

occupation. But their business was destroyed without compensation, while in other respects there is no effort made to enforce the law. There is absolutely no restriction upon the promiscuous sale of liquors in some of the western towns, and the number of places where liquor is sold is wonderful. Drunkenness is very much more prevalent than in Manitoba where licenses are granted, and the temptations to drink are immeasurably greater. Especially is this the case as a result of the permit system, for when a person of a social disposition obtains a quantity of liquor on the permit plan, he will invite his friends in to have a "big time" with him.

This is the moral aspect of the case. Commercially, the tendency is to encourage smuggling and underhand dealing, in a business which would otherwise be done in something like a business way. Then the Government licenses one or more hotels in each place to sell light beer, but little or no effort is made to prevent others from selling liquors of all kinds without a license.

It will be understood that this article applies to the western portion of the Territories. In some sections, particularly in the east, disregard for the law is not so generally apparent. It is evident, however, that a change is required, and the easiest plan would seem to be to allow the people to pronounce upon the question. If they want a prohibitory law, then let them have it, free from "four per cent. beer" and "permit" clauses. If the people declare for a license system, it will certainly be a great improvement upon the present situation. The present regulations, with the "beer" clause and the ridiculous permit system, under which one man grants individual licenses to import liquors according to his personal whims, are to outrageous in their nature to be tolerated in a country where the people are supposed to enjoy civil liberty.

OUTLOOK FOR BUTTER.

There is every indication that the present year will be one of unprecedentedly low values in butter, and merchants will be obliged to exercise unusual care in handling the article, if they are to get through without loss. Anything but best quality is likely to be practically unsaleable this season, except at such prices as it will bring for soap grease or some such purpose. The existing conditions point to very low values for butter in all the leading markets, both in Canada and the United States. It has been stated on reliable authority that eastern makers are offering to lay down creamery butter at Vancouver at 20c per pound. This statement is in keeping with the general conditions of the season in butter, and Manitoba merchants will require to exercise every care in buying and handling butter this year, if they are to come through the season without loss. Special care will have to be given to the matter of quality, as it will certainly be very difficult to find a market for medium and poor grades. As to prices country dealers will have to exercise great care, if they are to avoid the mistake made last year by many merchants, of paying more for butter than they could sell it for later in the season.

Handlers of butter should bear in mind that the conditions are entirely different in Manitoba to what they were a few years ago, when the province was barely able to supply itself with this commodity. With the supply hardly up to home requirements, better prices could of course be obtained, and with a light supply and high prices there was more ready sale even for medium qualities. Consumers were obliged to take what was offered, and not be too particular as to quality. But with a large surplus at home, prices tending lower and holders anxious to sell, consumers will not have inferior qualities forced upon them. They have abundance to select from and they will select the best. This applies to the local demand, and thus it is seen that even for the home trade greater care in regard to quality must be exercised.

Then a few years ago there was quite a demand for Manitoba butter from points westward in the Territories, where now the local supply is in excess of requirements. Some points which were partly supplied from Manitoba have now a surplus, and are competing with Manitoba shippers for the trade of points still farther west.

There is a limited market in the mountain towns and on the Pacific coast for butter, but there are several active competitors for this trade. In the first place we say the demand is limited, and this is evident from the fact that the total population of the district to be supplied is only in the neighborhood of 75,000. In the second place a portion of this demand is supplied by home producers of butter in British Columbia. Then during the first six months of the year, fresh grass butter from California comes into the British Columbia markets, and with a taste for this prime article acquired, it is difficult to dispose of packed butter of the previous season, even when it is of good quality, much less to induce consumers to take the ordinary dairy article. Then in the summer and fall, when there is some demand for butter in British Columbia, we have Ontario shippers to compete with. Last year Manitoba made the mistake of holding for too high prices, while Pacific coast markets were being filled up with Ontario butter. Such demand as there is in British Columbia for packed butter should be supplied by Manitoba and the Territories, but it will not do to hold for high prices, as the commodity can be shipped through to the coast from Ontario just about as cheaply as it can be sent from Manitoba. In addition to this we may add that it is useless to send anything but choice butter to the coast at any time. Considerable loss has already been experienced by dealers here through the shipment of common and medium qualities to those markets.

In a general sense there has been an improvement in the quality of butter marketed in other countries. Strenuous efforts are being made to improve the quality of butter in eastern Canada, and the same thing is true in other butter-making countries. Consumers the world over are becoming more particular in their tastes and more discriminating in regard to this article. This is shown to be the case from the fact that the large exports of butter from Canada to Great Britain have fallen away to next to nothing. The reason is that Canada has not kept pace with other countries in improving the

quality of her butter. The British consumers soon noticed this and refused to take our stuff when they could get a better article elsewhere. Our butter trade with Britain has therefore been lost, and in the present condition of the butter markets it will be almost impossible to regain it. First it will require a great improvement in the average quality, and then we will be obliged to sell at prices to successfully compete with other exporting countries.

Now as to prices, we have already intimated that indications point to unusually low values. Late Montreal advices report sales of "choice fresh creamery" at 17 to 18 cents per pound. These figures are certainly low enough. With choice fresh creamery worth 17 to 18 cents at Montreal, what is ordinary dairy butter worth in Manitoba? Certainly a long way under these quotations. Choice Eastern Townships, which ranks well up to creamery in quality, is quoted one to two cents lower, while for anything but choice it is noted that there is no demand whatever. Choice fresh western dairy was being taken at 14 cents.

Looking up Toronto markets we find choice dairy tubs quoted at 13 to 14 cents, and it is noted that a lot of old stuff had been cleared out at about 5 cents per pound.

In the United States butter prices are low in all important markets. At Minneapolis, the principal produce market for the Northwestern States, we find creamery butter quoted at 11 to 14 cents, while good to fancy dairy ranges from 8 to 12 cents. Store packed goods it is noted are going mostly into packing stock, which is in demand at 3½ to 5 cents.

The different markets quoted certainly show that values are low enough to suit the greatest butter bears. It is also everywhere reported that medium and poor qualities are not wanted at all. On the basis of values as existing elsewhere, it is questionable if Winnipeg prices are not still too high. At any rate, it would not be safe for country merchants to buy on a full parity with prices quoted here during the past few weeks. Our markets, to be on a reasonably safe basis, should be something lower than quotations in eastern Canada markets, instead of being fully as high, if not higher, when average quality is considered. If we have any considerable surplus of butter this year, it will be necessary to export a portion of it eastward, as the western trade will not absorb it all. But if prices here are higher than in the East, what position will holders be in to ship eastward? Then we have already said that Manitoba and the Territories should have all the western trade. But if prices are held higher than in the East, shippers there will be sending car lots through to the coast again, the same as they did last year. All things therefore point to the necessity of using special care this season in handling butter, both as regards quality and prices paid therefore.

BINDER TWINE OUTLOOK.

The local situation in binder twine is somewhat interesting at present, and it seems to be the impression that there will be a lively scramble for twine before the season is over, with the prospect of a sharp advance in prices. It is a well known fact that last year's trade in twine