

### Winnipeg Commercial Travellers.

It would be difficult to find a better illustration of western push and go-aheadism than is furnished by the North-west Commercial Travellers' Association of Canada, which has its headquarters in Winnipeg. It is only a little over two months since the first meeting for the purpose of organization of the association took place. But the meeting was called for the purpose of organization, and not to add to delays upon the principle of taking mature consideration. In one week from the first meeting was held, the association was in working order, and in two weeks its membership was over seventy. The principals of wholesale houses in town when waited upon, almost to a man subscribed, and became life members, and the increase to the association's membership has been so rapid, that the two hundred membership cards prepared by the Secretary are about all applied for or supplied to members, and a new supply is now necessary. The treasurer of the association has ample funds on hand to meet all demands, and a surplus, which will be employed in securing a reading room and library. All this has been accomplished inside of three months, and while outsiders laughed at the movement, and thought it folly.

### The Railway War.

The fight between the lines leading from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Chicago still continues, and there is no hope of an early settlement of differences. At the conferences of managers held during the past week a feeling of friendliness prevailed, but any attempt to bridge over the difficulties seemed impossible to secure any agreement upon. The question of divided territory gives much trouble, and the policy of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul to be barred from no work of railway construction they wish to carry out. The Omaha managers, on the other hand, insist on having reserved to them certain stretches of territory. All these side issues are imported into the struggle and assist in making it a stubborn one, but the real *causa belli*, namely the struggle between the two great railway combinations for the trade of the North-western States, must be decided before any permanent settlement of the struggle can take place.

There has been no extra cutting indulged in by any of the roads during the past week, and the cut passenger rates from Chicago north have been abandoned. The fare from St. Paul to Chicago is now fifty cents, and all competing lines have the same rates. The cuts in freights are by no means so even over the different lines, and the practice of discrimination is no doubt being extensively carried on. The war still rages from Chicago to St. Paul on the north, and to the Missouri River towns on the west.

### North-western Post Offices.

It is difficult at all times to impress upon the sleepy officials of a capital the rapidity of progress in new western countries, and this has been specially so in connection with the post office facilities of the North-west. It is only after repeated representations have been made,

that the department have decided upon establishing a weekly mail between Winnipeg and Prince Albert. Hitherto a mail every three weeks was all that the people of the latter town had as a means of communication with the outer world. The town of Brandon had no money order office until last summer, and notwithstanding all the rapid progress of that place, it had a population of nearly 2,500 people before a post office order could be purchased at its post office. Over forty applications for new post offices are now under consideration at Ottawa, and the number will in all probability be a hundred before these forty get attended to.

It would be sheer folly to attach any political importance to this slowness, as a change in parties would not likely make any change for the better. The facts are, the people who live in eastern provinces cannot comprehend the magic growth of the North-west, and at Ottawa they are a little worse than any where else.

### The Hop Famine.

Evidences are at hand that the famine in hops is not likely to create such high prices as were expected by many. A few weeks ago it was confidently asserted by parties whose wishes were parent to their thoughts, that hops would sell before January 1st, in Montreal and New York, at \$2.00 a pound. Prices did reach \$1.35 at one time, and these prophecies seemed in a fair way to be fulfilled. The European demand was calculated as a powerfully bullish element, and the cry was raised against the exportation of what was so much wanted at home. The whole movement for hoisting prices was well managed, but unfortunately the elements interested were too varied, and the decline of some 20c from the highest figures is rather a surprise to those who were waiting for a hop famine. It now turns out that the demand in New York for export purpose is not quite so great, and dealers in that city can even afford to sell and press business in Montreal. There will doubtless be very light prices for hops until a new crop is secured, but the fancy figures talked of a few weeks ago are evidently not going to be reached just yet.

### The C. P. R. Capital.

The increase of the C. P. R. capital stock from \$15,000,000 to \$100,000,000 seems to be a great puzzler to most of the wiseheads of the eastern press, and some of the reasons assigned for the increase are really amusing. One Montreal journal hints that the Syndicate, having difficulty in securing money in England, owing to Grand Trunk opposition, have decided upon this expansion of capital. This theory carries absurdity on its face, as \$100,000,000 would certainly be much harder to float than \$15,000,000, and the subscribed capital of a railway corporation is by no means generally accepted as a proof of its solidity and safety of investment in its stock.

Other journals have advanced what seems a much more reasonable theory, namely that the C. P. R. Syndicate anticipate hard times to overtake them long before their work of railway construction is completed, and the present

close state of the money market they accept as a sure indication of the near approach of the same. Their aim in increasing their capital therefore is to have sufficient funds at their disposal in the way of subscribed capital to enable them to prosecute their work with vigor even through a period of commercial depression. It has been too frequently the case that great railway undertakings have been brought to a standstill by the advent of such periods, and the Syndicate wisely wish to avoid any such consequences.

There is no doubt some truth in this theory of financial precaution, but it is more likely that even the C. P. R. Syndicate are only becoming aware of the magnitude of the work they have on hand. They find that the construction of a single line across the continent is not all that is necessary, although it is all that the contract binds them to. Numerous branches are wanted throughout the North-west, which it seems private railway enterprise is powerless to undertake. And these branches must each and all prove of great value as feeders to the company's main lines, and contribute much towards making good dividends as well as satisfying the general cry for railways in the North-west.

There is no doubt but the C. P. R. Syndicate have been looking ahead to the construction of these branches, and the energy they have displayed hitherto in the work of construction would indicate that they above all other corporations are prepared to grapple with the railway wants of the North-west. While therefore there may be some talk in the financial precaution theory, it is more probable that an intention to greatly extend the work of railway construction is the principal reason for the enlarging of the C. P. R. capital.

### Railway Rumors.

Every week we have rumor after rumor of railway schemes for the North-west, and week after week we meet disappointment by finding that they are without foundation. The latest that has reached the city of Winnipeg is, if anything, the wildest that has yet went into circulation, and it is to the effect that a certain officer of the Northern Pacific had by secret and subtle working managed to secure enough of the stock of the St. P. M. & M. to give the Northern Pacific element a controlling power in the management of the former company's lines. The rumor is too wild to be worth much consideration, but assuming it to be a fact, we can smile at the change which would take place in the anti-monopoly cry throughout the North-west. The Northern Pacific has hitherto been looked to as the probable saviour of Manitoba and Northern Dakota by opponents of railway monopoly. With a controlling power in the St. P. M. & M. the Northern Pacific would be the greatest monopoly the North-west ever had, add the high rates of freight and passenger travel west of Fargo, where the N. P. have no opposition is an index to how they would act with this rumored extension of their monopoly.

J. & W. Humbertoff have opened up as general merchants at Auburn.