

the accommodation are at hand, in the train service over the railways mentioned, but a niggardly policy in the postal department is the cause of these grievances. Again, we have the spectacle in Manitoba of railways with a regular train service, and with little towns at points along the lines, yet no mails are carried over these railways. This refers to the branches of the Northern Pacific in Manitoba. The 250 odd miles of railway in Manitoba operated by the Northern Pacific has not yet been provided with any mail accommodation whatever. These are the most glaring cases of neglect or parsimony on the part of the department. From many other points in Manitoba and the territories comes the cry for some postal service, or improvements in the existing service.

From British Columbia there are also many complaints against the slowness of the postal department in providing mail accommodation to meet the demands of extending settlement. The *Miner*, a paper published at Nelson, which town is the centre of a great mining country, reports that letters sent from Winnipeg addressed to Nelson, via Kootenay, Idaho, reached their destination ten days ahead of letters sent from Winnipeg by the Canadian route. There appears to be a great lack of mail accommodation in that section of British Columbia, and the same is true of other parts of the country.

### AN ERA OF HIGH PRICES.

The Cincinnati *Price Current* has been looking up the value of certain commodities in that market, and presents a table showing the comparative values of these articles on the same day for the past three years. All grains show much higher prices this year, and apples and potatoes are also comparatively very high. Nearly everything is much higher this year, sugar and hay being about the only exceptions to the rule. These prices furnish an interesting study, as they may be taken as supplying an index to the result of the crop of 1890 in the United States. Following are the prices of the commodities mentioned, on the 26th of August in each of the three years named:—

Articles—	1890.	1889.	1888.
Wheat, No. 2 winter, bu. \$	1.02½	74	90
Corn, No. 2 mixed, bu. ....	52	35	45
Oats, No. 2 mixed, bu. ....	33½	20½	26
Rye, No. 2 bu. ....	70	41	63
Flour, winter patent, brl....	5.25	4.40	4.35
Mess pork, brl....	11.00	10.62½	14.75
Lard, 100 lbs. ....	6.00	5.90	8.75
Short rib sides 100 lbs....	5.00	5.15	8.50
S. P. hams, 100 lbs. ....	10.50	10.25	11.75
Butter, creamery, lb. ....	25	21	22
Cheese, choice, lb. ....	8½	8	8½
Eggs, doz. ....	16½	15	15
Potatoes, brl. ....	3.50	1.00	2.50
Apples, choice, brl. ....	3.00	1.75	1.50
Hay, choice, ton. ....	11.50	13.50	16.50
Coffee, prime, lb. ....	21½	19½	17½
Sugar, granulated, lb. ....	6½	8½	8
Rice, La., lb. ....	7	6	6

### CROP STATISTICS.

Last week THE COMMERCIAL referred to the advantages which would be derived from an efficient system of crop reporting, carried out under the direction of the Dominion Government, and covering the whole of Canada. A recent report of the Agricultural Department of the United States contains a review of the trade and other information concerning Canada. This review contains the following paragraph:—

"It is certainly a remarkable, as it is an unfortunate circumstance, that so little attention

is paid to the collection of agricultural statistics by the Dominion as a whole, that work being left to the provinces themselves. Ontario and Manitoba alone possess anything approaching complete annual records."

*Bradstreet's Journal*, the eminent commercial authority, also emphasizes the statement made in the report of the Department of Agriculture concerning the absence of official statistics covering the Dominion. If the question is thought to be of sufficient importance, the leading boards of trade of Canada could no doubt, by representation to the Government, induce our Ottawa authorities to move in the matter.

### OATS AND POTATOES.

Prime reports that at no time in the history of the oat crop (of the United States) has the smallness of yield and the poor quality been as apparent as to-day. There is an excellent demand for oats even now among farmers who have this season lost their corn crop and who have not grown enough oats themselves for feed. This is something phenomenal and is one of the peculiarities of the present short crop year. Another report is to the effect that a large proportion of farmers who at harvest thought they had a fair crop of oats and contracted to make deliveries, now find that upon threshing the crop falls far below former estimates, and it is impossible for them to fill their contracts.

These all point to high prices for this grain for the next year in the United States. Manitoba has a very large crop of oats this year, and a considerable portion of this will not be required at home. The same conditions exist in regard to potatoes in the United States, and of these Manitoba has also a considerable surplus. In the Winnipeg district, which is the principal potato section of Manitoba, the crop is turning out 300 to 400 bushels per acre. Now, then, if Uncle Sam will just take the duties off these commodities, we will be pleased to sell to his less fortunate subjects at lowest cash prices. The McKinley bill, which it is expected will be passed soon by congress, however, instead of reducing the duties, proposes a general increase in the tariff, especially upon agricultural produce.

### British Crops.

Returns for the United Kingdom, reported to the *London Times*, show that wheat is 3.1 per cent. under an average, barley 0.8 per cent. over an average; oats, 2.7 per cent. over an average; potatoes, 0.1 per cent. over an average; beans, 2.5 per cent. over; peas, 1.8 per cent. under, and hay 18.9 per cent. under. In the case of potatoes the great bulk of the correspondents speak of them as diseased—a larger number, in fact, than has been the case in any year since these returns were started. In the case of hay, also, although the figures show the crop to have been about four-fifths of an average one, it is very evident that much of this is damaged. More than half of the entire number of correspondents refer to this fact. With these facts in mind, however, it is still evident that although the year is not fulfilling its high promise, the crops all round are fairly within what may be called "the average zone"—i. e., if there is no wonderful abundance, there is, on the other hand, no story of great disaster.

### Western Exports for the East.

Three cars loaded with the products of Western Canada, for the Toronto and other exhibitions in eastern Canada, passed through Winnipeg last week. One car contained the British Columbia exhibit, in charge of R. E. Gosnell, who claimed it would surpass anything ever seen. With the Calgary car were H. Douglas, J. Maw, Geo. Hamilton and Sam. Livingston, the latter known as the pioneer of the western country. The car was packed with grain and grasses, those in the straw showing wonderful growth. A number of samples were six feet and over in length. There was a lump of coal weighing a ton, and a sample of the beautiful building stone found at Calgary, which will materially assist in making that place noted for fine stone buildings. The third car was filled with samples of what the country around Regina can do. The train was late in reaching Winnipeg, and with the cloudy sky which prevailed, it was too dark to admit of a fair inspection of the contents of the cars, but they were choice so far as could be seen. The West will certainly be well represented in the East this year.

### Mushrooms.

Lord Bacon advises men who settle in a new country to carefully ascertain what that country is best adapted for producing and conduct agricultural operations accordingly. It has already been discovered that Manitoba will furnish in abundance all ordinary articles of food in the greatest perfection, but there are a few things good to eat and but little used that love the rich black soil of the prairie in peculiar degree and the fact has, to a considerable extent, escaped the observation of the people of the country. In Europe as well as in America, the mushroom is considered a delicacy, and the luxury is procured only at a high price and is found chiefly on the tables of the wealthy. In the celebrated *Pickwick Papers*, Jingle is made to say, "that broiled fowls and mushrooms are capital things," and so they are. In many countries the mushroom is raised with difficulty and is produced on ground specially prepared with much care and labor, but in Manitoba, wherever a field or garden has been enriched, mushrooms, by thousands, will spring up spontaneously and will appear for more than one season, generally being allowed to go to waste as few persons know their value or are afraid of being poisoned by mistaking an unknown fungus for a mushroom. Sometimes even mushrooms are not fit for food, for these curious productions of nature should not be permitted to stand in the light and heat of the sun; they spring up in the night and should be gathered early in the morning. The best are those that have only cracked and upheaved the earth, not yet appearing above ground. The best resemble in appearance a porcelain knob of a door lock, are white and solid and when peeled and fried in sufficient butter have an agreeable taste. Those who are accustomed to eat the delicacy become exceedingly fond of mushrooms and there is no other country in the world where they can be had of such excellent quality without care or labor. Like oysters they must be taken often before they can be relished and then they will be properly valued and eagerly sought. —Pilot Mound Sentinel.