

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, APRIL 30, 1894.

IMPROVING THE STREETS.

The horrible condition of the streets of this city has set the people thinking. Winnipeg mud is quite a noted commodity both at home and abroad, and our citizens may be said to almost glory in the renown which it has achieved. But this spring we have had so much of it as to fairly disgust all concerned. The long spell of drizzling weather has made our streets just a little worse than they have been in previous years, even during the spring season. It is agreed on all sides that something must be done to remedy this situation. The city has expended a considerable sum in block paving a number of the streets, but this plan is not giving satisfaction. The cost is too great in proportion to its durability. The pavement on Main street is already worn out and is sadly in need of replacing. Block pavement therefore seems out of the question when a plan of improving all the streets is considered, and the city will never present a respectable appearance in wet weather until all the streets are paved or improved in some way.

There has been considerable talk of using gravel upon the streets. A heavy dressing of gravel would no doubt make a great improvement, though it is not just the proper thing for a city street. It might, however, prove of advantage as a temporary shift, until some more permanent plan of paving is found desirable, providing the expense of gravelling the streets is not too great. Some years ago the city purchased a gravel pit at Bird's Hill, but little has been done in utilizing the gravel. One difficulty is, that the gravel is seven miles distant from the city, which would make the cost of hauling very great. It has been proposed to haul in the gravel by rail in car lots. The Canadian Pacific main line passes close by the locality where the gravel exists, and we believe very favorable terms can be made with the company to haul it to the city, provided a sufficient quantity is taken to make it worth while for the company to put in a steam shovel and arrange for handling the commodity on a large scale.

Certainly something should be done to improve our streets. The condition has been such this spring as to cause a feeling of shame on the part of our citizens, for the sake of the reputation of the city. We also owe it to the farmers in the surrounding country, that the principal streets leading out of the city should be improved. The city corporation limit extends a long way out into the country to the west, and it is a well known fact that the roads leading into the city are much worse within the corporation than they are beyond the city limits. In any plan for improving the streets, these main roads leading out to the country should have early attention. We do not say that the plan of gravelling the streets should be adopted. This should be left to the decision of those who are more competent to judge of its value. But the experience of the present spring has shown how necessary it is for something to be done to improve our streets.

ODIOUS COMPARISONS.

A few Canadians have got into the habit of looking away from home for enterprise and development. They belittle their own country, and point to what they consider the greater enterprise of other countries. The United States is generally the country referred to as the embodiment of advancement. If these people were acquainted with the actual facts they would have little reason for such comparisons to the disadvantage of their own country. The fact is, that in an honest comparison of the progress of the two countries, Canada is by no means at a disadvantage, but rather the contrary is the case. The only true comparison is one of percentage. Canada has increased in population more rapidly than the United States, notwithstanding that our population is small as compared with the republic. In railways and in shipping we are clean out of sight in advance of our neighbor, and in education and actual prosperity of the masses we are certainly ahead of the United States. Following is a comparative statement of the railway mileage of the two countries, compiled from recent official reports:—

In the United States there were added 2,630 miles of railway last year, an increase of less than 2 per cent during the year, as against 1,764 miles in Canada, equal to an increase of 13 per cent. The number of miles in operation at the close of 1893 was in the United States 145,869 and 17,332 in Canada. To have a mileage in proportion to population equal to the railway mileage in Canada, the United States should be able to show 35,000 miles more than that country possesses, according to the official returns quoted from, so that at the present rate of progress Canada is, comparatively speaking, 15 years ahead of her neighbor in railway development. This is only one comparison of many which can be made to the advantage of this country. It is all very well for our neighbors to the south to boast of their great achievements, but enterprise and advancement on this continent does not remain entirely with them, notwithstanding that some few Canadians seem to be willing to admit that it does. The republic has certainly made great progress in some respects, and we may add that this has been largely possible through the investment of British capital in the country.

THE EXPORT CATTLE TRADE.

Exporters of live stock appear to have a lot of grievances, according to a circular lately issued by the Dominion Live Stock Association which we publish on another page of the Commercial this week. The live stock export trade is a very important matter for Canada as a whole, and it is a trade of growing importance in the West. The circular in question points out the grievances of the exporters, the principal feature of which appears to be the alleged combination of vessel owners, whereby excessive freight rates are charged. The association makes out quite a strong case, but does not suggest anything as a remedy, beyond a passing reference to Mr. Mulock's bill now before Parliament. The circular may prove interesting to a number of our readers who are connected directly or indirectly with the cattle trade.

While referring to this question, it is satisfactory to note that indications are more favorable for the removal of the embargo in England upon the importation of Canadian cattle. President Gardner of the British Board of Agriculture, stated in the House of Commons on Monday that the government would make an immediate investigation of the question of the re-admission of Canadian cattle into England. He said the inquiry would begin when the bulk of cattle began to arrive from Canada. He thought the restrictions would be withdrawn. He was pressed to withdraw the restrictions at once, but said he could not do so.

More Tariff Changes.

The minister of finance has given notice of the following further changes in the tariff:—

Wall paper, not including borders, printed in plain underground paper and colored with any material except bronze, gilt or flitter, 35 per cent. All other paper hangings and borders, per roll of eight yards and under and proportionally for greater lengths, 1½ per roll and 25 per cent. ad valorem.

Tarred paper, 25 per cent.

Tomatoes and other vegetables, including corn and baked beans, in cans or other packages, not elsewhere specified, 1½ cents per pound, the weight of the cans or other packages to be included in the weight for duty.

Stearine, 2 cents per pound.

Tea and green coffee imported direct from the country of growth and production free. This item shall include tea and coffee purchased in bond in any country where tea and coffee are subject to customs duty, provided there be satisfactory proof that the tea or coffee so purchased in bond is such as might be entered for home consumption in the country where the same is purchased.

The effect of this change respecting tea and coffee is to relieve tea and coffee purchased in England from any duty, and to continue to discriminate against the United States to the extent of ten per cent. This is accomplished by the provision that free tea and coffee shall only enter as such when purchased in countries imposing a customs duty on tea and coffee. England imposes such duty, but the United States does not, and consequently tea purchased in the United States will continue to be taxed 10 per cent.

In addition to the above the duties on nuts were changed to read as follows: "Nuts shelled, 5 cents a pound; almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts and pecan nuts, not shelled 3 cents per pound." This item in the new tariff only included almonds. Nuts of all kinds not elsewhere specified, 2 cents per pound. This item in the new tariff was 3 cents per pound.

The Export Demand for Sheep.

The actual number of sheep exported from the United States during the first three months this year was 28,959. About half this number was purchased on the Chicago market, the other half being shipped direct from feeding points. The average price was close to \$4.00 in Chicago and 13 to 14c dressed at Liverpool and London. The scarcity of good heavy sheep in England and Scotland made an unusual demand for American sheep, and prices were so low that for a time there was a good margin in the business. It gave a good deal of relief to the trade when relief was most wanted, but of course soon became overdone. The rapid advance in prices recently entirely cut off this line of business, so that foreign prices have had a chance to advance some, but as yet values are too high here to admit of extensive exportations. — Chicagorovers' Journal.