

The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, especially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the country between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast, than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. By a thorough system of personal solicitation, carried out annually, this journal has been placed upon the desks of the great majority of business men in the vast district designated above, and including northwest Ontario, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the territories of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, JUNE 12, 1893.

Building on Realty in Winnipeg.

Gordon & Suckling, real estate brokers, Winnipeg, make the following half-yearly building report: "The class of buildings being erected this year is generally far superior to that of any previous year in the history of the city. Quite a number of large business blocks are in course of construction, and there are not a few residences costing from \$4,000 to \$11,000. There are some two hundred houses now being built at the present time, and it is estimated that there will be fully another 175 built before fall.

The building and improvements for this year up to June 1st amounts to a large figure, it being in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000; and this year the total expenditure in this particular line from the present outlook promises to fully reach \$1,800,000, and will in all probability exceed the expenditure of 1892 by \$800,000.

Real estate is steadily advancing and in some localities has risen from twenty to twenty-five per cent. Taken as a whole, land values in the city have advanced about 13 per cent.

Quite a number of inquiries are being made by outsiders and considerable foreign capital is finding its way for investment in Winnipeg properties. The prospects for a continued substantial improvement in the city, is most hopeful and Winnipeggers may well feel proud of the advancement the city is making.

Weather and Crops in Europe.

The weather in the United Kingdom has been showery and unsettled during the past week. On some days a good deal of rain has fallen, so that the extraordinary drouth, which has lasted practically since the beginning of March, may be fairly said to have come to an end. It is somewhat noticeable how few in number are the complaints regarding the grain crops in the chief districts; it is, however, quite otherwise with respect to the hay crop, for which the rain has come too late. In

Franco heavy rain storms have been experienced in some parts of the country, and the agricultural outlook has been thereby greatly improved. This morning's advices from Paris expresses the opinion that the reports are today just as exaggeratedly sanguine as they were pessimistic during the prolonged drouth. As a matter of fact the rain came too late to benefit the wheat crop in the south, while in the east, centre and west, the rye crop, which is in ear, is very poor. The barley and oats crops will be benefited most by this rainfall, the injury to the hay crop being beyond repair. In Germany the weather is hot and threatening rain; the wheat crop is considered to be in a satisfactory condition, but rye in the important eastern countries has suffered seriously; spring grain crops want more rain. In Hungary the rain has improved the spring grain crops, but it came too late for the rye and rapeseed crops; wheat is reported as fair. The Austrian minister of agriculture says in his latest report that the damage to rye cannot be repaired, but the wheat crop may improve with good weather. Rapeseed in general is very short. In parts of Italy the drouth still continues, and the hay crop is practically a failure. The grain crops have also suffered, but it is difficult yet to judge of the extent of the injury. In Roumania abundant rains have fallen, leading to serious floods; the crops, however, were greatly benefited thereby. In South Russia, too, there have been heavy rains and a much milder temperature, so that the crop advices have greatly improved, except in the southwest. In the centre and north of Russia, however, the weather has again become very cold, with frost and snow in different districts.—Beerbhjm, May 19.

Complaints of United States Farmers.

Secretary Morton has some decided views about the agricultural situation, and they do not agree in any respect with those which the Populists are continually proclaiming for political purposes. It is true, he says, that the general profits of agriculture in this country have materially declined during the last ten years—not by reason, however, of unfriendly legislation, but mainly because of friendly legislation, strange as it may seem. The opening of new tracts of territory to settlement and cultivation have so increased the supply of farm products, he explains, that it has run far ahead of the demand, and the natural result has been a lowering of prices. When the fact is considered that the plowed area has trebled since the homestead law was passed, and that in the same time farming implements have been so improved that one man can now do as much work as was formerly done by six men, it is easy to understand why agricultural values have decreased. The market has not decreased in a corresponding degree with the production, and the surplus has accordingly reduced the profits. In short, the present condition demonstrates in a very plain and conclusive way the truth of the economic maxim that the relation of supply to demand is the sole regulator of value; and this includes that other important fact that the law which thus adjusts prices can not be reversed or evaded by artificial appliances of any sort.

The situation is unsatisfactory in this respect, but it is by no means so bad, Mr. Morton insists, as the calamitarians represent. He reminds these professional croakers that only about 3 per cent. of all the merchants escape failure, whereas hardly 3 per cent of the farmers fail. The statistics really show that agriculture is safer than banking, manufacturing, or railroading, taking all things into account. There is no farmer of good sense and good health anywhere in the West, Mr. Morton declares, who can not make a good living for himself and family, and that is as well as the majority of men are doing in any other pursuit. The man who owns a farm and sticks to it is certain to profit by it in the future. There is practically no more land to be added to the

area of cultivation. The supply of agricultural products has reached its limit in the United States, and must now remain stationary, while the demand will go on increasing every year. This implies a gradual improvement in prices, and a steady appreciation of the value of farming lands. The outlook is not really so discouraging, it will be seen, as the pessimists try to make it appear. There is a better time coming, unquestionably. It can not be hastened by political devices or other contrivances for the arbitrary regulation of natural forces; but there are logical and sufficient reasons for expecting it, nevertheless, and the great lesson to be learned by the farmers is that of patience and perseverance. The worst has been experienced, and that is a comforting thing to know. Men can afford to wait when they are sure to succeed in the end.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Sago or Palm Starch.

Sago, or palm starch, is obtained from the *sagus farinifera*, a species of palm growing in Molucca and Philippine Islands, and in New Guinea. A considerable quantity is now imported into France and Italy, mainly because the potato starch has reached so high a price. It yields a transparent paste, and has quite superseded the potato starch as a glaze in England. In France it has long been used for the same purpose for the so-called Normandy fabrics. Granulated sago starch comes into commerce as tapioca sago, which is reddish, and contains soluble starch; granulated sago which does not yield a paste, and Malacca sago, which yields a stiff paste. It may be purchased in powder, both in an impure state and as washed starch. A single sago palm yields about 1,300 pounds of starch containing 12 per cent of water. Sago starch is the raw material from which the granulated product is manufactured.

This industry is carried on in India and at Singapore, where 20,000,000 kilos (44,000,000 pounds) are annually produced by Chinese manufacturers. Purified sago starch is made chiefly in Malacca. The annual import into England is 16,000,000 kilos; London is the chief market. The product, which was almost exclusively confined to the island of Portland, has died out years ago.

The Indian Maple Sugar.

A Vermont paper, in drawing a comparison between primitive and modern methods of producing maple sugar, says that ever since the Indians in the section now known as Fletcher discovered "honey" in the maple trees, that district has been known far and wide as the heart of the Vermont maple sugar country. The way the red man extracted the delicious compound was somewhat slow as compared with the present process. He used to cut a slanting gash in the bark, and insert in the lower end a gauge shaped piece of wood, from which the sap ran and dropped into a poplar or bass wood trough. At the end of the season these troughs would be set up against the trees and left till the following season, by which time the troughs would be thoroughly mildewed. This materially added to the flavor of the aboriginal sugar, but can hardly be said to have improved it. The evaporator of these times consisted of an iron kettle swung from a sapling bent over a stump. By a slow and tedious process the sap was first heated, and then boiled in this kettle, often taking two or three days' boiling before it could be sugared off.

In the best Fletcher groves of to-day a long pipe or trough line runs from some central spot in the grove down to the big storage tanks in the sugar house. Hence the perfected evaporator, when under full headway, will convert the first sap into syrup in half an hour, consuming about one cord of wood to produce one hundred pounds of sugar.