

make iron fencing as good and as cheaply here as in the East?" "Yes, sir," was his reply. "We can make it just as good as it can be made anywhere. The casting can be done at as low a price here as in St. Louis or Chicago. Our workmen are just as good, and wages no higher."

"Then you can compete with the eastern made goods?"

"No, we cannot," came the response. "We've got to get iron from the east, and the cost of shipping it over the railroads is so much greater than the rate for manufactured fencing that competition is out of sight. When we get iron at St. Louis rates, we can furnish the made-up article at the St. Louis price, or even a little under. But when the railroads charge us so much more for hauling iron than they do for the manufactured article, which they class as merchandise and carry at a low rate, that there is not enough difference in the total cost of ten tons of each to pay for unloading from the cars why, we simply can't cast the fencing for nothing, that's all. If we could get raw material shipped at a reasonable rate, we would be all right. But iron costs more today than it did five years ago. When merchandise rates went down it went up."

It is not alone in the iron business that such a situation is complained of. Several branches of industry are similarly affected, and those directly interested should combine and agitate the question until the grievance is remedied.

In the matter of freight rates, affairs have been in much worse condition than at present. This was the case last year when the Chamber of Commerce proceeded against the railways for equitable rates for all, both in raw material and manufactured goods. The presentation of the case was so effective that the railways realized that revision of their tariff was necessary, and they accomplished this result through a compromise with leading shippers. In the face of this arrangement it was deemed injudicious to press the Chamber of Commerce suit to a finality. Its institution had been the means of securing a reduction in freight rates amounting to about \$600,000 per annum in favor of the Territory.

A proper presentation and effective work would reduce the evil still further. The local manufacturers injuriously affected now probably were not represented in the arrangement referred to, though every effort was made to give it as broad a scope as possible. Be that as it may, they should be afforded every consistent opportunity to successfully compete in price as well as quality with imported articles. And if they will prepare and give facts and figures so they can be handled, and will put energy into the work, there is no doubt the Chamber of Commerce will throw the whole weight of its influence against the discriminative tariff. But without this decisive action, mere general talk will not attain the desirable result.

THE WORLD quietly refuses to stand still while the state of Wyoming is electing or trying to elect a United States senator.

BY RAIL TO LOS ANGELES.

A writer in the *Los Angeles Times* advocates the building of a railroad to connect that city with Salt Lake by public aid. His plan is one that it is shown has proven feasible elsewhere; it is, in brief, to ask a law at the hands of the legislature by the terms of which counties of a certain class can issue bonds for building railroads and thus become the owners of them, with power to lease them to corporations. It is questionable whether such a law would be constitutional; but if one having that object in view could be made without such infringement, we are informed that it would find many advocates in Los Angeles county as well as among the lawmakers themselves.

"That the project of constructing a railway from the seaboard near Los Angeles to Salt Lake City is feasible and highly desirable," says the *Times*, "there is no dispute. The line would tap a rich mineral region, and minerals are what we need if Los Angeles is to become a manufacturing city. It would put us in close and quick communication with a wide area of country that requires our peculiar horticultural and agricultural products, and will purchase and consume them in larger quantities than ever when a direct line shall have been established by means of which interchanges can be facilitated." It is shown that there is cheap coal and iron in the Utah and Nevada mountains, and it is needed on the coast. "The ocean is at our doors, and a great sea traffic would ultimately be diverted to Los Angeles, and through it to the east, if this road were built. A heavy volume of passenger traffic would grow up on the new line, for it would afford a very direct, picturesque and comfortable route from the Pacific to the East, and for the people of the entire Salt Lake country to this coast. The advantages of the line are, in short, apparent, and need not be elaborated here."

The business men of Los Angeles county are then invited to examine the question at once, and to act with vigor, determination and persistence. It all sounds well enough to us at this end of the line, or rather proposed line, and we would hail with delight the announcement of work in earnest at either end of it. Rail communication with Los Angeles is one of the inevitable things to come, and it cannot come any too soon. The company that is first in the field will probably hold it for a long time, and it can scarcely be otherwise than a most fruitful one. It has been promised us on several occasions, and we believe some work in the way of surveying but very little of any other kind has been done. It is represented as a rather easy country to construct a road over, a great portion of it being level and timber in places abundant.

A road to the Pacific coast via Los Angeles, or one terminating at that point, from this city, would not only be a money-maker from the start for its owners, but would open up and bring into market vast areas of presently unoccupied and thereby unproductive land. Much of this is mineral bearing, some of it being known to be very rich,

so that in the long run the road would not have to look to its terminus for its chief support. It would enhance the commercial status of both the great cities chiefly affected and cheapen tropical fruits and vegetables to us while doing likewise with coal and salt at the other end. Yes, we all want a road to Southern California and are not gravely concerned as to who does the job or how it is accomplished so long as it is done to stay. Push it along!

THE WAR PROSPECTS.

The approach of spring each year is prolific of promises of a great war in Europe. This season is no exception to the rule, and it would not occasion any surprise to see two or more of the great powers plunged into fierce and deadly conflict upon a very small provocation. The dispatches state that the scramble for gold now going on among the nations on the other side of the Atlantic is regarded there as one of the grandest signs of the times, and is a cause of widespread feeling in political circles that European peace is about to be broken. The *London Statist* has this significant utterance on the situation:

Not only do military preparations on the continent threaten us with the most terrible war the world has ever seen with the greatest waste of life and wealth, and with a complete break-up of the political systems of the continent, but they actually put a prohibition upon new enterprise elsewhere. Nobody can be sure for a week together of what may happen, or how the money markets of the world may be thrown into confusion and of how disastrous therefore every undertaking may be made, and the injurious effect will continue, even if war itself is still postponed. There is naturally very much uneasiness all over the continent and in every war office throughout the world, yet there is hope at the same time that the magnitude of the risk will deter every one from beginning the struggle.

WE ARE advised that France, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany are to wage a joint war of extermination against wolves. During the past year 386 were killed in a half dozen departments of France, and their scalps were paid for by the French government. There is very much more for them in a dozen such wars as that than in one of the kind they have been talking of so long.

IT IS not pleasurable to read that last year 7000 homicides occurred in the United States, but such is what the record proclaims and it must be received along with the other kinds of information. Of these 286 were committed by mobs, this being forty-one in excess of the number for the year before and makes the percentage of increase for twelve months about fourteen per cent. Of those who were so killed 231 were men and 5 were women, 80 were white and 155 black, the list containing the name of one Indian. We seem to be progressing in all respects, but the criminal exhibit is one that we don't feel particularly proud of.