

LOSSES IN THE GRAIN TRADE.

There are many ways by which losses are made in the grain trade, which are not taken into account by those not familiar with all the details of the business. It is the popular thing in Manitoba to talk about the long profits made by grain shippers. This belief is not only among the farmers, but even many business men in other branches seem to hold the belief that grain men make inordinate profits. The grain trade, like every other branch of business, has its profits and its losses. There are seasons in which good profits are made on the year's business, and again there are seasons when the losses exceed the profits. No, it is not all straight profit and big margins for grain men. THE COMMERCIAL could name seasons during the few years since Manitoba began to export, in which grain men have not held their own, and in which the majority of them came out poorer at the end of the crop year, than when they started in on the first of the crop.

At the present time it looks as though the crop year of 1891 would prove another disastrous year for many grain shippers, though the balance of the year yet to run may prove more satisfactory than the first half of the year has done. At the outset some shippers lost on the extraordinary advance in lake freights. Grain did not come to market as early and freely as was expected last fall, and grain shippers who had sold ahead, and became alarmed about filling their contracts before the close of navigation, began to pay high prices in order to draw out the wheat. Then when they got loaded up and began to ship, lake freights went up with a bound, from 2½ to 3 cents up to 7, 8 and 9 and even 12 cents per bushel from Fort William to Buffalo. This rapid and altogether abnormal advance in freights, was of course a serious matter for those who had bought to ship on a rate of from 3 to 5 cents.

The next thing to bring trouble upon the trade, was the railway blockade. This again meant serious loss to grain shippers. We have heard it stated that some have lost heavily on account of the congested railway situation east, individual losses ranging up in the thousands. At present there is any quantity of wheat, barley and oats held by Manitoba shippers, which could not be sold in car lots on track at the price paid the growers for the stuff, much less pay for the cost of buying and placing on track.

FARMERS BUYING MORE LAND.

Collections may be slow, viewed from the commercial standpoint, but Manitoba farmers seem to have plenty of money nevertheless. The sales of school lands held recently at different points throughout the province have proved an unqualified success for the government. It is understood that over 50,000 acres were disposed of at these sales, realizing well up to half a million dollars, the average price paid for the land being about \$8 per acre. In all cases the lands were sold to actual settlers. Though the lands were sold at public auction, it is stated that not an acre was purchased by others than farmers. This means that the farmers outbid speculators or others who may have had intentions of purchasing. In one respect, this showing is gratifying. It is

pleasant to know that the farmers, who are the actual users of the land, place a higher value upon it than speculators. These farmers have cultivated the soil of Manitoba in past years and they know its capabilities. It also is pleasing to know that Manitoba farmers are contented with their surroundings, as shown by the result of these sales. These farmers, who already have large holdings, would not be so anxious to increase their lands if they were not fully satisfied with the country. It is also pleasing to note that our farmers are in such a prosperous condition that they can outbid speculators and buy such a large quantity of land for cash, for the lands were sold on a cash basis.

There is another way of looking at these land sales, however, which is not so pleasant. Mercantile collections are not as prompt as they should be. Country merchants complain that on account of the large number of farmers who have not sold their grain yet, they are unable to collect in their accounts. We wonder how many of these farmers, who bought lands at the recent government sales, are among those who cannot pay their store bills! We have heard of one who paid over \$1,000 cash for lands bought at one of these sales, and yet this same man has not paid his last year's store bill yet, because he "has not sold his crop." We have frequently heard of cases of farmers who could not pay their store bills, but who had money to buy new farms. Of course these are exceptions. We do not believe that there are a very large number of farmers of this class in Manitoba. It does seem, however, that when our handful of farmers could pay out such a large sum in cash, for lands, that they ought to be able to pay up their store bills more promptly. Reduced to an average, the amount paid in cash at these land sales, by farmers only, equalled about \$25 for every farmer in Manitoba. The scandalous credit system which obtains in Manitoba is at the bottom of most of the trouble about slow collections, and if farmers are slow pay and invest their money in other ways, instead of paying their store accounts, it is because they have been educated so to do by the way business is done in this country.

TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The Canadian ministers who went to Washington to talk over improved trade relationship with Uncle Sam, have returned, but so far no official statements have come from either Washington or Ottawa, as to the result of the mission. In the meantime, the published reports that our ministers were not received very cordially at Washington, and that the mission proved a failure, must be discredited, for the reason that they are not in accordance with the facts. They remained in Washington a week, and had a meeting daily with United States officials, lasting two hours each session. This shows that the question must have been fully discussed, newspaper reports to the contrary notwithstanding. The Canadian ministers did not go with the idea of arranging a trade treaty. The idea was simply to have an informal discussion. Evidently all that was intended was fully accomplished. What the re-

sult may be, however, the future will show. Newspaper reports of the failure of the mission, and cool treatment of our ministers, may be set down as having emanated from their political opponents, whose wish is father to the thought.

A Complaint From the East.

THE COMMERCIAL of February 8th, contained the following letter from James Hall & Co., of the Ontario Glove Works, Brockville. "Having noticed that you gave publicity to the following paragraph in your last issue, viz: 'Thos. Clearihue, well known to the west as traveller for the Ontario Glove Works, of Brockville, Ontario, is establishing a new manufactory in gloves, mitts, moccasins, etc., at Brockville.' As this is misleading, and is not true, and may have an injurious effect on our business in Manitoba and the Northwest, we ask you to give this denial a place in your next issue. Mr. Clearihue is not establishing a new manufactory in Brockville, the Ontario Glove Works being the only factory of any note between Montreal and Toronto."

Mr. Clearihue now writes as follows, in reply to the above: "In looking over your issue of the 8th inst., I was much surprised to find a letter from James Hall & Co., of the Ontario Glove Works, Brockville. Now, Mr. Editor, if you refer to my advertisement in your paper, you will note, that I am not entering the commercial arena as a manufacturer but as a 'wholesale dealer,' and the following item published in your issue of January 25th, viz: 'Thos. Clearihue, well known to the west as traveller for the Ontario Glove Works, of Brockville, Ontario, is establishing a new manufactory in gloves, mitts, moccasins, etc., at Brockville,' is not in accordance with the facts. It was published by you without my knowledge, and I am in no way responsible for it. You will thus see that by publishing James Hall & Co.'s letter, without first exonerating me, you have unwittingly done me an injustice, on account of which Jas. Hall & Co., seem to fear that their interests in Manitoba and the West may suffer. I may mention that I was in the employ of James Hall & Co. for over twenty-one years, and now in starting business on my own account, I have no desire to injure my late employers, and regret exceedingly that your publishing the item should have caused them uneasiness."

THOS. CLEARIHUE

Brockville, Feb. 12.

NOTE BY EDITOR.—The original item, which led to the letter from James Hall & Co., and now to the reply from Mr. Clearihue, was simply copied from an eastern exchange. THE COMMERCIAL, therefore, did not originate the report which has led to a misunderstanding between our correspondents.

North Dakota's Crops.

Official estimates of the commissioner of agriculture gives the following figures as the total crop of North Dakota for 1891:

	Acreage.	Average yield bu.-hels.	Crop bus.
Wheat	2,585,602	22.58	61,713,323
Oats	420,224	42.54	17,875,568
Barley	143,363	36.70	5,261,755
Flax	106,613	11.64	1,241,018
Rye	11,893	28.05	335,339
Potatoes	19,606	178.61	3,494,861
Corn	35,693	24.25	865,693

Six Red River counties, Grand Forks, Walsh, Pembina, Traill, Cass and Richland, produced 53½ per cent of the wheat crop of the entire state.

The cane and plant of the Beet Sugar company, of the province of Quebec, will be sold by the sheriff February 20th. Over \$25,000 have been spent by the company and the property is expected to realize but a fraction of this amount. Beet root sugar manufacturing is apparently a failure in Quebec.