

Freight Rates at Fort William.

An eastern report says: It is understood that the Canadian Pacific Railway and the steamboat lines who were at variance last year, have settled their differences and that a mutual rate of freight is to be made between the lake and rail lines for the coming season of navigation. Last year the Canadian Pacific put up its rate on goods from Port Arthur to Winnipeg 19 cents per hundred pounds. This ten cents was not charged, however, where shippers, say from Montreal, sent their goods by certain propeller lines in which both the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk railways were interested. As a result of this move some of the independent propeller lines plying from Montreal and Toronto to Port Arthur were compelled to reduce their charges just 10 cents in order to meet the competition of the Canadian Pacific. It was understood at the time that the reason the latter road made this discrimination was because one Montreal firm owning a couple of propellers, had cut rates all round. This firm will not be in business this year, and therefore the Canadian Pacific will withdraw its discriminating rate. In other words all the propeller lines will be on the same basis this year and have the same working arrangement in regard to rates with the Canadian Pacific. A meeting of the lake and rail agents has been called for the 16th of the present month. It will be held at Montreal and it is expected that a mutual tariff of rates will be agreed upon.

The Great Falls Lumber states that the Great Falls and Canada railway, running from Lethbridge to Great Falls, Montana, is now a bonded line, and that its gauge is to be changed to the standard width.

Commercial Legislation.

Mr. Teichman, representing the Winnipeg Retailers' association, appeared before the law amendments committee of the Manitoba legislature recently and requested that two amendments be made to the garnishee act, that the cost of issue of garnishee and summons do not exceed \$1.00 in addition to the cost of service, and that the amount of exemption be reduced to \$25. In introducing the matter Mr. Teichman said the greatest difficulty was experienced in collecting small amounts.

A deputation from the labor organizations of Winnipeg interviewed the law amendments committee recently. Mr. Appleton was the first speaker and entered on an exhaustive explanation of the legislation desired, including a free labor and employ ment bureau amendments to the new law, a bake shop act, the abolishment of property qualification for municipal office, the payment of aldermen, and a fair wage clause in all government contracts. Ald. Andrews explained the features of the lien law prepared, and Mr. Mason detailed many instances demonstrating the necessity of some changes. Messrs. Byo and Boulton spoke particularly of the bake shop act, and gave some interesting information as to the hours of labor in local shops. Men were working from twelve to fourteen hours a day, frequently without any intermission for meals, simply a few minutes for lunch, and generally, all night. At times men worked the full twenty-four hours under the most trying circumstances. Mr. Small discussed the Mechanic's Lien act, and pointed out desired features to be incorporated.

Messrs. Hunter and McKerchar, representing the Winnipeg Caterers' union, waited on Hon. Mr. Cameron, provincial attorney, and requested an amendment to the garnishee act, along the lines asked by the Retailers' association, namely, to reduce the cost of collection and lessen amount of exemption.

The plan for the recovery of small debts, detailed and advocated by Wm. Trant of Regina, before the recent Business Men's convention, has been placed by a committee of the Winnipeg board of trade in the hands of the attorney-general of Manitoba with a view to legislation on the subject.

The Fur Trade.

The following are the prices at the Hudson's Bay Company's London sale, held January 18: Beaver—Yorkfort, firsts, large, 31, small, 12.3 to 14, seconds, large, 21.6 to 23.6, small, 9.6 to 11; thirds, large, 15.9 small, 6.9; cub, 5.3 shillings. Mackenzie river, firsts, large, 24 to 26.6 small, 10.9 to 11.9; seconds, large, 20 to 21, small, 9.6 to 10; thirds, large, 12.9 to 15.6, small, 6 to 6.9; cub, 4.6 shillings. Moose river and East Maine, firsts, large, 32.6 to 38, small, 14.3 to 16.3, seconds, large, 27.6 to 29, small, 11.9 to 13.9; thirds, large, 18.6, small, 8.9 to 9; cubs 6 shillings. Bursamis, etc., firsts, large, 31.6 to 35 small 16.6, seconds large, 25.6 to 27, small, 12.9 to 14.3; thirds, large, 19.3 to 19.6, small, 9 to 9.3 shillings. Fort Garry, firsts, large, 41, small, 17.9; seconds, large, 32.6, small, 15.9, thirds, large, 19.3, small, 9.6; cubs 6.6 shillings. Canada, firsts, large, 25.6 to 32.6, small, 11.9 to 15; seconds, large, 20.6 to 22.3, small, 12 to 12.6; thirds large, 15.9 to 17.8, small, 7.3 to 9.3; cubs, 6 shillings. North west, firsts, large, 21.6 to 25 small 10.3 to 11; seconds, large, 20 to 21.9, small, 9 to 10, thirds, large, 15.3 to 17.9, small, 6.9 to 7.9; cubs, 5.9 shillings. Musquash, Yorkfort, firsts, 10.3, small firsts 7; seconds, 6.7; thirds, 4.3, fourths 2.4 pence. Mackenzie river, firsts, 7.3; seconds, 6; thirds, 3.7; fourths, 2.4 pence. Northwest, firsts, 7.3; seconds 7.3, thirds, 4.3; fourths, 2.4 pence. Moose river, firsts, 11; seconds, 7; thirds, 5.4 pence. East Maine, firsts, 13.3, small firsts, 10.3, seconds 8.3; thirds, 6 pence. Canada, etc., firsts, 12; small firsts, 8.3; seconds, 8; thirds, 6; fourths, 4 pence.

The New York Fur Trade Review says: The entire collection of raw furs throughout the country will undoubtedly be larger than is desirable, independent of what the comparison may be with former years. The stress of necessity has led many to trap and hunt animals of all kinds indiscriminately, and we think the aggregate catch will exceed the requirements of the markets at home and abroad. Such being the facts, prices must be moderate. We would like to see country shippers and collectors get the highest possible prices for their furs, but as there may be some buyers who depend upon handling furs as a means of money making we would warn out-of-town readers to regard with caution, if not suspicion, price lists quoting figures very much above reasonable value.

Silver.

The London silver market experienced a rapid drop on the announcement that the Japanese government had taken steps to the adoption of a gold currency standard. The effect of this was seen in the decline of the market quotation at London to 293d. for bars, which is the lowest touched by the metal since February, 1895, when it sold at 27.5-16d. per ounce. The New York price kept pace with the decline in London, the market quotation for commercial bars falling from 64½c. to 61½c. per ounce. Silver prices on March 5 were, London, 293d.; New York, 61c.

Monthly Wheat Statement

The total quantity of wheat available in the United States on March 1—63,521,000 bushels—points to a falling off of about 35,313,000 bushels as compared with the cor-

responding total on March 1, 1891—decrease of 47,025,000 bushels contrasted with the like date two years ago, and forms the smallest total since March 1, 1892.

The total quantity of wheat available for immediate distribution in the United States and Canada, both coasts, plus quantities afloat for Europe from all exporting countries, on March 1, added to available stocks in Europe, as reported to Bradstreet's, is follows:

	(000 omitted).			
	East of Rockies.	Pacific coast.	Europe and Africa.	Grand total.
1897...	61,661	1,857	55,000	119,518
1896...	91,538	4,296	55,208	151,042
1895...	98,715	11,801	60,112	170,628
1894...	96,216	9,622	78,218	184,056
1893...	103,223	5,470	67,188	175,889
1892...	61,666	8,311	77,608	147,585
1891...	42,401	8,594	48,528	99,523
1890...	41,362	5,079	46,100	92,541
1889...	41,683	3,533	61,504	106,720

The falling off in stocks of available wheat in the United States and Canada east of the Rocky mountains, during the month of February amounted to 6,421,000 bushels more than twice as much as during February last year, three-fourths of the decrease in February, 1895, twice the falling off in the like month of 1891, and three times that of the corresponding month of 1893. When to these decreases is added the shrinkage in stocks of wheat on the Pacific coast, the total decline last month, United States and Canada, was found to be 7,572,000 bushels compared with 4,617,000 bushels in February, 1895, 9,489,000 bushels in February, 1894, 9,587,000 bushels in the like month of 1893, and 3,019,000 bushels in February, 1892. This points to a continuance of the relative excessive decrease in stocks of wheat in January 1, noted one month ago. The falling off in supplies in sight out of farm hands since January 1, in the United States and Canada, is 13,908,000 bushels more than twice the decline in the corresponding period in 1896, more than three-fourths the like increase in 1895, three times that in 1891, and four times that in 1893.

There has been a falling off of about 51,000,000 bushels in available supplies of wheat, United States and Canada, afloat and in Europe, between January 1 and July 1, 1895, and the analysis indicates a decrease during the past two months amounting about three-fourths the falling off in the corresponding period in 1895.

Should this ratio of decrease continue during the ensuing four months, the outlook for a grand total supply of available stocks of wheat in United States and Canada, afloat and in Europe, on July 1 next of about 100,000,000 bushels, the smallest total on a like date since 1891.

The recent unfavorable reports of the condition of the wheat crop in various portions of the world have been the strength and support of the wheat market of late. But it remains to be seen whether the trade generally will regard a probable decrease on July 1 next of only about 5,000,000 bushels, compared with July 1, 1896, reference being made to stocks in United States, in Canada, afloat and in Europe, as being bullish when contrasted with the past two months' decrease in world's stocks compared with a year ago amounting to 35,000,000 bushels—Bradstreet's.

At Montreal on March 2 the feature in the egg market was the weaker feeling that prevailed in now laid stock, and prices declined per dozen. The demand for small was fair and sales were made at 11c to 12c per dozen. Limes were held at 11c.