

if present crop prospects are realized a much larger percentage will be required over the whole Dominion. Last year the western wheat crop was comparatively thin on the ground and only about two and a-half pounds of binder twine to the acre was required. This year's crop is very much thicker on the ground and it will probably take upwards of three and a-half pounds per acre to tie up the harvest. So it is probably safe to estimate that fully twenty-five per cent. more twine will be required this year than last in the Dominion.

The binder twine industry is in a somewhat peculiar shape this year. Nearly all the large operators in binder twine have either very little to sell or are out of the business nearly altogether. There is one notable exception in the case of the Farmers' Binder Twine Co., of Brantford. Through the foresight of its business management, this co-operative concern was the only firm in the Dominion that laid in a large supply of the raw material for this season's trade, and, consequently, they are in the business of supplying binder twine to a greater extent than ever. But the Consumers' Cordage Co., one of the largest manufacturers of binder twine in Canada, will only have about one-half, or about 2,000 tons, as against 4,000 tons last year, to dispose of. No twine is being made at the Central Prison this year, where last year 1,000 tons were made. During the winter some of the large American dealers in binder twine sold largely to the local dealers of Ontario chiefly, and this is the reason why so many of the local merchants throughout the country have large supplies of twine on hand. It is supposed that this twine was sold to the local dealers at about seven cents per pound, which enables them to sell it to the farmer at from eight to nine cents, and make a fair profit. Notwithstanding this supply at country points, there is every indication of higher prices later on, and farmers will consider their own interests by making their purchases as early as possible.

In connection with the present situation of the binder twine trade, there is one firm whose action deserves more than passing commendation. We have stated that the Farmers' Binder Twine Co. had secured their supply of raw material before the war broke out. From a purely business point of view, it would be quite natural to suppose that this firm would seek to make all the capital it could out of the present situation. But, instead of doing so, we find that the management, having the interest of the farmer at heart, are offering their large stock of high-class twine at very low prices. One good turn deserves another, and the farmers should recognize this when getting their supplies.

#### Excessive Freight Rates.

In last week's issue we quoted some figures showing the great disadvantage in which Canada is placed with regard to railroad and ocean freight rates on cattle as compared with the United States and the South American States. In this issue we publish an address by Lt. Col. O'Brien, president of the East Simcoe Farmers' Institute, in which he deals with this question. As Col. O'Brien points out the people of this country owe the railroads nothing. Every railway in the Dominion has sometime or other either received a large land grant or a money bonus, which has come out of the pockets of the people who are chiefly the tillers of the soil. In many instances the land grants made are in the most fertile sections of the country, and the railway companies who were so fortunate as to secure them are to day accumulating wealth much faster than the best mercantile concern in the land.

Considering the many and great advantages which the railway companies have received from the people the great producing classes have a right to demand that reasonable rates be given them when sending their goods over these roads. At any rate they are entitled to rates similar to those allowed by the railroads of other countries. The districts in which most of our export cattle are produced are situated much nearer the seaboard

than the sections of the United States where the bulk of the export cattle are raised; then why should the Canadian shipper have to pay \$26 per head for transportation while his competitor across the border has only to pay \$20 per head. There certainly must be something radically wrong with the freight rates of this country.

Whether the difficulty is with the railroad or ocean rates we are not in a position to state. It may be that both the railways and the steamship lines between Canada and Great Britain are responsible for this unfair condition of things. How to remedy the difficulty is the next question. As Col. O'Brien suggests, a commission to regulate the rates where there is no competition might help to solve the problem. But where the railroads have been in operation for years it might be difficult to get them to submit to the ruling of a commission in such matters. Where a new road is to be built the charter might be granted under any condition that might be named. Another method of helping the rates is to create competition. In this regard the United States shipper has an immense advantage over his Canadian competitor. There are competing lines of railway running in nearly every direction through the United States, and the way some of these competing lines cut both passenger and freight rates sometimes would almost take the breath away from a Canadian shipper. We have had a taste of cut rates in Canada for the past three or four months, and the sensation is so peculiarly pleasant that we would like to have these cheap rates applied to freight as well as to passengers.

The producers of this country, in demanding cheaper freight rates, are not asking anything that is unreasonable. Nor do they want a rate that would mean ruin to the railway companies whose prosperity is so closely associated with the prosperity of the country. All the producers want is to be placed on the same footing, in regard to freight rates, as the producers of the United States or any other country similarly situated, and it would be in the interests of the railways themselves to grant this. If the \$6 per head which the Canadian cattle shipper has to pay more than the United States shipper for getting his cattle to Great Britain were paid to the producer of our cattle, it is needless to say that the production of cattle would greatly increase. If this were brought about, the railways and steamships would have more cattle to ship, and be able to do a much larger carrying trade than they are doing at present. On the other hand, if the present excessive rates for carrying live stock are to continue, our export cattle trade is not likely to increase unless the price goes up very materially. In regard to ocean freight rates, about the only way to get better rates is to induce more competition. To induce more competition the best shipping facilities should be provided at the seaboard. If, as Col. O'Brien points out, ninety per cent. of the grain shipped from this country goes by way of New York instead of via our own ocean ports, there is something radically wrong with the carrying trade of this country from beginning to end, and the sooner those in authority look into the matter the better.

#### Buying and Selling Cheese.

As those closely identified with the dairy industry are well aware the cheese made at the different factories throughout the country is sold by what is known as the "call" system at the local dairy boards of trade. One of the regulations governing the operations of the boards is that no member of the board is allowed either to buy or sell cheese on the day on which the market is held unless at the board in the regular prescribed manner. So long as the members abide by this rule the "call" system of disposing of the product has given pretty general satisfaction. It is only when this rule, as well as some of the other regulations, has not been adhered to, that dissatisfaction with this method of selling and buying cheese has arisen.

There are about twenty of these local dairy boards of trade in the province. As far as we are aware those in the eastern portion of the province work satisfactorily. In Western Ontario, however, with one or two exceptions, the local cheese markets during the past couple of years have been sort of parodies on what a well-conducted dairy board of trade ought to be. Instead of meeting for the purpose of buying and selling in a business-like way, the regular meetings of the boards were little more than mere "fencing bouts," where the buyer and the seller would fence a bit in an endeavor to find out what price one was prepared to give and the other prepared to pay, and when the contest was over they would know as much about the situation as when they began. As one would expect this method of conducting an important business could not give satisfaction, and after a year or two of this "go as you please" method, the factorymen and buyers in some sections are beginning to view the matter in its proper light.

The London cheese market is now considering a proposition to make it compulsory for all salesmen to dispose of their cheese only by the "call" system at the regular meeting of their own board, or at any other board. If the cheese is once sold and rejected by the buyer, the salesman may resell the cheese at any time or place. The buyers also bind themselves to buy at the board from all factories which have ordinarily sold at the London market in the past. If either a buyer or seller violates these rules he will be punished by a fine of \$25. It is also recommended that all cheese be inspected and shipped within one week of sale. While this proposition is under consideration an effort is being made to induce the neighboring markets at Ingersoll, Woodstock, Listowel, and Brantford to co-operate and adopt this uniform method of selling.

Though this new proposal may seem a little arbitrary to some it will, if properly carried out, help to remedy many of the existing evils in connection with the buying and selling of cheese at the Western markets. If a dairy board of trade is established for the purpose of disposing of dairy products, that is the place to sell and nowhere else. We have watched the operations of the local cheese markets for several years back, and are safe in stating that, taking one season with another, a salesman will do better always to sell his cheese on the market when they are ready for shipping. When all transactions are made open and above board the bargain is a more binding one, and the trade is acquainted with what is being done, which is a distinct advantage. Then if the quality of the product is all right, and all cheese are bought and sold on the board, the salesman is always sure of getting the highest price which the market will warrant. Whereas if the salesman makes a bargain with the buyer off the board he is not sure whether he is getting the highest figure going or not. When it is the law that all cheese must be sold on the board the competition between buyers will be sure to bring out the highest value for the goods.

From a buyer's point of view it will be a decided advantage to have all cheese sold on the board only. When the market is over the buyer will know which factories have sold and which have not. It will be less trouble for him to get his orders filled, and make it much more pleasant to do business. Though it will be advantageous for one market to adopt such a regulation, it would be very much better if all the local boards in a district united, and agreed to buy and sell on the market only.

#### The Creamery Butter Market.

There has been considerable activity in the butter market during the past week and dealers seem anxious to get supplies. There also appears to be a lack of sympathy with the easier feeling in the English butter market. This is accounted for by the fact that at this season of the year there is always an increased demand for