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A Dominion Exhibition for Winnipeg.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—Your suggestion that something should be done to make the Winnipeg Exhibition a still greater demonstration of the importance of Western Canada is well timed, and I hope the result will be the greatest advertisement of the wealth and resources of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories ever seen. Whether it will be possible or wise to hold such an exhibition in 1904 is a question requiring some little consideration, as it appears to me that something of a very different character to the present general arrangements ought to be kept in view. The show of grains, stock, dairying, etc., will probably, and rightly, hold the first place, but much more could be done, with the necessary financial backing, in the industrial, art, scientific, natural history and other sections, to bring large numbers of visitors from all parts of the Dominion, from the States, and even from Europe. The Dominion Government have from time to time sent valuable contributions to former exhibitions, both in the mother country and in the States, and similar exhibits, so far as they are representative of Western Canada, would doubtless be forthcoming for the proposed show at Winnipeg; and the farmers of Manitoba and the N.-W. T. would be greatly benefited by the lessons thus again thrown open to them, on such matters as forestry (to which important subject the "Farmer's Advocate," Mr. Bedford, of the Experimental Farm at Brandon, and others, have time and again contributed much needed and valuable information), fisheries, mines and minerals, etc., all of the first importance to every settler, but sadly neglected in past days. A special grant from the Dominion Government would do much to ensure the success of such an exhibition, but the wealthy corporations, manufacturers and merchants should also be asked to contribute to a guarantee fund large enough to render failure of such a scheme impossible. The time has surely come when the merchants and business men of Winnipeg alone could become se-

cure for such an amount as would enable the promoters to make their exhibition an event of such importance as would attract the attention and bring to the Prairie Province the peoples of at least all the English-speaking countries of the world. Even in the unlikely event of partial failure, the necessity for drawing upon such a fund would be amply compensated by the development of the country and the increased volume of business which must inevitably follow. It is almost too much to hope to make such enterprises pay directly, but surely it is worth some trouble and outlay to increase the general trade and prosperity of the Province, and with good management and fairly good luck as to weather, the management would probably come out with a handsome balance—witness the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901 (in which the Canadian exhibit was, perhaps, the most interesting and popular), possibly the best managed thing of the kind seen for many years, although even in the case of the great Clyde City the surplus fell lamentable short of the exaggerated ideas indulged in by the canny Scots. The great thing is to make sure that everything possible is done to ensure a high-class exhibition, so that the result, direct and indirect, may count for much to the City of Winnipeg and to Western Canada generally.

Assuming that the exhibition would be held on the existing grounds, the present buildings would form an excellent nucleus for the work, while there is ample scope for extensions to provide accommodation for a much larger show of manufactured goods and machinery, pictures, drawings and sculpture, natural history specimens, scientific and historical exhibits, etc., such as has never been seen in a Provincial exhibition on the American continent. The labor and expense of such an exhibition would, no doubt, be great, and the exhibition would require to be kept open for a considerably longer time, but the immediate benefits accruing to the city and the Province would amply repay the additional labor. Instead of a week, why not provide for a month? To the Western farmer and intending settler the exhibition ought to be a great object lesson, from which he may learn much that is new to him, which will teach him how to improve in many ways what he already knows, and stimulate in him a desire for improvement and advancement in his methods, in his material, and in his life. Our brothers from the Old Country, of whom it may be hoped many would find their way to Winnipeg Exhibition, require even plainer teaching, and if it were possible to hammer into their heads a few of the facts which are so plain to Canadians, we should find the number of British immigrants rapidly increasing. It is curious that the average Briton understands what he is told about the summer climate, but has never been able to grasp the truth that the Canadian winter is so much more endurable than his own, and sticks to the old-fashioned views of shivering and shaking for six months out of the twelve.

Among the general arrangements requiring alteration or amplification are the means of transit, which last year, notwithstanding the admirable efforts of the Street Railway Company, were insufficient to handle the large crowds which at times awaited the cars; and the numbers would be greatly added to in the case of the proposed Dominion Exhibition. To get over this difficulty, and at the same time relieve the pressure at the railway depot, it would be a simple matter to establish a temporary railroad station at the exhibition. This would be a great convenience, especially to visitors from country districts and distant cities and towns, many of whom would come on one-day excursions. The railway tickets can be issued to admit direct to the exhibition. Then as to the so-called "attractions." The deplorably tawdry, and, to put it mildly, vulgar side-shows, should not be necessary, and ought to be swept away for ever; while the horse-racing, however admirable in itself, is out of place, and should be entirely separate from such an exhibition, swallowing up, as it does, an amount of prize money ridiculously out of proportion to the sums devoted to competitions in other and more legitimate directions. If the public cannot be induced to visit a high-class exhibition without the bait of such "attractions," it is not worth running. The space taken up by such entertainments could be advantageously occupied by more

profitable and equally alluring attractions. With the wealth of musical talent available in the city and throughout the Province, with bands and professionals from other places, daylight and ordinary fireworks displays, etc., etc., it should be possible to provide amusement for any number of visitors at all times, for six months if need be. If the advertising be sufficient and efficient, you will bring crowds to any form of entertainment, irrespective of its nature. And, to develop the industries of the city and introduce fresh capital for the establishment of new ones, advertising, and big advertising, is what Winnipeg requires now.

Another point deserving of consideration is the possibility of providing for some portion or the exhibition being retained as a permanent institution, and as, unfortunately, no provision is likely to be made in connection with the Carnegie Library for a really useful museum for the city and Province, it might be possible to arrange for the retention of such educative exhibits as would form the beginnings of a collection illustrative of the actual and potential wealth and resources of the country, available at all times for the instruction of Canadians and of visitors to the city. The site selected for the Carnegie Library is not large enough to provide for future extensions and at the same time allow for space for a suitable museum illustrative of the history and the possibilities of this great territory. The distance of the Exhibition Park from the present center of Winnipeg is not a disadvantage, as the growth of the city being necessarily largely westward, will, in a comparatively short time, bring the exhibition, with improved car connections, within easy reach of the public. It is time Winnipeg had something better. In this connection, is it too much to suggest that some portion or portions of the grounds which lie idle for the greater part of the year should be laid out with artificial lakes, not only to enhance the beauty of the place, but to give a feeling of relief and coolness to the surroundings? I think the city gardener proposed something of this kind, and it is to be hoped it may be carried into effect.

If there must be sensationalism of some sort, I would suggest that a high erection of some kind, not necessarily copied from the Eiffel Tower or the Great Wheel at Earl's Court, should be erected and established as a permanent institution. It would be a mighty relief to the weary workers of Winnipeg to be able to get a little higher than their own shadows occasionally, to look at the rising or setting sun of the wondrous West, and I have no doubt they would gladly pay a small toll for the privilege. But such a building could be made to serve an important purpose as a meteorological station; and, who knows, might act as a half-way house for slinging Marconigrams between the Emperor of China and Mr. Chamberlain!! It would require to be most carefully designed and constructed, but if it should prove another Tower of Babel, we are provided with the confusion of tongues in the city beforehand!!!

A matter of importance which ought to be kept in view, as was done in Glasgow, is that the exhibition should not be made a general sale-room, as has been too often the case, to the detriment of the city stores. No goods should be for sale direct, without written permission from the management, and then only in cases where unfair competition is impossible. The merchants of Winnipeg can hardly be asked to guarantee the success of an exhibition if their competitors from far and near are to be allowed to undersell them on their own ground.

Another reason for doubt as to the advisability of holding the exhibition next year is the lack of accommodation for visitors. Unless this can be very largely increased the demand would so greatly exceed the supply as to render the position intolerable for ordinary visitors.

Here is food for reflection, and it will be clear from the above very imperfect outline that much preparation and organization is wanted before fixing the date of any exhibition of the importance indicated. Anyhow, we don't want to be second to any other Province or State, and the "Farmer's Advocate" is entitled to the thanks of every farmer, merchant and business man in Western Canada for the excellent suggestion, and I hope other readers will give full expression to their views on the subject.

L. S. L.
Winnipeg, 4th May, 1903.