

# 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.

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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 Can-  
ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also  
reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manu-  
facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada

WINNIPEG, MAY 26, 1900.

## MERCHANT ORGANIZATION

There is a gratifying movement on foot among the country merchants of Manitoba and the Territories to-day in the direction of forming boards of trade, early closing associations, etc. This is as it should be and reflects credit upon the trading communities of the west. Several new boards of trade have been formed recently and in a number of country towns agreements have been made among the merchants to close their places of business at early hours during the summer months. There is so much that can be done to improve the lot of the merchant and his help if concerted action is taken that it seems a wonder that there is not a board of trade in every town, village and hamlet in this country. In many cases merchants have been kept from forming such institutions by petty jealousies and animosities which are unworthy of them. In some cases the lying practices of certain customers who delight to stir up strife and its consequent price cutting among merchants has kept some who might otherwise have been the best of friends from even speaking to each other.

The principles which underlie the carrying on of business successfully are never changed by the action of any particular merchant or set of merchants and it makes very little difference in the end as far the volume of trade done in a town is concerned whether the merchants in it are on a friendly footing with each other or are at daggers drawn. The community from which they draw their custom can consume only a given amount of goods each year in any case and the merchants among whom the trade is divided might just as well be good friends with each

other as bad ones as far as the effect upon the amount of goods they sell is concerned. When it comes to a question of profits and satisfactoriness with which trade is carried on they will be infinitely better off if good friends. There will not be the endless annoyance and loss due to price cutting and there will be a tendency to help one another at times which will lift the whole business community to a higher level.

Boards of trade so far towards smoothing out the little differences which sometimes arise between different dealers in towns and cities. They bring the merchants together and make them acquainted with one another. They furnish opportunity for general exchange of views on local matters and are often the means of advertising a district. Early closing associations, while limited in their scope to one object are also a good thing and should be formed in every trading community where the movement has not already taken hold.

## NEW COUNTRY STORE CONDITIONS.

The country general store keeper is gradually being brought face to face with a question affecting his interest. In fact, his very existence, growing out of the development of rapid transit and departmental stores which will at no distant date tax his ingenuity and resourcefulness to their utmost to successfully grapple with. Already he has felt to a considerable extent the competition of large city and town stores which are able by means of the telephone, post and improved parcel delivery system to compete with him for the business of all but the most remote farmers and this competition will become more and more keen as these conveniences are improved and supplemented by others. The electric railway for instance will in a very few years be serving many leading country districts as successfully as it now serves the people of the large cities and will enable the farmer's wife to visit town as frequently as she wishes for the purpose of making purchases. The telephone is the most potent factor, though, in this consideration owing to the cheapness with which it can be installed and the willingness of the city and town trader to undertake the delivery of goods. Farmers readily see the advantage of having this means of communication which enables them to fill their wants without having to hitch up a team of horses, perhaps just at the busiest time, and drive several miles.

How to successfully meet this competition is the question which the general store-keeper at small country points has to face. He may have thought that these improved means of communication were more largely designed to give him a greater advantage in reaching town and secur-

ing delivery of goods but he has also to consider that they possess the same advantage to his customers, who will not be slow to improve the opportunity. In order to hold this trade the country merchant will have to materially alter his methods of doing business. He will have to offer his customers as good inducements at home as can be found abroad and he will have to imitate in many ways the methods of the city retailer. Bargain sales have become a regular feature of retailing devices for catching trade and will have the same effect in the country as in the city. By running into town frequently and personally inspecting jobbing stock the country merchant could secure these bargain lines just as well as the city store. By buying more frequently and in smaller quantities he can keep his stock as well assorted as his city competitor and will be able to actually undersell him on many lines. Close attention to details and consideration for the interests of customers will give the country merchant advantages in the eyes of his customers which will enable him to hold much of the trade he now stands in danger of losing.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Judging by the vigor with which the trading communities of Canada are kicking for a Dominion insolvency bill the government will not be able to withstand the pressure much longer. The reason for delay in bringing in a bill to cover at least the points which are unanimously agreed upon by all classes of creditors is not plain to the ordinary observer and there is much resentment on the part of the trading community because some relief has not long ago been granted.

The ready cash customer is becoming more and more powerful in the securing of advantages from merchants and others as the intrinsic merit of this system of doing business manifests itself. This kind of trade with most merchants is now in a class by itself and many are the tempting allurments held out to catch it. The system is bound to come more and more into use and when it becomes common practice as it should in time the retail merchant will be happy.

Duncan Kennedy has opened a hotel at Snowflake, Man.

An order-in-council has been passed by the Dominion government, providing to give a rebate of duty on all donations sent to Ottawa and Hull fire sufferers. This will last for two months, when it is expected there will be no further need of it.

A combination to be known as the American Sheet Metal Company is being organized at Pittsburg with a capital of \$50,000,000. The combine, which takes in 29 of the 35 plants, includes plants manufacturing corrugated iron and cornice work.