

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 12, 1896.

THE GRAIN GRADES.

The grain committee of the Winnipeg board of trade has prepared a very full report on the question of the wheat grades, setting forth the reasons why the changes in the grades as recently announced by the department of inland revenue, should not be made. This report has been adopted by the council of the board, and secretary C. N. Bell has gone to Ottawa to press the matter upon the department.

The first matter taken up in the report is the composition of the standards' board, and a very strong point is made against the appointment of incompetent persons to this board. It is pointed out that the grain inspectors are obliged to pass a rigid examination before they can be appointed, and that they must be thoroughly competent persons before they can fill such a position. It is urged that those entrusted with the work of selecting the standards to govern inspectors, should also be required to pass some examination to show their fitness to perform the work. This is the strongest point which could be made against the present ridiculous system of fixing the standards. The inspectors are experts in their qualifications for judging grain, yet they are governed by standards selected by a board composed largely of incompetent persons. Take, for instance, the standards board appointed for the present season, and it is doubtful if more than half a dozen of the eighteen persons composing the board would be competent to grade wheat. The thing is so absurd that it is hardly necessary to attempt to carry the argument further. The grain inspectors themselves, who have an expert knowledge of the matter, and who are, moreover officials of the government and under heavy bonds to perform their duties impartially, are evidently the proper persons to select the standards, if standards are necessary.

Reference is next made to the great disadvantage which the frequent changes in the grades has been to the grain trade. Duluth dealers are safe in selling wheat at any time for future delivery, as their grades are permanent, while there is always the fear of a change in the grades hanging over the Manitoba dealer, thus making it unsafe to sell for future delivery any length of time ahead.

Regarding the changes now ordered in the grades, the report recounts the history of the past few years in connection with the grades. In the earlier years the standards were much higher than they are now, and experience demonstrated that the higher standards were a loss to both the producer and the dealer. It required a number of years' experience to gain a fair knowledge of the average crop conditions of the country. This was at last well understood by the trade, and the present standards are believed to be as near to what is required as can be made. It is further pointed out that the farmers were strongly in favor of reducing the standards

to their present state, and that the department has evidently been misled in supposing that the farmers desire to return to a high standard again.

Another strong point is made in referring to the desirability of keeping our grades close to the Duluth standard. Our grades are already above the Duluth standard, and the changes announced would still further remove them from the Duluth standard.

Altogether a very strong case is made out, and the points are put very clearly.

THE UNITED STATES MARKET FOR CATTLE.

The Medicine Hat Times publishes a little incident with the object of showing the value which a free market in the United States would be to our western stock raisers. It appears that some steers from a Canadian range strayed across the boundary into the United States, and were gathered up and shipped to Chicago, along with a lot of cattle among which they had made their home. The Times relates the occurrence as follows:

"Some time ago some steers belonging to Thos. Stephenson, of Forbes, strayed south of the boundary, and were ultimately found in the shipment of J. H. Green, of Chinook, Montana, by the brand inspector, at the Union stock yards, Chicago. The shipment was inspected and sold in Chicago on August 11, and on the 20th the secretary-treasurer of the Montana Stock Growers' association forwarded to the owner of the steers his check for their value. The whole transaction was businesslike on the part of the association, and very satisfactory to the owner of the steers, the latter having had, we presume, no idea of where his steers had strayed to.

The record of shipping, selling, and the charges, as furnished in the secretary's report, show the value of steers on the ranges in Montana, and at the stock yards in Chicago, and we will quote them here in full.

Sold for account of J. H. Green, Chinook, Mont., by Clay, Robinson & Co., Union stock yards, Chicago, on August 11th, 1896, and purchased by Hammond:

Two steers, 3380 lbs. @ \$3.65	.....	\$123 37
Less—Freight	.....	\$13 50
Yardage	.....	50
Hay	.....	14
Commission	.....	1 60
Shipping charges	.....	14 15 28

\$108 09

It will be seen by these figures the two steers netted the owner over \$54 each, or about 80 per cent more than steers are bringing on the ranges in Western Canada. The price is so eminently satisfactory that our ranchers will be inclined to covet the Chicago market and wish that all their saleable steers would drift south of the line, and fall into such good hands as the Montana Stock Growers' association."

The price paid the past two seasons at our western ranges for shipping cattle has been \$40 per head. These two steers, which strayed away and ultimately turned up at Chicago, netted their owner \$14 per head more than the ruling price paid in Canada. It may be that these two steers were very superior animals and were worth more than the average export animal, or it may be that they happened to strike a very favorable market. These are points which should be taken into consideration. While the price realized for these steers would indicate that the freedom of the Chicago market would be a great advantage

to our cattlemen, the incident does not prove that equally satisfactory results would be obtained as a general rule.

GRAIN GRADES

The inland revenue department at Ottawa has evidently backed down to some extent regarding the more radical of the proposed changes in the Manitoba wheat grades. An order in-council in the official Gazette declares as follows:

No. 1 Manitoba hard wheat shall consist wholly of wheat grown in Manitoba or the Territories. It shall be sound and well cleaned, weighing not less than sixty-one pounds to the bushel and shall be composed of at least three-fourths hard red fife wheat.

No. 2 Manitoba hard wheat shall consist wholly of wheat grown in Manitoba or the Territories. It shall be sound and reasonably clean, weighing not less than fifty-eight and one-half pounds to the bushel, and shall be composed of at least two-thirds hard red fife wheat.

No. 1 Manitoba northern wheat shall consist wholly of wheat grown in Manitoba or the Territories. It shall be sound and well cleaned, weighing not less than sixty pounds to the bushel and shall be composed of at least fifty per cent hard red fife wheat.

No wheat which has been subjected to scouring or brushing for the removal of smut or other fungoid growth shall be included in any of the above mentioned grades.

No. 2 Manitoba northern shall weigh 58 pounds, with fifty per cent hard red fife wheat.

No. 1 hard white fife wheat shall weigh not less than 60 pounds to the bushel and contain not less than 60 per cent of hard white fife, and not more than twenty-five per cent of soft wheat.

Spring wheat shall be sound and clean, weighing not less than sixty pounds to the bushel.

In the No. 1 hard grade, the weight is increased from 60 pounds to 61 pounds per measured bushel, and the minimum percentage of red fife is increased from two-thirds to three-fourths.

The only change in the No. 2 hard grade is an increase of half a pound per bushel in the weight. It was at first announced by the department that the weight would be increased two pounds, but this met with such strong opposition that the department has backed down.

There are no changes in the other grades, compared with last year, but the order provides that scoured wheat shall not be mixed in with No. 1 or No. 2 hard or No. 1 northern. Last year the mixing of scoured wheat was allowed in all but the No. 1 hard grade. The new order virtually excludes the mixing of scoured wheat at all, as it would not be profitable to mix it in the lower grades to any great extent. Scoured wheat will therefore have to be sold on its merits as a separate class.

The most objectionable change proposed was to increase the No. 2 hard grade to 60 pounds to the measured bushel, and as this intention has been dropped, the opposition to the proposed changes is to that extent reduced. There is, however, still strong opposition to any of the proposed changes.

R. R. Gallagher, representing S. Green-shields, Son & Co., Montreal, wholesale dry goods, is again in the West on a business trip.