

EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is very gratifying to note that Manitoba millers are securing such a large share of the Australian flour trade. This week two full train loads of flour left Winnipeg for Vancouver, on route to Australia. Previous to this a number of shipments were made from the mills at Portage la Prairie, Winnipeg and Keewatin, and the two large Manitoba milling companies have now orders in hand which will take all the surplus flour they can produce over domestic requirements for some time in the future. It is still more gratifying to note, as The Commercial has been reliably informed, that good prices are being obtained for the flour which is going to Australia, in some cases the figure obtained being equal, we are told, to the price obtained for similar grades from the domestic trade. It speaks very highly for the Manitoba flour that our millers are able to compete so successfully with the millers of the Pacific coast states, handicapped as our millers are by the long railway haul from here to the Pacific ports.

It is reported from Ottawa that a movement is on foot to secure the passage of very strict laws to deal with tramps. It is to be hoped the movement will be entirely successful. The horde of tramps who wander through this country, committing all sorts of crime from petty thieving to murder and outrages upon women and children, should be vigorously dealt with. A great many of these vagabonds are not Canadians. They invade the country each summer from the United States, and go south again in the winter. It is an invasion which should be repelled as vigorously as if it were an incursion of an armed band of freebooters. The tramp nuisance should be vigorously dealt with, and probably nothing would prove so efficacious in this connection as a liberal application of the cat.

Owing to the higher prices obtainable in Manitoba this year for oats, in consequence of the light crop of this cereal, it is likely that a much larger quantity of millstuffs will be consumed than was taken during the past year. While oats are much higher here than they were a year ago, millstuffs are lower. A year ago oats were worth 15 to 16 cents per bushel of 34 pounds in the Winnipeg market for home consumption and bran was quoted at the same time at \$9 per ton. Now a sample of oats equal to the average quality of last year's crop is worth 25 to 26 cents per bushel here, while bran is worth \$6 to \$7 per ton. Thus for about 12 cents 34 pounds of bran can be obtained, or a quantity equal in weight to a bushel of oats. Of course for some purposes the oats are worth the difference for feed, but bran is also a valuable feed and at present prices it is a very cheap feed. It would no doubt pay farmers to sell a part of their oat crop and buy bran. We have quoted Winnipeg prices for oats, and of course farmers at country points cannot get these prices, as local freight and cost of handling would have to be deducted, but millstuffs are also being sold cheaper at many country points than in the city, so that the

relative value of the two commodities would be about the same at country points as in the city. Owing to the low price of bran and shorts in Eastern Canada, Manitoba millers cannot ship millstuffs east. The present price of bran in Montreal and Toronto would only about pay the freight and commission, leaving nothing for the shipper, on the basis of all rail freights. Even at lake and rail rates there was no money in shipping bran East, and this accounts for the low prices of the product in Manitoba.

The Winnipeg Tribune makes a demand for "free agricultural implements, free twine, free barbed wire, free lumber, free nails, free fruit and the tariff reduced on a great many other articles," in the interest of Western Canada. Why does not the Tribune include refined petroleum in this list. We do not know of anything in need of a tariff reduction more urgently than coal oil. Some of the articles enumerated by the Tribune, are not sold materially lower south of the boundary than they are in Manitoba, but in the case of coal oil, the difference in prices in Manitoba, as compared with points in the United States just south of the boundary, is so great as to surprise one. Even after allowing for the difference in the measure, the United States gallon being one-fifth smaller than ours, the price of coal oil at Pembina, just south of the boundary, in Dakota, is not far from one half the price charged in Winnipeg. Canada is paying an enormous tax to keep up our oil industry, and it is a tax which weighs exceedingly heavy on the West. Last year it is said we imported about 6,500,000 gallons of oil from the United States, valued at \$114,000, on which the duty was \$357,000 or over 90 per cent. The consumption of Canadian oil amounted to 11,000,000 gallons, and this no doubt cost consumers an increased price in proportion to the duty. As an exchange remarks, it would at this rate pay the government to buy up the vested interests in our oil territory and set fire to the wells.

The proposal alleged to be under consideration at Washington, to settle the Cuban question by the purchase of the independence of the island, would appear to be an eminently satisfactory plan for the settlement of this long-standing sore. The plan is said to be a tripartite agreement whereby Great Britain is to furnish the money to buy the independence of the island, on Cuban bonds guaranteed by the United States. Spain's assent it is said, has already been practically assured. The commission which is to perfect the plans and see that they are carried out is to be composed of three members representing the countries interested. If any such proposal is really under consideration, we should fancy that Spain would be wise in quickly accepting it. Cuba will never be anything but a source of weakness to Spain, and soon or later must become independent. The purchase of the independence of the island in this way, would provide an easy means for Spain to escape from an awkward situation, and at the same time would greatly help to restore Spanish finances to a healthy condition. Great Britain, as a strong American power, is interested in the Cuban question almost as

closely as the United States, and it is in the interest of both countries that the Cuban question should be permanently settled. In guaranteeing the bonds for the purchase of Cuban independence, the United States would practically be pledged to maintain law and order in the country in case the Cubans failed to prove equal to the task of self-government. This would dispose of the claim that if Spain withdrew from the country it would be left in a state of anarchy.

HIS GRACE ARCHBISHOP LANGBEVIN, the head of the Roman Catholic church in Manitoba, has refused to accept the settlement of the Manitoba school question, and he has declared for a continuance of the agitation of the question. How the matter will be taken up in the Roman Catholic sections of Eastern Canada, remains to be seen. Judging from the remarks of Liberal leaders, however, they seem to have no fear of the result. Perhaps the Quebec Liberals have been emboldened by the great victory which they achieved last June, over the combined power of the clergy and the Conservative party. At any rate, it looks as if they intended to carry the war into Africa. There is evidently a struggle coming in Quebec, if it has not already begun, in which the clergy will be for the first time on the defensive. The gauntlet which Premier Laurier threw down to the bishops, in his remarkable speech on the remedial bill, during the last session of Parliament under the Tupper Government, has evidently not yet been withdrawn. If the utterances of Mr. Tarte and other leading Liberals count for anything, no truce has been agreed to between the clericals and the Liberals in Quebec. While the clerical organ in Winnipeg speaks of the "iniquitous fusion of Protestant and Catholic children" under the school laws in Manitoba, Hon. Mr. Tarte boldly declares that he is anxious to see Catholic and Protestant children educated together. In Quebec province itself a movement has been started for the reform of the educational system of the province. Mr. Marchand, leader of the Opposition in the Quebec Legislature, has declared that Quebec is away behind in its educational matters, and that the system must be reformed. In the coming provincial elections in Quebec, the school question there will be an important factor, and the result of the elections will no doubt indicate the feeling of the electors upon the Manitoba school question. It would be peculiar if the Manitoba school question should be the means of leading to a change in the school situation in Quebec, but stranger things than this have happened. The position of the clergy in Quebec has undoubtedly been greatly weakened by the overwhelming defeat administered to them in June last. If French Canadian liberalism is imbued to any great extent with the spirit displayed by Mr. Tarte, we might look for a movement against clerical influences in political, educational and state matters generally. If the Quebec Liberals could overcome the clergy with the Dominion Government at their back, what may they not attempt

Continued on Page 306.