

FREIGHT RATES.

One of the most important subjects before the Board last year was the ever-important one of freight rates. If Winnipeg is anything in particular, it is especially a wholesale centre, but it is not so because of any favors hitherto shown it by the railway companies. It is a large distributing centre because of its geographical position, and the energy of its business men. Through rates to points in our own immediate constituency have been against us, while the discrimination against Winnipeg to Kootenay points has practically shut us out of that market. Up to five years ago, we had a large trade in West Kootenay, but during the period named, freight rates have been so badly against us, we were compelled to withdraw almost altogether, sustaining a heavy loss of trade, one house alone being obliged to forego over one hundred thousand dollars worth of business per annum. The Board has all along felt that Winnipeg was entitled to fairer treatment. We never asked for favors, we simply asked to be placed on the same footing as our competitors in the matter of freight rates. If that right was granted us, we never feared the result. I am happy to be able to report to you that the untiring efforts of the Board have at last resulted in a recognition of this principle by the railway corporations.

Through rates from the East to all points west of Winnipeg as far as Revelstoke and in the Kootenay country are now the same as the two rates combined from the East to Winnipeg and out again, except that cartage and handling charges at Winnipeg, amounting to from four to eight cents per hundred pounds for the first five classes are added to the latter. These charges are, of course, still a handicap, but I am not prepared to say that they are unreasonable. I feel sure this simple act of justice will result in great good to the business