

## TRADE WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA

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be worth while considering whether we should not increase our duties so as to give the entire British Columbia trade to the farmers of Manitoba and the Territories. At present a large quantity of agricultural products are imported from the United States into British Columbia, the lower freight rates in favor of the Pacific coast states enabling the producers there to compete to good advantage for the British Columbia trade even with the present duty against them.

## EXEMPTIONS.

It is pleasing to note that at last some members of the Manitoba legislature are beginning to realize that the exemption business has been overdone in Manitoba. In supporting the bill providing for the reduction of the exemption in the garnishment act, Hon. Mr. Cameron is reported to have said that "it was just a question if Manitoba was not in danger of passing the safety line in exemption legislation. The large exemptions had resulted in only \$1,600 being recovered through the county court here by process of execution."

It is a good thing that the attorney general recognizes this situation. Only a week or two ago The Commercial said that it was evidently time to begin reducing exemptions. A start has been made in this direction, and it is hoped hereafter the tendency will be to gradually reduce exemptions.

## DEVELOP THE WATER-WAYS.

Andrew Pattullo, in a speech in the Ontario legislature recently, dwelt upon mineral development in northwestern Ontario, in which he urged the recognition of the claims of the prospector as superior to the speculator. Coming to another subject he said:

The first and chief duty of the government is as to transportation. We must bring the people who go into those regions, and we must bring the products of their energy and capital nearer to the rest of the world. A great deal can be done at once. Although all through that country, say for instance the Rainey River region, nature has provided a marvellous system of intercommunication by water in summer, much of it is useless for lack of a little expenditure, a portage here, a lock there, or a canal, it may be. Such work would help the mines already in operation and stimulate work on new prospects.

This brings us again to the question of the development of our western water-ways, a matter which The Commercial has frequently discussed. In northwestern Ontario, all the way from the eastern boundary of Manitoba, to within a short distance of Lake Superior, there is a chain of waterways which it is believed could be opened out for continuous navigation. Years ago it was the policy of the Mackenzie government to develop these water stretches, instead of building a through line of railway from Lake Superior westward. It is not necessary now to discuss the wisdom of that policy as applied to the situation eighteen or twenty years ago. The development of these water-stretches now, however,

would appear to be a wise and even necessary policy, in the interest of the mineral development of those great regions.

Mr. Pattullo refers more directly to the development of these water-stretches for local purposes. The Commercial would like to see it taken up with a much grander object in view, namely; the opening up of a through water-route from the Red river to Lake Superior. In an article which appeared recently in The Commercial upon the subject of western water-ways, the following reference was made to the possibility of opening a route from the Red river to Lake Superior

"Last but not least we have another great water route which has received more or less consideration for many years. We refer to the proposal to establish a water route from the Red River through to Lake Superior. This would appear superficially to be a very heavy undertaking, and many persons will be inclined to doubt the feasibility of such a route, on first thought. They will be inclined to consider that the cost would be so great that it would be foolishness to undertake it. Parties who have given the question some study, however, claim that a water route from the Red River to Lake Superior is not only feasible, but that the cost of opening such a route would not be out of proportion to the importance of the work. It will be remembered that it was the policy of the late Alexander McKenzie Government to develop the water stretches of this route in opening communication between the older provinces and Manitoba. However, that idea was dropped and a railway was built instead. Now that a second outlet to Lake Superior is being considered necessary, it would appear to be a wise thing to have a thorough examination of the proposed water route made, before deciding that we must have another railway. If the water route be feasible at a reasonable cost, it would be a more valuable acquisition than a second railway, and it would provide a means of handling heavy freight at rates with which the railways could not begin to compete.

"From the Red river to Lake of the Woods it is believed that a light draft canal could be opened at a very moderate expense. The The Rosseau river rises near Lake of the Woods and flows eastward to the Red river. The land in south-eastern Manitoba, west of the Lake of the Woods, is low and marshy. There is an abundance of water everywhere. In fact to much, and the canal would be a means of reclaiming a large area of land which is now too wet for settlement. It has been alleged that it is possible to pass from the Lake of the Woods to the Red river, via the Rosseau river, during high water, in a canoe, without making any portages, thus indicating that the country between the Lake at Buffalo Bay and the head waters of the Rosseau is inundated in high water.

"From the point where the proposed canal would enter the Lake of the Woods, there is navigable water all the way to Fort Frances, a distance of over 100 miles. The opening of a canal to the Lake of the Woods would bring that great timber country to our doors. The logs for sawing into lumber would be brought by water to the Red river, and sawn here, and thus the expensive railway haul of 130 to 150 miles would be saved to the purchaser of lumber. The opening of this part of the route alone, regardless of connections east of Fort Frances, would be an undertaking of immense advantage to Manitoba, providing the work can be done at a reasonable cost.

"From Fort Frances eastward there are stretches of navigable water which it is claimed could be utilized at a moderate cost,

to open the proposed water route to within about forty miles of Lake Superior. From that point to the latter lake, the work would be very heavy and a short railroad would probably be necessary, instead of carrying the canal through to the lake, but even with the transfer which would be caused by this break in the water route, the cost of transporting goods from Red river to Lake Superior would be about cut in two."

Perhaps Mr. Pattullo will use his influence as a member of the Ontario legislature, in securing a preliminary survey of this proposed route. No doubt the Manitoba government would co-operate with that of Ontario, by having an examination made of that portion of the route from the Red river to the Lake of the Woods. If it is then decided that the route is feasible at a reasonable cost, it would be in order to approach the Dominion Government for assistance.

The opening of even a shallow water-way to Lake Superior would be of such inestimable value to the West, that it would appear desirable to have a survey of this route made as early as practicable. As the route lies principally through the province of Ontario, it would be quite appropriate that the Ontario government should move first in the matter.

## HAIL INSURANCE ONCE MORE.

The advocates of the proposed provincial government system of hail insurance, as now before the legislature, claim that the cost would range only between \$1.00 and \$1.50 per quarter section of land. The amount is so small that it is given as an argument in favor of a general land tax for hail insurance purposes. If the amount were likely to be much less than the minimum estimate, it would not change the arbitrary and unjust principle of the proposed law. Why should a new settler, who has taken up half a section of land (320 acres), but who has only been able to bring twenty-five acres under cultivation, be obliged to pay a sum possibly amounting to \$3 or \$10 per annum, for the protection of the well-to-do farmer who cultivated 200 to 300 acres, the latter paying no more than the former, though receiving eight to twelve times as much protection. Apply the same reasoning to the farmer who devoted his land principally to stock-raising or dairying, or to the struggling farmer who had started with limited means, and who has not been able to accumulate sufficient plant to work more than a limited area of his land.

No matter how the question is viewed, a little reasoning will show that the proposed general tax system is entirely wrong. If a government system is thought necessary, let it be based on business principles, each one paying in proportion to the protection received—in proportion to the amount of property at risk.

## COAL PRICES.

The Winnipeg Free Press says:

"A gentleman interested in the hard coal mines up in the Rockies disputes the statement made in these columns, that a duty on Pennsylvania anthracite would raise the price of hard coal in Winnipeg." The

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