will be considered, it is understood, though no reference is made to it in the address. A judicature act will be introduced.

## CHATEL MORTGAGES.

The question of chattel mortgages given upon growing crops, even before the seed is in the ground, is a matter which has of late received considerable attention from business men. At the annual meeting of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange last week, President Atkinson referred to the subject, and his remarks include a strong condemnation of the custom. We cannot do better than quote his words in full as follows:—

The only too extensive system pursued, in late years in this province, of farmers giving chattel mortgages on their growing crops, has led to considerable trouble and annoyance in handling grain at shipping points. Dealers and elevator owners at these points this past autumn, in many cases were served with notices from agricultural firms, warning them that they had chattel mortgages on the crops of farmers named in accompanying lists, and further, that in case the dealer purchased any of this wheat, the payments therefore were to be made to the firms serving notice. It is quite apparent that it is an impossibility for the street or elevator buyer to recognize the identity of mortgaged wheat from the free article; the whole grain arriving in wagon or sleigh loads without any distinguishing mark; buyers have no means of knowing who is the owner of the wheat presented to him for sale, beyond the fact that the load has to be paid for in cash to the deliverer thereof. The evil of this system of holding the purchasers of grain, offered in the open market, responsible to the mortgagee, is so great, that unless the Legislature provides some relief, the trade will be so hampered and the difficulty of purchasing grain so increased, that precautions will have to be taken by buyers which will increase the cost of handling, and thereby lower prices to producers. It is admitted that the finding of a remedy is not easy, but now that the evils of the system have become so apparent it is to be hoped that the Legislature will find means of meeting the difficulty.

That world wide and justly celebrated preparation, "chocolate menier," is introduced to the readers of THE COMMERCIAL this week. The preparation is so well known that it is unnecessary to puff it.