

try to Australia have been comparatively nothing. This of course was largely owing to the lack of communication with our Pacific coast. Now that the railway has been completed, with a probability that a steamship route will soon be established between Vancouver and Australia, it is thought that a considerable portion of the export trade from the United States to Australia, could be done by Canada, especially as the bulk of the goods required can be produced to good advantage in this country.

One matter which has apparently been overlooked, and which should receive early attention in connection with the efforts to extend commercial relationship between the Dominion of Canada and the Island Continent of the South Pacific, is that of the postal service. As at present existing, the postage rates between the two countries are so excessive as to greatly curtail correspondence of a commercial nature. There are at present two mail routes by which postal matter is forwarded from Canada to Australia, viz., San Francisco and Brindisi. Via San Francisco the letter rate to South and West Australia is seven cents, and to New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, etc., the rate is fifteen cents. By the other route the rate is even higher. Registration costs an additional fifteen cents. Post cards cannot be used. The rate on papers is from two to three cents for two ounces. Books and parcels, six cents for two ounces, except via San Francisco to some of the colonies, when it is three cents. With such high postal rates prevailing the effect must be to operate against a free interchange of correspondence between the two countries. On the other hand, a cheap postal service would encourage Canadian manufacturers and producers to distribute their circulars throughout Australia. This is a matter which is worthy of special attention, if trade between Canada and Australia is to be greatly extended, and it is to be hoped that before long a better and cheaper postal service between the two countries will be secured.

OUR VACANT LANDS.

If anything is to be done this season in securing the settlement of the vacant lands around Winnipeg, no time should be lost in arranging some practical plan of operating toward that end. The season is now upon us, and already immi-

grants have commenced to come into the country in considerable numbers, yet nothing more than the preliminary work has been accomplished in the direction of an organized effort to secure settlers for these lands. Practically the matter is yet in the hands of the owners of the lands, who will be able to do little individually toward securing settlers. The action taken by the Winnipeg Board of Trade was of vast importance, so far as it was in the power of that body to prosecute its efforts. A great deal of information was secured concerning the lands, through the work of the Board. It was ascertained that over 1,000,000 acres of vacant land within twenty-five miles of the city, were open for settlement, and that the greater portion of this could be purchased at very reasonable prices. At best, however, the action of the Board could only have its best effect in directing attention to the lands, for it would hardly be within the power of such a body to undertake an organized scheme of colonization. This work could only be undertaken by an incorporated company, with considerable capital at its disposal. Such a company should receive active assistance from the Legislature, and should at the same time be under such legislative control and restriction as would effectually prevent its operations taking the shape of a speculative landed monopoly.

Several schemes of one kind and another have been proposed for the formation of colonization companies, some of which were almost purely speculative undertakings, designed for the benefit of the originators more than for the object of securing settlers. One scheme, however, which it is understood will be submitted at the next session of the Legislature, has been received with considerable favor. By this plan, it is proposed to grant a charter of incorporation for colonization purposes to any five or more persons who between them possess not less than 40,000 acres of land. Parties forming such a syndicate, would require to have a stated amount of capital stock, and under the proposed act of incorporation they would be given power to purchase, improve, lease, sell and colonize their lands, or to improve and cultivate the same. They would also have the right to borrow money from the Government, at five per cent. interest, which they would loan to settlers at six per cent., the advance being necessary to cover the cost of expenses in securing settlers,

etc. The Government will be further asked to grant an annual subsidy or percentage upon the capital expended by the company. The company would not be confined to the lands about Winnipeg, but would be free to operate in any part of the provinces. The plan to be followed in settling the lands is to portion it out in 160 acre lots, and to settlers without sufficient capital an advance would be made to the amount of \$500, this amount to be expended in necessary improvements, seed, implements, stock, etc. For this advance, together with the price of the farm, a mortgage would be taken as security, and the amount would require to be repaid in annual instalments. A company incorporated under the proposed scheme, would be supposed to put forth special efforts in the way of securing settlers. Such is a brief outline of the most important plan yet proposed for the settlement of the vacant lands in the province. A more careful criticism will be in order when the scheme takes definite shape. In the meantime, however, there would seem to be little prospect of much headway being made this season in the settlement of the vacant lands about the city.

WOOLEN MANUFACTURER.

An Ontario woolen manufacturer who is visiting in Winnipeg is understood to be favorably impressed with the field here, and will endeavor to associate with himself several local capitalists, for the purpose of establishing a first-class woolen mill in Winnipeg. Such an industry should prove a success in this country, and it is to be hoped the mill will be established in due time. There is only one small mill in the province in operation, whilst the raw material is now produced to a large and rapidly increasing extent. Last season a considerable quantity of wool was shipped to Toronto, and this year the available surplus for export will be greatly increased. There would seem to be no good reason why this wool could not be manufactured on the spot, instead of being shipped to Eastern Canada, manufactured there and then sent back to the Northwest in the shape of the various products of the mill. The saving in freight charges for the double trip should amount to quite an item in favor of the manufacture here, and help very materially in neutralizing the advantage enjoyed in the East in the way of cheaper labor, etc.