

tion of business men representing Manitoba and the Territories. In calling such a convention it would be necessary to take up some matters which are of special interest to country merchants, such, for instance, as the credit system, insurance, handling produce, etc. There are other questions of wider interest to the country at large. Some matters might be taken up with the object of impressing upon the local or federal governments, as the case may be, the particular needs of the commercial and industrial interests of the West, or the general requirements of our western country. The convention would no doubt also have a stimulating influence in the direction of securing the establishment of local boards of trade or other business organizations in country towns.

CANADIAN ENTERPRISE WANTED.

The *Spokane-Review*, a paper published at Spokane, Washington, recently had an article which shows what Canada is losing owing to lack of railway facilities into the rich Kootenay region. Though this district is Canadian territory it cannot be reached by rail direct through Canadian territory. The present Canadian route is to Revelstoke, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and thence by steamers on the Columbia river. The Kootenay country has direct railway connection with Spokane, the chief city in the interior of Washington state, and this gives Spokane merchants a great advantage in supplying the wants of the district.

The *Spokane* paper referred to above is authority for the statement that \$1,000,000 of silver-lead and gold ores were entered at the United States customs port of Northport, coming from the Kootenay country. These ores go largely to the United States for smelting, when a great industry might be maintained in this country in smelting these ores.

But it is not only this wealth that is going out of the country. The mining towns of the Kootenay country draw largely for supplies from the United States, when they should be supplied by Manitoba, the territories and other parts of British Columbia. All the produce consumed in the district is brought in from outside, as there is no farming done in the district, and these supplies come largely from Spokane. The *Spokane* paper referred to, in speaking of the supplies sent to the Kootenay country says:

"The exports are most interesting and make a showing which should put Spokane on an excellent footing as a wholesale town. In a year's time goods to the value of a million dollars have passed through Northport and have paid duty. By far the largest part of the exports have been groceries and foodstuffs. Every article which is consumed in prosperous mining camps is included in the lists of the customs collector, and his reports show that nearly 75 per cent. of the exports come from Spokane and eastern Washington. The business is increasing. It has been steady for two years past up to the beginning of the present mining season, but now it is larger than ever. The smaller towns are good traders. Rosslund imports the bulk of goods, and there is a gain of a large per cent. in the business done in that section."

From the above it will be seen that \$1,000,000 worth of goods have been brought into the Kootenay country from the United States via Northport alone. These imports, it is understood, were largely foodstuffs, such as are produced in Manitoba and the Territories, and which should be supplied by our farmers. Spokane counts upon becoming a large wholesaletown, mainly as a source of supply for this region, which, as Canadian territory, should be supplied by our own farmers and merchants.

What is needed to preserve this trade is a direct line of railway into the Kootenay country. This can be accomplished by building a railway through the Crow's Nest Pass of the Rocky Mountains. This pass is in a direct line westward from Lethbridge, Alberta, which is the nearest point reached by a railway line running in the direction desired. A railway through the Crow's Nest Pass would penetrate right through the heart of the rich Kootenay country, and the pass is said to be a very desirable one for a railway. Besides, rich coal deposits have been discovered in the pass, of a quality suitable for coking. Petroleum is also said to exist in the pass. By the construction of this road the country would not only be opened out by a direct line of railway, but coal would also be produced for the smelters which would be established in Canadian territory, and the ores now going to the United States would be treated at home. Thus a great industry would be built up. The jobbing trade of Winnipeg would be greatly benefitted by the construction of a direct line into the Kootenay country.

It is to be hoped that before another season goes by, the trade of the Kootenay country will be reclaimed for Canada.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The pleasing announcement was made from Ottawa on Wednesday, that a basis for the settlement of the Manitoba school question had been reached, through negotiations carried on between the federal and provincial governments. Particulars as to the agreement are not given, but every one will rejoice that the troublesome question is about to be disposed of.

THE ARMY worm is doing damage to the crops in Dakota, within seventy-five miles of the Manitoba boundary. It is too late in the season to look for the advent of the worms into Manitoba this year, but we should be on our guard lest they come another year. Any threatened invasion of an army of this nature should call forth as strong opposition as if it were an armed military expedition coming in a hostile manner.

THE ABSURDITY of electing political leaders in more than one constituency, is now apparent. As a result of this action, two western constituencies—Brandon and Saskatchewan—will not be represented in Parliament this session. It is to be hoped western constituencies will in future select local men, rather than go east to get a political leader, who will desert them as soon as his election is assured in an eastern district.

OWING to the heavy growth of grass on the prairies this year, prairie fires will likely be more severe than usual this fall, particularly if the season should be a dry one. Last year there were enormous losses from prairie fires. Those interested should be early on their guard and make proper obstructions to the spread of fires. In a very short time now the prairie fire season will be on. From the western range country where the season is drier, fires have already been reported.

THE success of the Winnipeg oarsmen at Minnetonka, Belleville and Saratoga Lake, though not a matter of great commercial importance, will nevertheless be a source of satisfaction to our business men and citizens generally. It is sometimes considered necessary to adopt special means to advertise the city abroad. The Winnipeg oarsmen have done more to advertise Winnipeg and Manitoba than columns of paid write-up in a paper would do.

At the last meeting of the Winnipeg city council an alderman blamed the city engineer for the dangerous and disgraceful condition of the streets on which the electric railway lines have been laid. In defence of the engineer another speaker said the city solicitor was to blame for not compelling the street railway company to live up to its contract. The Commercial would suppose that the council is to blame for not instructing its officials to enforce the contract, or finding out the reason why it is not enforced. Meantime the electric railway remains a source of danger to those who are compelled to drive on the streets, an eyesore to the citizens, and a cause of shame to the city council, as showing the negligent and slovenly manner in which the city's business is done, and how its interests are allowed to suffer.

A COMPLAINT which is frequently heard in business circles, is the custom of shipping goods after a drop in the market, on a bid made some time previous to the decline. This may be further explained by reference to the wool market. The tendency of wool prices has been steadily downward since the season opened, and bids made some time ago on wool would be 1 to 2 cents above present values. A great many bids were made early in the season for wool, which were not accepted at the time, but after the market has declined, several lots of wool have been shipped in, accompanied by a draft for the price of the wool on a bid made one or two months ago. In some cases dealers have refused to accept the drafts, as to do so would mean a loss of 1 to 2 cents per lb. on the basis of present values. It is of course unreasonable to expect that dealers should take goods which have been held so long after the bid was made. When no time limit is specified, a bid for a lot of goods would naturally mean for prompt shipment, within a few days at least of the receipt of the offer. While buyers cannot be expected to accept goods which were not shipped within a reasonable time after the bid was made, they might save themselves and their customers some trouble by always specifying a limit during which the bid would remain open.