prosper, and there would not now have been this universal demand for relief from monopoly. But by a system of discriminating and outrageously high freight charges, the company has rendered the further endurance of railway monopoly actually unbearable. Even with these excessive charges, the majority of the exporters and importers of this city would have been inclined to favor the C.P.R. in actual business, though at the same time most anxious for the construction of a competing line. The policy of the company since the commencement of the Red River Valley road, however, has almost completely destroyed that extensive feeling in favor of the C.P.R. which existed here, notwithstanding the great desire for railway competition.

Of late the ingenuity of the C.P.R. officials seems to be taxed in originating some new plan to hamper the trade of the city. The latest move is a circular nforming shippers that 50 per cent. will be added to the freight charges on all goods which the company refuses to carry except at owners' risks, unless the shipper specially designates that the goods are to be shipped at his own risk. If the shipper fails to specify that he releases the company from responsibility in carrying the goods, the 50 per cent. will be added to the freight charges. Shippers here were compelled to submit to this new regulation without any previous notification, though up to the time the circular was issued the goods were received by the company at the ordinary rates. Of course shippers have no option but to accept the new order, as in justice to their customers they could not agree to the extra freight charges. It is hardly probable that the company enforces such conditions in regard to its through traffic, which we hear so much about as being carried at low rates.

The way matters stand now, it is likely that were the Red River Valley road opened to-morrow, the monopoly company would find very little favor in the site of Winnipeg shippers. At present they are compelled to use the road; but many of the best friends of the company have become so thoroughly disgusted with the superabundant display of Van Hornism of late, that they now declare their intention of favoring the new route. If the company wish to retain any influence with the Winnipeg people, they will have to make a change in the policy pursued oward this country at once. As to the new circular, should occasion arise, a test will undoubtedly be made as to the powers which the company has to exempt itself from responsibility as a common carrier.

THE SUGAR COMBINATION.

The sugar combination is just now attracting a great deal of attention in Eastern Canada. It will be remembered that a short time ago the refiners met and arranged prices. About the same time a wholesale grocers' combination was formed for the purpose of preventing the cutting of prices in sugar to an unprofitable extent. As in the retail, so in the wholesale trade, the cutting of sugar prices had been carried so far that dealers were frequently compelled to sell at a loss, in order to protect their business. This state of things was certainly undesirable for all concerned. An individual house might gain an occasionl customer by sacrificing sugar, but in the end the entire trade must suffer. To do away with this unprofitable custom, a combination was formed among the wholesale grocers, and it was mutually agreed between the contracting firms, that sugars should be sold at a stated advance upon the cost at refineries. For instance, it was arranged that granulated sugar would be sold at ⅜c, advance, or equivalent to a profit of about ½c. This was certainly a moderate advance, seeing that it would only yield a profit of from 4 to 5 per cent. In order to make the combination secure, an arrangement was arrived at with the refiners, by which the latter agreed to sell to grocers outside of the combination only at an advance of ½c over the price to members of the combination. Nearly all the wholesale grocers at once accepted the arrangement, only about three firms in Ontario and Quebec refusing to do so. The number of firms joining in the agreement amount to 103. Had all the grocers fallen in with the combination, the matter would prabably have occasioned little interest, but the refusal of the few houses to do so has led to the development of other features of interest. Rather than submit to what they considered an imposition, these firms resorted to the importation of Scotch sugar, which they have been enabled to do, owing to the recent advances at home refineries. Canada refiners have been selling granulated at 6¾c, and in accordance with their agreement, the wholesale grocers have been selling to the retail trade at 7c for 15 barrel lots, and 7⅛c for single barrels. The houses out of the combination would be compelled to pay 7⅛c to the refiners. However, it is claimed that they have been able to purchase Scotch sugar at 6⅝c all charges paid at Montreal, and re-sell to retailers at 7c. There is of course no money in these transactions, but anything to defeat the combination is the object. The imported sugar is subject to a duty or \$2.89 per 100 pounds, which goes to show that the Scotch refiners must be content with very small prices, to be able to sell free of duty at Montreal, at 6⅝c.

A great outcry has been raised by a section of the eastern press against the combination, but so far as the wholesale grocers are concerned, they cannot be held responsible for the apparent high prices of Canadian sugar, as compared with the Scotch article. There are two sides to every question, and although combinations as a rule are to be depreciated, yet in this case there appears to be ample justification for it. No complaint can be urged against the grocers on the score of excessive profits, as the very moderate advance of from 4 to 5 per cent. is certainly small enough. On the other hand a regular price has been established and a very unsatisfactory feature of the trade abolished. The cutting which has been indulged in so long in connection with handling sugar, has been a source of annoyance and danger to both wholesalers and retailers, and an improved condition has certainly been the result of the combination. Legitimate business demands a legitimate profit.

The combination has not resulted in a material advance in the price of sugar to the consumer. The latest advance at the refineries was probably due to the destruction by fire of the St Laurence refinery at Montreal. At any rate, sugar would undoubtedly be as high to day in this country, if the combination had not been formed. The incident, however, has served to show, that but for the duties, foreign sugars could be laid down in this country nearly three cents under ruling prices, or about 4c for granulated. But it must not be understood from this that Canadian refiners are protected to the amount of nearly three cents per pound in addition to their advantages in carriage charges. The fact is, that Canadian refiners are obliged to contribute a considerable sum to the national revenue in duties upon the raw sugar which they import, and which of course reduces the value of protection upon the refined article.