

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 16, 1891.

THE SEASON AND ITS LESSONS.

Advices from the country indicate that the grain crops are turning out even better than was expected. The great bulk of the threshing remains to be done, but this work has progressed sufficiently to indicate more clearly than could have been estimated heretofore, what the result will be. Reports from threshers are as a rule very favorable. The grain is turning out a heavier crop in many districts, than was thought possible a few weeks ago. This information is very gratifying. It is now a certainty that our wheat surplus will fully equal all reasonable estimates heretofore made, and the more conservative estimates will be considerably distanced. The yield of all grains is simply phenomenal. In individual instances, yields of oats up to between 90 and 100 bushels per acre, are vouched for, and in wheat, many claims are made of yields varying from forty to fifty bushels per acre. Altogether the country has been abundantly favored this year. The large sales of binder twine and threshing machines, prove that the crops have been very heavy, and we have further evidence to this effect in the large movement of wheat to market. Notwithstanding the late season, and the desire of farmers to get their plowing done, there has been a movement of wheat unequalled in any previous year. The large yield of wheat is the more remarkable, in view of the fact that the crop was reduced both in quantity and quality, by unfavorable climatic conditions during harvest time. Though there has certainly been considerable loss on account of the unfavorable features noted, yet even after allowing for this reduction, the crop is still simply enormous. It is safe to say, that no country in the world can show a record of as large a number of bushels of grain, in proportion to agricultural population, as has been harvested in the prairie region of Western Canada this year. But for some unfavorable spells of weather during harvest, our record would have been very much better than it really is. We have no reason to complain, however, of the result, as it is, and can challenge the world to make a better showing.

Now that the crop is safely in stack or in granary, and that the growing and harvest periods are past, we may take a glance backward, with the object of drawing some lessons from the experiences of the season. One point which is very evident, is, that many of our farmers try to do too much work in too short a time. Overreaching is almost a general feature of farming in Manitoba. Many farmers put in more crop than they are able to handle, and when it comes to the harvest season, help is scarce and wages high, and they find it impossible to obtain men to assist them in gathering their crops. On this account grain is left standing in the fields an unreasonably long time, where it is subject to damage from unfavorable weather. A great deal of the damaged grain is due to overreaching. If farmers

would decide to operate on a much smaller scale, and in a more careful manner, we would hear less about damaged grain. Say for instance, in the spring a farmer puts in 300 acres of wheat. The first 100 acres is sown in good time, the second hundred is rather late to ensure a safe crop, and the third 100 acres is put in so late as to be very risky. When it comes to the harvest, the first 100 acres is secured in good condition, but the balance is backward, and with help so scarce as it has always been here in a fair crop year, the late grain is about certain to be injured before it can be harvested. If the farmers would content themselves with as much crop as they can sow in good time, and harvest within a reasonable time, they would relieve themselves of a great deal of worry and anxiety. They would not have as much grain, but they would be reasonably sure of a good quality, and they would have more time to devote to other work. If many of our farmers would reduce their wheat acreage, and devote the time instead to stock, dairying, poultry, etc., they would be money in pocket, have less worry, and make a better record for the country. The injury which the wheat crop has sustained this year, we regard as a blessing in disguise. Had the weather been favorable throughout, additional encouragement would have been given farmers to expand their wheat acreage, to the neglect of other matters, and perhaps with the result of disaster next year. The lesson of the season is plain. Do not carry your eggs all in one basket. Try to do no more than you can do well.

There is another point which should be referred to, and one which we have heretofore devoted some space to. This is the exceedingly objectionable custom which prevails to a considerable extent, of allowing grain to remain in stook, with the intention of threshing without stacking. In order to save the labor of stacking, some farmers will allow their grain to stand in stook for weeks, till they can secure a machine to thresh it. Many have suffered from this custom this year. While dry weather is the rule here in the fall season, the experience of the past two years has shown, that it is not safe to count upon dry weather. Besides, even should the crop escape damage from wet, the quality of the grain is always improved by the sweating process which it undergoes in stack. The cost and labor of stacking is so slight, that no risk whatever should be taken in order to pass over this work. The practice of threshing from the stook cannot be too severely condemned.

Credit business has been carried to great extremes in this country, and we may also be permitted to draw some conclusions on this question. The present season would seem an admirable one to reduce the general liabilities of the country, and place matters on a more solid basis. The farmers especially have been the victims of the credit system. We say victims, because we believe that instead of its being an accommodation, it is an injury to them to be able to obtain credit so freely. They have been loaded up with liabilities, have frequently been placed in uncomfortable positions, and have had the cost of their purchases greatly increased to them, through the credit system. The farmer must pay tribute to the credit system, either

directly or indirectly. If he does not pay a straight interest, he will pay an enhanced price for goods purchased on credit. In fact, he frequently pays more for the privilege of buying on credit, and has interest added as well. The increased cost to the farmer, upon credit purchases of many articles, is really enormous. Farmers should draw a lesson from their past experiences in buying on credit. This season will place a great many of them in a position of independence, if they choose to avail themselves of the opportunity. The way to do this will be to use the proceeds of their crop to pay off their debts, and endeavor to keep out of debt in the future. Many farmers seem to have a great desire to increase their holdings of land. We say it will pay them better to buy their implements and other requirements for cash, and go without the land, rather than pay out money for land and go into debt for implements, etc., with the possibility of a crop failure the next season. Farmers would be money in pocket very considerably in the cost of their purchases, by buying for cash, to say nothing of the many articles which they buy, that they could get on very well without, because they can get it on credit.

THE MUNICIPAL SITUATION.

Leading citizens of Winnipeg have lately shown a disposition to take a hand in municipal affairs, with the object of endeavoring to elect a more suitable board of aldermen for the next term, than we have had in the past. It is indeed high time that the better class of our citizens should take more interest in municipal affairs. Efforts have been made in past years to arouse more interest in municipal affairs, but they have been spasmodic and short-lived, and have accomplished no permanent good. It will soon be in order to elect a new board of aldermen, and it is to be hoped that a strong effort will be put forth to bring out suitable men.

Our aldermanic board in past years, has simply been a disgrace to the city, and the board for the present year is no exception. We do not say there are no good men in the council, but good men have been in a decided minority in the present and in the councils of most past years. Read over the lists, and see how small the number of really representative men who have served the city. Blatherskite orators and street-corner schemers have been more numerous than men of wisdom and integrity. Who, for instance, can say that the present board is composed of a majority of persons who are competent and trustworthy guardians of our civic interests?

This state of things in Winnipeg should be speedily terminated. The citizens should be thoroughly aroused and made aware of the necessity for decisive action. The indifference which our business men have shown to taking an active part in municipal matters, should no longer be maintained. Business men of all others are the losers from the mismanagement of civic affairs, and they should be the first to lend their influence and assistance in endeavoring to correct evils in the civic administration. It is a matter of the greatest regret, that our prominent business men and representative