

A petition has been presented to the Manitoba Legislature praying for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the taxation of vacant lands in rural municipalities, with a view to making the taxes more equitable. At present vacant lands are taxed the full value of cultivated farms in many districts.

The Protestant ministers of British Columbia are preaching against the Protestant Protective Association, warning their congregations to have nothing to do with the association. Rev. Mr. McLaren, a Vancouver clergyman, is reported to have said that "a man's country should be considered above his creed. They were living in peace with their Roman Catholic brethren, whom they respected as worthy citizens, and he hoped no hot-headed enthusiasts would introduce such a calamity as the Protestant Protective Association in British Columbia." The same may be said of all Western Canada. There is nothing for the order to do here, beyond the creation of ill feeling among neighbors who should be at peace with each other. It is to be hoped the association will not gain a foothold anywhere in the West.

According to reports, the towns up the Red River in Minnesota and Dakota are suffering from a most alarming outbreak of typhoid fever, which it is said has been traced to the water of the Red Lake river, which empties into the Red river at Grand Forks. An analysis of the water was made, it is said, at one of the government laboratories with the result that the water was found to be reeking with fever germs. Fortunately Winnipeg does not depend upon the Red river for water, our water supply being taken from the Assiniboine river, so that there is no immediate cause for alarm here. It has been stated that fever at Crookston, which discharges its sewage into the Red Lake river, has caused the contamination of the Red river, and it is a matter of great importance to Manitoba, as many persons draw their water supply from the river. The incident should increase attention to the question of the water supply of Winnipeg. While the Assiniboine has no connection with the Red river, beyond the fact that it empties into the latter river at Winnipeg, the cause which has led to the contamination of the Red, may produce the same condition in the waters of the Assiniboine at some future date. The matter should therefore be looked into carefully by the proper authorities. Our present water supply is not satisfactory, for several reasons, but how to improve it is an open question.

TALK about hard times becomes chronic occasionally, without any reason for it. The most of the talk one hears about hard times in Winnipeg this winter is really sound and nothing more. Some one—perhaps one who is a little slow in his payments—talks gloomily about hard times, and his story is repeated by others who become sympathetically affected thereby. Many men who are in a position to speak with authority, state that they cannot see any material difference between this and average seasons. Some wholesale houses report payments up to the average. The city tax collector

states that payments of taxes have been good, and the amount paid in considerably ahead of last year. Over \$300,000 has been paid into the city treasury in taxes during the past few weeks. Probably the talk about hard times has been brought about to a considerable extent by reading in the papers about the depression in the United States and elsewhere. People have read these reports until they began to fancy they felt them, or at least expected to feel them in their own business, and from expectation to fancied realization is not a long stride sometimes. The more pessimistically inclined, or those who are always looking for an excuse to put on a poor mouth, have read the reports until they began to apply the talk of hard times to themselves, while some have repeated, parrot-like, what they heard from others, and thus the idea has become chronic with many. While some people in Winnipeg may find cash a little closer than usual, undoubtedly the most of the talk about hard times has been brought about in the way described.

### Toronto Live Stock Market.

**Butcher's Cattle**—At Toronto on Tuesday offerings were rather more than the market required, and though there was fairly good buying, there were a good many left unsold at the close of the day. Prices were a shade off. The range was from 2½ to 3c for inferior to medium; 3 to 3½c for medium to good; 3½ to 3¾c for good to choice, and the price for extra choice picked cattle was 3½c. Several bulls were sold for shipment east at from \$2.30 to \$3.25.

**Stockers**—There was some enquiry for stockers. One lot of 6, averaging 1,025 lbs, sold at 3½c, and another lot of 10, averaging 1,080 lbs, sold at 3½c. A buyer is in the market to buy half a dozen loads of stockers which will average not less than 1,100 lbs. For this sort from \$3.40 to 3.50 would probably be paid.

**Hogs**—Prices ranged from \$5 to 5.25, weighed off car, for long lean hogs weighing from 140 to 200 lbs each. This sort is in demand for the manufacture of bacon for the English market, and command from 50 to 75c per cwt over the general run. Heavy fat hogs were in poor demand at lower prices, \$4.50 to 4.80 being paid to-day, weighed off car. Stores and mixed lots sold at an average of \$4.75; rough sows at \$4 to 4.25, and stags at \$3 to 3.50.

**Sheep and Lambs**—A bunch of cull lambs which have been in the market since last week, offered at \$1.50 per head, with no buyers. Sheep were dull and easy at \$3.75 to 4.00 a head.

In the supreme court Judge Tait has given judgment declaring the Quebec provincial commercial traders' tax perfectly constitutional.

W. F. Henderson & Co., Manitoba and western agents of the Truro Condensed Milk and Canning Co., Truro, Nova Scotia, manufacturers of the celebrated Reindeer brands of condensed milk, coffee and milk, cocoa and milk and condensed tea, have submitted for examination and testing samples of a new preparation which they are introducing to the trade of this country. It is a pure cream prepared from cow's milk, of unsurpassed richness, and reduced to cream by evaporation. The milk first being thoroughly sterilized, is a guarantee that the cream is absolutely pure, and as a food for infants it is unsurpassed. A teaspoonful of evaporated cream is sufficient for a cup of coffee or chocolate. All Winnipeg wholesale grocers have the cream for sale. The condensed coffee put up by the same company, is an ever ready preparation, and makes a delicious cup of coffee, far superior to the decoction generally offered as coffee in many eating houses.

### THE SITUATION.

WINNIPEG, SATURDAY AFTERNOON, Feb. 3.

The Quiet season continues in about all mercantile lines, and it is too early in the year yet to look for a livening up in business generally. In hardware, paints, lumber and such lines there is practically nothing doing yet. The weather, though somewhat changeable, has been generally favorable, with a moderate average temperature. There is more talk than usual about hard times and scarcity of money, but there is probably a great deal more talk than reality in this, that is, when the present is compared with past seasons. This is the dull season of the year, it must be remembered, and a little closeness is to be expected. The outlook, however, is not unfavorable, but rather the contrary. There is a larger area of land than usual ready for crop in the spring, and marketings of farm produce, outside of grain, have been larger than usual, the quantity of butter, eggs, meats, etc., being in excess of former years, which indicates that the farmers are making steady progress. An unusual thing for this time of year is the shipment of several car lots of cattle east. City taxes have been well paid in, the collections being larger to date than in other years, which does not indicate a great scarcity of money. Tax payments have been considerably over \$500,000. Work is still going on in the woods getting out saw logs and cord wood, and quite a large force of men are employed in this way. In the Lake of the Woods district, the number of men in the woods is less than in former years, and the lumber cut will be smaller. It is too early yet to look for the beginning of the spring immigration, though a few "early birds" have already arrived. Prospects are uncertain as to the outlook for immigration, but the opinion is that it will not be heavy. One of the latest memorials to the Federal Government upon the tariff issue, is said to be from certain millers, asking that the duty on flour be not changed. The new tariff measure before the United States Congress provides for the free admission of breadstuffs from countries which admit similar products from the United States free of duty. If Canada is to have an open market in the United States for wheat, etc., we will therefore have to take our duty off flour. Western farmers will demand that the opportunity of shipping wheat to the United States free of duty be taken advantage of, and Western grain shippers, who now experience much difficulty with the customs regulations, in exporting in bond through the United States, will also be in favor of the reciprocation of the offer for free breadstuffs. The millers, if they stand for the duty on flour, will have the opposition of the farmers and grain exporters. Some millers, however, will no doubt favor the removal of the duty, as they will be able to compete with their product in eastern United States markets. The financial difficulties of a leading Ontario implement manufacturing concern is interesting at the moment, in connection with the agitation for free trade in implements.

In railway matters the most important item here is the agreement made between the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific and the Canadian Pacific now made public, under which rate wars between these Pacific roads is at an end, so long as the alliance remains in effect; but either of the parties may terminate the agreement by giving three months' notice. All parties consenting, the contract is to be renewed at the end of one year. Both the Great Northern and the Canadian Pacific will have through lines between their eastern terminals and Tacoma and Portland in connection with the Northern Pacific, and finally the Northern Pacific will have a through line over the Great Northern coast lines and Canadian Pacific to and from Vancouver. Under this