

in consultation with him, discussing financial matters connected with the building of the railway. The latter is said to have had a part in financing the company in the European market.

Thirty township sites, making up 700,000 acres in Northern Alberta will be thrown open for homesteading on March 27th. The land is said to be some of the best in the West, though as yet rather inaccessible. It is 400 miles north of Edmonton, in the prairie section of the Peace River Valley.

The Elevator Bill.

Though the Manitoba Elevator Bill has been passed, discussion regarding it has not abated. This week the elevator committee of the Grain Growers' Association held a lengthy conference with members of the Cabinet in regard to the details of the bill. Among the matters discussed was that of appointment of the commission to which the Government will delegate the work of operating the system. This was the moot point at which the grain growers and the Government diverged. It is understood that, as a result of this week's conference, there is now a likelihood that this matter will, in practice, be dealt with in a way satisfactory to grain growers. The commission will at once set to work in accordance with the bill to make the fullest investigation of the existing conditions in regard to provincial elevators, with a view to inaugurating the Government system on the best terms possible and as expeditiously as possible.

The Wheat Situation.

The British markets have showed more interest in Manitoba wheat during the past week, and export trade has been somewhat brisker. The slack demand for flour, however, both at home and for export, tends to make the market dull. Should the present Western Canadian crop go in on a dry seed-bed there will be likely a stronger Canadian market for wheat. Farmers are continuing to hold wheat, and a good many of them are talking a dollar at their own station, while the persistent bulls of the Grain Exchange are again talking \$1.20 wheat. With existing mild weather, there is prospect of the farmers getting on the land early, so that it does not look as if receipts would increase much until after seeding.

A glance at the world's shipments shows that every exporting country is to-day sending more wheat than it did last year, with the exception of the Argentine, and even from there supplies are on the increase.

Winnipeg wheat prices at yesterday's close were: \$1.05 1-2 for March, \$1.06 5-8 for May and \$1.07 5-8 for July delivery—as compared with following prices a week ago: \$1.04 1-2 for March, \$1.06 1-4 for May and \$1.08 1-2 for July.

Rivals for Carriage of Grain.

United States transportation interests are determined to make a strong fight for grain carrying from the Canadian West. A Boston despatch this week stated that, after negotiations lasting many months between the Chamber of Commerce and the Boston and Maine and Boston and Albany Railroads, the New York Central have published, via both of these routes, rates on export grain for the summer season from Buffalo to Boston on a low basis, in order to compete with all-water-rates through Canada from the Canadian Northwest.

Statistics for a period of years show that while

Boston has had a marked falling off in exports of grain, Montreal is showing a steady increase.

A Winnipeg authority on grain and transportation matters expresses the view that a bitter rate war is in prospect, in which the advantage will be all on the side of the exporter. Usually at the opening of navigation a rate of 6c from Georgian Bay to Montreal is charged, this rate being decreased to 5c, as the season progresses. This year the Inland Rate Association, by which body the rates are governed, had its usual spring meeting, and fixed the rate on export wheat from the Georgian Bay to Montreal at 6 1-4c. But this is likely to be modified by the recent action of the American Trunk Railways touching Buffalo, in notifying the Interstate Commerce Commission that from May 1, their rates are to be considerably lower than at the present time.

In May, the rates are likely to be as follows: Wheat 4c per bushel; rye, 3 3-4c; oats, 3c; barley, 3 1-2c. These rates are applicable "from Buffalo and East," to New York and Boston by rail route. The present rate from Buffalo to New York and Boston is 5 1-2c per bushel on Canadian spring wheat, and the Trunk Line Railway of the United States have not been able to get any for export at these rates.

It is now thought by exporters, that a drop in the rate to 4c a bushel, delivered on the steamer at Montreal, will be announced. This would more than meet the competition of the American lines, for to the 4c rate which they quote nine-tenths of a cent has to be added for the transfer from rail to ship.

From the American side it is hinted that if this proposed rate goes into effect, the American lines will drop the tariff still lower in an effort to get, at any rate, a share of the business now coming by Canadian routes to Montreal.

Vancouver Favors Single Tax.

The Assessment Act in British Columbia compels all municipalities to exempt improvements from taxation to the extent of at least 50 per cent. of their value, and they had the power further to reduce the taxation of improvements as to abolish it entirely. Vancouver city for several years past has availed itself of this privilege and only taxed improvements on twenty-five per cent. of their value. The City Council has just passed a by-law entirely to exempt improvements from taxation, so that in future Vancouver will raise the municipal revenue by the operation of the single tax.

That the British Columbia Electric Railway Co. has the right in perpetuity to enter on the streets of any city in British Columbia and lay and operate tram lines, was the contention of counsel for the company at a hearing before the provincial Government at Victoria, this week. The company claims that under its charter it has the right to do so without seeking authority from city or municipal councils. The contention was advanced at the hearing of the petition presented by a delegation from the British Columbia Municipal Association, asking that the tramway company's privileges be curtailed.

THE APPEAL in the case of the Florence Mining Company v. Cobalt Lake Mining Co. was dismissed with costs, a week ago, by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, thus confirming the action of the Ontario Legislature.