

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

**Eighteenth Year of Publication**  
**ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY**

SUBSCRIPTIONS, CANADA AND UNITED STATES  
\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE OR \$2.25 WHEN  
NOT SO PAID; OTHER COUNTRIES, \$2.50 PER  
ANNUM IN ADVANCE

*Changes for advertisements should be in not later than Thursday Morning.*

Advertisements purporting to be news matter, or which profess to express the opinions of this Journal, will not be inserted.

Office: 181 McDermot Street.

D. W. RUCHANAN,  
Publisher.

The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, DEC. 16, 1899.

## NEGLECT OF A PROFITABLE INDUSTRY.

Winnipeg packers report some increase in the number of hogs being marketed here this season, compared with last year. It is to be hoped that this increase will be permanent and will continue to grow until we can at least supply our own requirements of fresh and cured hog products. During the past year an enormous quantity of cash has been drained out of the country to supply our importations of hog products. Carloads of these goods have been arriving continually from eastern Canada and the United States, to supply the trade of western Canada. It is a matter for regret that this trade has not been supplied by the farmers of Manitoba. Our mining districts and the great northern country take large quantities of cured meats, in addition to the local trade of the agricultural and stock-raising sections of the prairie region. Our production of hogs has not been sufficient to supply even the local trade, much less the outlying lumber, mining, ranching and northern trading regions.

Some years ago efforts were made to induce Manitoba farmers to raise more hogs. The movement was successful and the number of hogs increased rapidly, to such an extent that we were obliged to ship quite a quantity of live hogs to eastern Canada markets in order to find sale for them. This was a very wasteful way of disposing of the hogs. Prices were not very high for hogs at the time and the shipment of live hogs a long distance by rail is an unprofitable and expensive operation. Besides, freights were higher then than they are now. There was no help for it, however, the difficulty being that we had no properly equipped

packing houses for handling the hogs on the spot. The farmers became discouraged and went out of the hog raising business.

Conditions now, however, are quite different. We have large and well-equipped packing houses, capable of turning all the hogs that the country is likely to produce for years to come, into cured product. The curing and packing of the hogs here would, of course, be a vastly more economical way of disposing of them than by shipping live hogs to a distant market, consequently, with our present facilities the raising of hogs should be much more profitable to the Manitoba farmer than it was some years ago. If those who became discouraged and gave up raising hogs were to try it again, they would likely find it now a more profitable business. The wasteful plan of shipping live hogs east would not now be necessary, even if the quantity of hogs marketed here were doubled or trebled, as they could be packed on the spot and the product would all be required for the home trade of western Canada. But even if we had a surplus over home requirements, it would be much more economical to pack the hogs here than to ship them away in a live state. The probability of a surplus, however, seems remote, when we review the past history of this country in the raising of hogs. Even when we were shipping live hogs away at very low prices, there was a market at home for them all, if we had then had packing facilities for handling the animals.

Unfortunately, since the large packing houses were established, the supply of hogs has been limited and irregular, and what at one time promised to become a flourishing local industry, giving employment to a large number of persons, has been greatly retarded. In a grain country, where freight rates are such an important factor as they are here, owing to the long railway haul which our products are subject to in order to reach the markets of the world, the raising and packing of at least our own supply of hog products should be a very profitable undertaking. There is bound to be a certain amount of rough or off grade grain, varying with climatic conditions in different seasons, which could be turned into pork at home more profitably than to ship abroad. By selling this grain and importing hams, bacon and such products, it would appear that we are burning our candle at both ends at the same time, when it should not be necessary to burn it at all. We are paying freight on the feed grain shipped away, and also paying the freight and in some cases duty too, on the

hog products brought in. This is certainly a wasteful policy, and one which it is hoped will soon be changed.

While discussing the hog question, it may be stated that there was a considerable mortality among young hogs in Manitoba last spring and summer, which it is said was due to excessive feeding of strong grain food, which probably means that the hogs were given too much wheat. This is a matter, however, which, hardly comes within the scope of an article devoted to the commercial side of the question.

## ELEVATOR POOLS.

In granting sites and other privileges to the Buffalo elevator syndicate, to build elevators at Montreal, it is to be hoped the Montreal harbor commissioners will take precaution to retain some control of rates, etc., to be charged by the elevator corporation. The fact that the proposed new company is known as the Buffalo syndicate, is alone a matter for suspicion. The Buffalo elevator pool has managed to place a heavy and unreasonable toll upon the grain trade of the west. The Montreal harbor commissioners should take care that they do not create another interest at that place, similar to the one that has so successfully tolled the grain trade of the west at Buffalo.

## Early Closing.

Hoover & Co., Winnipeg, deserve a word of commendation for their move in the direction of early closing. The Winnipeg clerks have been agitating for some time to secure the closing of stores at six o'clock in the evening, instead of at seven, as is now the custom, except on Saturdays or evenings before holidays. Hoover & Co. have announced, without waiting for other merchants to agree to the proposals, that after January 1 they will close their store at six o'clock. This should be a great assistance to the clerks in their efforts. The claim of those opposed to early closing is that consumers, who are busy until six o'clock, will be greatly inconvenienced if the stores are closed earlier. Hoover & Co. are in a business which would suffer more severely by early closing than any other line, if the arguments against early closing are sound. The clothing and gent's furnishing trade almost more than any other branch, is a business wherein the goods handled are used by people who have the least time during the day to make purchases. At the same time we do not believe Hoover & Co. will lose anything by their decision to close at six o'clock. Rather the contrary. Early closing should be a benefit to all concerned—merchants as well as clerks. The closing of stores one hour earlier than at present will not reduce the consuming power of the people, but it will reduce the expense of doing business, by curtailing gas bills, etc. If merchants could overcome their little petty jealousies, and decide to close their business places regardless of what some other dealer may do, it would be better for themselves and all concerned. Hoover & Co. have set a creditable example in this respect.