

average crop of twenty-one bushels to the acre. This would make the cost per acre about \$16. Taking the lowest estimate it would therefore appear that the fall wheat crop of Ontario has netted an average loss to the farmers of the province of \$3.20 per acre, or a total loss of \$3,247,988 on the 902,219 acres of wheat sown. At the lowest estimate of 76 cents per bushel as the cost of growing wheat in an average season, the farmer would require to receive \$1.00 per bushel for his product to cover the cost of production this year. If this estimate is anywhere near the actual average cost, the farmers of Ontario must have sunk a good many million dollars in their agricultural operations for the past season, for other crops were not any better in proportion than fall wheat. Spring wheat, which is not largely grown, was only about a two-thirds crop; oats only yielded 30 bushels per acre, or seven bushels short of an average crop; whilst potatoes and roots, it is well known, are a very poor crop. Even at a full average crop present prices would only give the farmer a few cents profit per acre on his fall wheat, allowing the lowest estimate to be correct, which would practically put Ontario out of the competition for the world's wheat importing markets.

BINDING TWINE.

The item of binding twine is one of no small importance in Manitoba, and any means of reducing the cost on this account will be of great value to the farmers. This season, with the very heavy crops, a large quantity of twine has been required. In some cases over six pounds per acre have been used. But placing the average at four pounds to the acre, we find that it has taken 1,728,536 pounds of twine to bind the 432,134 acres of wheat grown in Manitoba this year. At an average cost to the farmer of fifteen cents per pound, the outlay for twine would amount to \$259,280.40. This is for the wheat crop alone, and not taking into consideration other crops, such as barley and oats for which twine is also used. Though the average cost is placed at 15 cents per pound, as a matter of fact this was the minimum cost to the farmer, whilst owing to the scarcity twine sold in some instances at over 20 cents per pound. The sum mentioned represents about \$2.60 for every man, woman and child in the province; or, allowing one adult in every five of the population, and half the adult

population as farmers, the average cost for twine per farmer would be about \$26. The cost of twine to the farmers of Manitoba for wheat alone would pay the interest on over half the cost of constructing the Hudson's Bay Railway. In three years it would about pay for the railway to the boundary, without allowing for any increase in the consumption of twine each year. Counting in the twine used for oats and barley, based on the acreage as reported by the Agricultural Department, and we would have a total cost for twine this year of about \$377,552, and this in the yet comparatively undeveloped province of Manitoba. In a very few years, at the present rate of progress, this amount will be doubled. At present this expenditure goes entirely without the province, though the country offers excellent advantages for the manufacture of the twine at home. Flax grows to perfection here, and although it is not generally known, it is nevertheless true, that there are several varieties of wild flax, indigenous to the Northwest. With these facts in view, it would surely seem that the manufacture of binding twine should prove a profitable industry in Manitoba.

A better scheme for the farmers, however, would be the invention of a machine which would utilize the straw for binding the sheaves. In this great age of invention, such a binding machine should not prove a practical impossibility. Far more wonderful things have been accomplished and are being accomplished continually. Now, where is the mechanical genius who will invent a self-straw binder? May a Manitoban have the honor of providing such a machine, and he will be entitled to the everlasting respect of the farmers of the civilized world.

THE SITUATION.

Another week has passed away, and so far as is known at the time of writing, the situation regarding the construction of the Red River Valley Railway remains practically the same. Mr. Norquay has left New York, and was in Montreal on Wednesday, and a day later in Toronto. It is said that he will arrive in Winnipeg to-day (Monday). This move would either indicate that he has succeeded in his negotiations at New York, or that he has abandoned for the present any further efforts in that direction to raise the funds for the completion

of the road. Mr. Norquay has been very reticent all along as to the nature of his negotiations, but in an interview at Montreal he admitted that he had not been successful in New York in raising the funds. He would not, however, admit a complete failure, and intimated that he "did not in the least despair of raising the money." There were parties who were endeavoring to raise the funds, but as usual, the particulars could not be given. He further stated that "the people may rest assured that even if we do not succeed in raising money, we believe we have enough resources with the province at our back, to complete the road in spite of all opposition." It appears that there has been no attempt to float the bonds provided for under the disallowed Red River Valley Railway Act, but simply the bonds of the province under an Act assented to, relating to the provincial treasury. The *Toronto Mail* is authority for the statement that a sale of the bonds had been as good as effected in New York, but at the last moment negotiations fell through, owing to the activity of C.P.R. agents who had been despatched to New York with the object of defeating Mr. Norquay in his efforts to raise the money. If this is the case, it would show to what straits the C.P.R. people are going to maintain their monopoly in Manitoba. On Mr. Norquay's arrival here a more complete statement of the case may be expected. In the Browning injunction, the first to come up, the argument has been concluded, but the Chief Justice has reserved decision. The other injunctions will go on this week, including those asked for on behalf of the Dominion Government. The rails will be on hand to commence work to-day (Monday), and with Mr. Norquay back at his post, it may be considered that there is something wrong if the work of ironing the road does not go on at once.

The idea of endeavoring to float the bonds here, in case of failure elsewhere, has been mooted. It is urged by some that the bonds would be bought up by citizens, if placed on the market here, in sufficient quantities to successfully finance the road. The proposal that the city should lend financial aid to the Government is also again being seriously discussed. In the meantime, the wordy warfare in the press goes on, and a great deal is being said on both sides with the object of making political capital out of the imbroglio, which can only injure the cause of the province.