

EDITORIAL NOTES.

(Continued from page 1182.)

would be a great thing for the country. The large sums of money annually sent away for twine would then be kept in the province, and would go into the pockets of the producers of the raw material and the manufacturers of the twine. Flax has been much talked about as a material for the manufacture of binder twine, but flax fibre has not proved a success for this purpose. There seems to be nothing known which will answer so well as manilla, sisal standing second and jute third. It is just possible that there may be some plant indigenous in Manitoba, which would make good binder twine, and at the same time be susceptible to successful cultivation. For this purpose we require a plant not only valuable in fibre, but one as well which could be cultivated to advantage by our farmers. If there is such a plant in the country, it is to be hoped it will be discovered speedily. The Commercial has recently received a sample of a fibrous plant from John N. Mount, of Rounthwaite, in this province. The sender states that it is a native plant which he thought might be valuable for making binder twine, and he accordingly sent it to this office. We have forwarded a portion of the sample east for an opinion as to its value. Any person who may be a judge of twine fibre, can see a specimen at this office. The fibre is long and very fine and possesses wonderful strength. We hope something will come of this discovery.

New winter wheat is being sold as low as 50 cents per bushel in Ontario country markets. At this price we fancy we can almost hear the farmers of that region howl, and there must be great weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among them. Here in Manitoba, owing to the superior quality of our wheat, the farmers will receive almost as much for their grain as is paid the farmers of the east. Notwithstanding higher freight rates from the west, it is evident there is not so much difference in prices paid to farmers, as most people imagine. In fact Manitoba farmers really have the advantage, as with their cheaper land, light cost of fertilizing, etc., they can grow grain crops at a considerably less cost than can be done in Ontario.

The latest strike to disturb the commercial and industrial situation in the United States is at New Bedford, Massachusetts, an important textile manufacturing centre. About 11,000 operatives are said to be idle. The frequency of strikes this year is the outcome of close times and low prices. Manufacturers find it absolutely necessary to reduce expenses to meet the new condition of things, and employees naturally resist any proposed changes in the established order of prices. Many more strikes may be looked for before the commercial situation becomes evened up again. If there were some recognized way of adjusting these disputes by arbitration, a great loss to both capital and labor would be obviated.

The frequency with which disasters occur from lightning at this season of the year, render the question of protection from lightning particularly interesting. The United States

Agricultural Department has recently published a pamphlet on the subject. The pamphlet says that in many cases lightning rods are so carelessly placed on buildings as to be more likely to lead a current of electricity into a building than to divert it to the ground. The department, however, earnestly advises the use of rods, properly arranged. The use of good iron or copper conductors is advised, with the earth plates buried in damp earth or running water. Chain or link conductors should not be used. Altogether a very good case is made out for lightning rods, and it seems very conclusive from the evidence given that rods, properly arranged, are a great protection. Statistics are also given as to the number of fatalities and fires caused by lightning. We learn that 784 persons have been killed in the United States in the past four seasons. About \$13,000,000 worth of property has been lost in the past eight years. It is shown that the risk from lightning is five times greater in the country than in the cities, hence the greater need for protection in the country. The prevalence of wires act as a protecting agent in the city.

For several years the question of developing and utilizing the water power of the Assiniboine river at Winnipeg has been under discussion. Two proposals for the construction of the works are now before the city council. Now another undertaking has been proposed for supplying power to the city from another source than that of the Assiniboine river. Last year a company was formed to undertake the harnessing of the grand water-power at the outlet of the Lake of the Woods. This company is incorporated as the Keewatin Power Co. The company has expended a large sum in constructing the necessary works and it is expected the works will be completed early next year. The works are being constructed in a most substantial manner of granite masonry and soon one of the finest water powers on the continent will be ready for operation. It is now proposed to transmit this power to Winnipeg by electricity. At the last meeting of the Winnipeg City council a communication was read from John Mather, of the Keewatin Power Company, proposing that the city should wait four months before entering into any contract for the supply of power. At the end of this time the Keewatin Power Company would be in a position to make a proposal for supplying the city with from 5,000 to 50,000 horse power by transmission from their works at the Lake of the Woods. The company desire this time to investigate the systems of transmission of electric power, and will then make a proposal which they believe will be satisfactory to the city. This proposal from the Keewatin Power Co. will likely delay for the present any further action upon the proposals regarding the development of the Assiniboine water power here.

Foreign Duties on Oats and Barley

The import duties imposed on oats and barley by different countries is shown in the accompanying table, which gives the amounts of duties imposed reduced to an approximation of decimal money.

Five European countries admit these cereals free, as does the United Kingdom. Sweden and Norway allow the importation of oats free of duty, but the former imposes a tax of 17

cents per hundred weight and the latter of 3 cents per hundred weight on barley. Portugal levies more than twice the tax imposed by Spain, while Italy and Germany place a heavier duty on oats than on barley.

In the case of Franco all kinds of grain and flour of extra-European origin, but imported from European entrepôts are required to pay the specified duties with a surtax equivalent to 35 cents per hundredweight in addition. In Turkey there is maintained an ad valorem duty of 8 per cent. on corn, grain, pulse and flour and meal of all kinds, while in Bulgaria those articles are taxed 8½ per cent. ad valorem.

IMPORT DUTIES ON BARLEY AND OATS IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

Countries.	Barley.	Oats.
	\$0.85 per cwt.	\$0.88 per cwt.
Spain.....	.48	.43
France.....	.20	.48
Italy.....	.11	.39
Germany.....	.34	.34
Austria-Hungary.....	.17	.78
Greece.....	.23	.33
Sweden.....	.17	Free
Switzerland.....	.03	.03
Norway.....	.03	Free
Turkey.....	8½ ad val.	8½ ad val.
Bulgaria.....	8½	8½
Russia.....	Free	Free
Roumania.....	"	"
Denmark.....	"	"
Holland.....	"	"
Belgium.....	"	"
United Kingdom.....	"	"

Fine Winter Wheat.

It may interest our friends abroad, who are talking United States flour out of the foreign trade, to know that millers of this country have commenced grinding on the finest crop of winter wheat this country has produced for years. Competitors must produce something extraordinary, indeed, to outdo American millers this year, and we have little confidence in their assertions to that effect. The hard winter wheat harvested in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, has never been surpassed in flour making qualities in this country, and the red winter variety is excellent throughout the region of its production. There will be less effort required this year to produce high grades and to maintain their uniformity than during the year previous is apparent to anyone who has inspected the acceptable milling grades of winter wheat now coming to the winter wheat markets of the country. Besides, millers will not grind low grade wheat this season. It is worth more for feed than to mill, and as a consequence only the finest grain will go to the mills. This statement may not be accepted at once by foreign buyers, but they will soon be forced to admit its truthfulness, and we suggest that the foreign millers who are planning to drive us out of the export trade will find it an up-hill job as long as they mill grain no better in grade than farmers feed their live stock.—Produce Exchange Reporter.

A Prune Man's Opinion.

Giho Kabigilo, son of Salamon Kabigilo of Trieste, Australia, packer of the "Atlas" brand of prunes, was in Toronto a few days last week. This is his second visit to Canada, having been here in July last year. Mr. Kabigilo is a young man of fine appearance and an interesting conversationalist.

A feature of the prune trade he said is the almost total absence of demand for cask prunes, the consumption being almost entirely for the larger sized fruit prepared and packed in boxes.

Prices for first shipment are lower than for the corresponding shipment last year. This is due chiefly to the falling off in the demand from the United States. The demand from that country has fallen off a great deal of late years, principally on account of the development of the prune industry in California. In what we called the good years, say four or five years ago, the United States took about 200,000 boxes of our prunes annually, while last year they only took 25,000 boxes.

Mr. Kabigilo left for the west Friday night.—Grocer.