

Winnipeg's Steady Growth.

J. W. Harris, assessment commissioner for Winnipeg, reports the total assessment for this year as amounting to \$22,061,340, being an increase of over one third of a million dollars upon the assessment of last year, due principally to the natural growth of the city by the erection of buildings and other improvements. Lands to the value of \$100,000 have been withdrawn from taxation for parks and other public purposes. There has also been a reduction in valuation of lands lying in the outer and unoccupied portion of the city. These decreases have, with the exception of a slight increase shown from business tax, been met and exceeded by the value of new buildings erected, by the amount of the increase already referred to. The assessment by way of business tax amounts to \$3,237,240. Exemptions amount to \$4,372,080. The population of the city now numbers 34,994, being an increase over that of last years of nearly three thousand (2,825.)

The new edition for 1894 of the Manitoba and Northwest Territories Gazetteer and Directory gives the following estimate of the population of the city of Winnipeg for the past nineteen years:—

1876	3,240
1877	3,250
1878	3,273
1879	4,500
1880	6,468
1881	7,977
1882	11,759
1883	22,523
1884	24,700
1885	22,315
1886	20,287
1887	21,164
1888	23,496
1889	24,114
1890	25,002
1891	26,500
1892	30,000
1893	33,000
1894	35,500

The Soft Coal Strike.

The journal, Black Diamond, has the following to say of the coal miner's strike in the United States:—

"Two weeks of the suspension in the soft coal districts have passed without any material change in the condition of affairs. In many respects this shutting down, or strike, if so it may be called, is a surprise, not only to the operators, but practically to the miners and their executive officers. Nothing of the kind was ever anticipated. Fields that on former occasions have remained at work notwithstanding the influence brought to bear upon the employees by outside forces, are out. Offers of an increase of pay are rejected. It is practically, to say, a prima facie signal from the combined soft coal miners that the price of coal, the wages paid for mining it, have been driven down by unreasonable competition, interstate, of course, to a point when wages and invested capital are lost sight of.

Presumably the strike will last another week, yet even then if an adjustment is arrived at, it will take some time thereafter through conferences to fix up a basis satisfactory to all, and even when that is done it will be some time before the even flow of work is resumed. The matter affects railroads as well as mines, and it would not be surprising if before the end of next week some of the railroads, at least their freight traffic, would be practically tied up. The trouble is very paradoxical in its nature.

With the exception of the Ohio and Pennsylvania regions who are undoubtedly striking for the old scale rates, and who, it appears, will win that fight, the rest are out from sheer sympathy, yea, it has even been reported, and upon excellent authority, that advances that

have been offered upon the existing scale have been refused by the men. This shows a spirit of determination hitherto never exhibited, and, after all, it commands respect.

Soft coal has been selling at too low a figure; it has been constantly brought down in price. The time is that its value as an article of necessity should be recognized. It stands to reason, of course, that under circumstances of this kind, and with the supplies extremely scarce, prices soar practically beyond what one could keep track of. Coal that sold three weeks ago at \$2 f.o.b. sells now at \$4, and is eagerly bought even at such a figure. To what point these prices will rise if the strike continues is in a measure gauged by the price of anthracite coal, because it stands to reason that owners of buildings who have hitherto bought soft coal exclusively for the running of elevators and other purposes will as the strain increases resort to the use of egg or grate anthracite coal.

Many shippers and dealers find themselves in the most unpleasant position that after having found sources whence to get coal even at a very high figure, and placing their orders, that the product in transit is confiscated by the railroads—a most perplexing difficulty, yet which, after all, could not be obviated, although it occasions sometimes a good deal of profanity. It is indeed to be hoped that the conference that is called in Columbus on the 15th of this month may result in an equitable settlement of all the difficulties that exist.

Dissolving the Combines.

The Ontario linseed oil and turpentine associations, which are practically one organization, the same firms making up the membership in each, were started some two years ago. Their primary object was to regulate prices. The margin of profit which it was aimed to secure was from 10 to 12 per cent., which, it is claimed by the members was not exceeded except where a member here and there had done a little speculating. Most members looked upon the associations as having been beneficial both to themselves and to their customers, on account of the steadiness which they imparted to trade.

The decision to dissolve the linseed oil and turpentine associations was arrived at on Friday last. The causes which lead to the dissolution are manifold. The collapse of the eastern association undoubtedly had its influence; but the chief reason may be ascribed to foes without and discord within the associations. As a result of the dissolution, turpentine is down about 5c per gallon in price, and linseed oil 1c per gallon. The members of the late organizations are trying to maintain the old terms of 30 days net, but the fact that some at least of the Montreal houses are sending out circulars quoting linseed oil and turpentine on 4 months' basis does not assist them in the premises.

The paint and oil trade is now practically without an association. True there is still in existence the white lead association of Canada, the Ontario lead and barb wire Co., the Toronto lead and color company, Sanderson Percy & Company, composing its western section; and the Montreal rolling mills company, McArthur, Corneille & company and Canada paint company, A. Ramsay & Son, Bayliss Manufacturing company composing its eastern section. But this association merely exists for the purpose of ensuring the quality of white lead, it having some years ago eliminated the clause in regard to the regulation of prices, which was subsequently taken up by the now defunct White Lead Association. As far at least as prices are concerned, the wholesale paint and oil men are now without any organization regulating them.

The Mirror Plate Association, the third organization to dissolve, has only been in existence about five months, and was composed of

these three firms: The Hobbs Hardware Co., the Coburn Manufacturing Co., and Toronto Plate Glass Importing Co.

Shortly before the association was formed one of the parties to it made contracts throughout the country at prices about 25 per cent. below those subsequently fixed by the association. These contracts, too, seemed to have no time limit set upon them. This accordingly shut out the other members from competing for the custom of those dealers with whom contracts had been made. With this discovery one of the firms interested asked to be allowed to quote those dealers with whom contracts had been made the same prices at which these contracts had been made. This request being refused, the firm in question resigned its membership; and at a meeting held last week the association was dissolved.—Toronto Hardware.

A Crop Outlook.

The season having opened so early in Eastern Assiniboia this year the farmers have taken advantage of the opportunity not only to sow increased acreages but to work the land thoroughly. Up to yesterday the season has been about as favorable as the most exacting farmer could wish—mild and rainy and the ground is in excellent condition. Reports from all parts of Eastern Assiniboia show that wheat is already peeping through the soil, and on many farms it is as much as an inch high. As one old farmer remarked to the Spectator, "There never was a better show for a good crop since I came West." The general rule in this district is that the area sown is considerably in excess of previous years.—Moosomin Spectator.

Irrigation.

Irrigation is as old as the hills. Far back in those days when dynasties of kings ruled in the valley of the Nile, and left to posterity the inheritance of the pyramids, Egypt was made to blossom like a garden on account of the natural irrigation of the Nile. Indeed, several of the "Ten Commandments," or rather forty-nine, that the worshippers of Osiris had need to follow in order to obtain reward after death related to the use of the Nile overflow; so important a part did these waters play in the productive economy of the race of Rameses and Pharaoh. Egypt to day would be a desert like the Saharan wilds on the west, or the Arabian wastes on the east, were it not for the preservation in ditches of the waters of the Nile. When America was a new country, and rich prairie farms could be had for the asking, irrigation was not a question of much importance. To-day, however, it is a most trenchant one. When the waters of the little creek flowing past Sutter's mill in California were found to be rich in gold, people flocked to that state. San Francisco sprang up as if by magic, and in a few years a thriving commonwealth was in existence on our Pacific coast. But as the easily worked deposits of gold gave out the people already there found the agricultural possibilities of our Pacific commonwealth even grander than her mineral production. Small orchards of prunes, oranges or pears, and little vineyards were found to be very remunerative. Land in southern California became very valuable, all the more so as the area capable of raising fruit was more or less circumscribed. But it was found that by the use of irrigation large neighboring tracts of waste land could be reclaimed, and in hundreds of instances irrigation has been found to produce wonderful results. The supporters of the irrigation idea have a great national society, and support an able representative in the shape of the Irrigation Age. Irrigation opens up vistas of wealth for our western states. In Nevada, California, Arizona and New Mexico thousands of acres in sage brush can be made into the world's vineyard by the introduction of irrigating machinery. Our southwestern empire may become of time one of the most important sections of the country.—American Artisan.