

been an actual decrease in stocks during this period.

There are several statistical compilations made of wheat stocks. The figures given above are taken from one of these regular compilations. While none of these statistical statements are complete they furnish very valuable information as to the situation of wheat, based on stocks in store at principal points.

Europe appears to have plenty of wheat in store at the present moment, but the tendency of stocks to keep down during the past three months is significant. We look for more spirited buying on the part of importing countries soon, especially in view of the small wheat crop of the United Kingdom, which is estimated at only 40,000,000 bushels this year, as compared with 60,700,000 bushels last year, and 50,900,000 in 1893.

A DAMAGING AGITATION.

The scandalous agitation which has been worked up in Manitoba in connection with the grain trade, has been productive of much harm to the country. We have often heard it said that such and such things must not be discussed for fear of injuring the country as a field for immigration. The Commercial has been accused of injuring immigration prospects because this journal has published as reliable reports about the crops as could be secured. We can think of no agitation or discussion ever carried on here which has been so damaging to the country as this agitation regarding the grain trade. When we consider that this agitation has been worked up without any good reason, and has been founded upon false assertions or misconceptions, the more must the whole thing be deplored. The most scandalous charges have been made against a section of the community who are just as honorable as any other class of men in the country. The word "swindle" has been applied to these men over and over again, by a sensational newspaper, which is striving hard to keep itself before the public. No effort has been spared to work up one section of the community against another. This attempt to play upon the credulity of the farmers, and at the same time gain notoriety for a sensational newspaper, can be regarded as simply shameful. Aside from the injury it will do the country abroad, by spreading the false impression that the grain trade of Manitoba is in the hands of a "swindling combine," it is certainly a grievous offence to willfully work up one class of the people against another.

We do not blame the farmers in this matter. The whole trouble is that the price of wheat is low. If the price of wheat were high, they would pay little attention to such articles as have appeared in certain Manitoba papers of late. A great many of the farmers understand very little about market conditions, and when the prices of the products they have to sell are unusually low, they very often seem inclined to throw the blame on-

tirely upon the local buyers. When wheat is low, as it has been for some time back, they are ready to believe the stories circulated that they are being swindled by a grain combine.

There never was less reason for such an agitation in Manitoba than there has been the present season. The farmers of Manitoba are not suffering from any grain combine, wheat ring, elevator monopoly or any of the other absurd charges which have been made. The so-called elevator monopoly, which is in no sense a monopoly, is the only restriction upon the trade in any way, and just here we may say that we regard our fine elevator system as the greatest advantage the grain producers of Manitoba have to-day, in marketing their grain. The farmers of Manitoba never received a higher price for their wheat, in proportion to its actual value in the markets of the world, than they are receiving to-day. Wheat was never handled upon so small a margin as it has been handled during the past two years of low prices. In no direction can be found any good reason for this damaging agitation which has been worked up. The sole trouble so far as the farmer is concerned, is the low prices (which the local buyers are in no sense responsible for), and this has given certain parties an opportunity to gain a little notoriety.

All through these scandalous charges which have been made against them, the grain men have remained passive and have never entered a single protest. They recognize that in this country public sympathy is with the farmers, and that this sympathy will lead many persons to partially at least accept the charges made against them. Still they have not answered any of the slanderous charges made against them as a body, owing possibly to the belief that this public sympathy with the farmer has prejudiced their case to such an extent that a reply from them would not receive fair consideration. It must be very trying to the grain men, many at least of whom are honorable men, to remain passive under the slanders which have been cast upon them so freely of late. The Commercial has just as much real sympathy with the farmers as have many of these self-elected champions of the farmer. This sympathy, however, should not prejudice any one against a body of men who are just as honest and honorable as any other class of the people; and no one should form an opinion upon the grain trade from the rubbish which has been printed in some Manitoba papers of late. Before accepting these statements about swindling, etc., a careful enquiry should be made into the whole question.

The Commercial is pleased to see that the majority of the country papers of Manitoba have not been led into this agitation. We believe that the country editors are generally honorable men, who would despise to make capital out of this grain question, even though it would please many of their readers to have them take up this cry.

Most of the country papers have taken a very fair view of this agitation, and though there are points which some of them admit they do not understand, they have refused to credit the wholesale charges which have been made against the grain trade. The Commercial has made a careful study of the grain trade of this country since it had a beginning, and we have advocated what we believed to be in the interest of the country, in connection with grain matters. We believe that most of the country papers have confidence in The Commercial, and we will therefore offer to answer any "question of fact" which any country editor may desire information upon, in connection with the grain trade.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The item in another column showing the large increase in shipments out of farm produce over the Manitoba Northwestern railway, is certainly very gratifying as showing the progress being made by the country served by that road. At the same time it will be encouraging to the bond-holders of the road, who will see in this the good prospects for the future of their road. The remarkable growth of the cattle trade is one of the particularly pleasing features of the report. With the large crop secured this year, the next business year of this railway should show even a more remarkable increase in the quantity of farm produce handled, than is shown by the report for the business year recently closed.

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At the last meeting of the Winnipeg public school board, Mr. Bole brought up the question of adding commercial training and other more practical subjects to the list of studies taught in the public schools. On motion the superintendent was asked to report on this matter. This is in line with a growing feeling that our public schools are not meeting the requirements of the age. The Commercial has expressed its views upon this aspect of the school question in times past. It is a vastly more important question than that other school question which has absorbed so much public attention in Manitoba and throughout Canada of late, and it is a pity those in charge of our educational affairs could not be made to see it in this light. Our public schools are not giving satisfactory results. It is not higher education, but practical education which the present age demands. The great object should be to fit the rising generation for the practical duties of life, in so far as it is possible to do this in the public schools. This does not seem to be the aim of our educationists. Public opinion, however, is being drawn to this question, and no doubt a desirable change will be brought about in time.

A FEW papers still keep up an agitation against the so-called elevator monopoly, but the farmers, who it is alleged are the sufferers thereby, do not seem to be troubling them-

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