

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 7, 1896.

THE HOG INDUSTRY.

The pork-packing industry is a business which has made considerable progress in Canada during recent years, and what is equally gratifying is the fact that the hogs are being raised at home. Within five to ten years the number of hogs annually raised in Canada has vastly increased. In fact it is only during the past few years that the hog-raising industry has become an important interest in Canada. Up to the year 1886, the annual pack of hogs in Canada, at all principal packing points, was under 200,000 hogs. Since then, however, it has steadily increased, until last year it reached over 600,000 hogs. The most rapid increase has been during the past three years. These figures only include hogs packed at principal points, in the larger factories. A great many hogs are packed in a small way which are not reported.

Formerly we imported our cured hog products, principally from the United States. Six or seven years ago we imported about 65,000,000 pounds of hog products, including lard, from the United States, while last year we only imported something over 17,000,000 pounds of such products. This will indicate what importance the hog-raising and packing industry has assumed in Canada within a few years. It is also pleasing to know that the West has shared largely in the growth of this industry, and we have to-day one of the largest factories in Canada located in Winnipeg, besides other smaller packing industries in this city and at other points throughout the West.

The hog-raising industry is not an exotic growth in Canada. It is an industry which is perfectly natural to the country, and the wonder is that it did not develop to a position of importance some years ago. There are few if there are any other industries which are more suited to the country and which can be made more profitable to the farmer than raising hogs. It is an industry which works in well with dairying, and wherever dairy factories can be carried on to advantage (and where can dairy manufacturing be carried on to better advantage than in Canada) there can hog-raising be made specially profitable. In the western states they can raise heavy, corn-fed hogs to advantage, but the class of hog which is in favor is the lighter bacon hog, raised on mixed feed. This is why Canadian bacon has gained such a high reputation in British markets, where it is now readily taken in preference to the United States product, and at a higher price.

Hog raising is not only profitable to the farmer, but it has led to the establishment of an important industry at home, giving room for the employment of capital and labor in the packing houses which have been established throughout the country. In this respect it is a more important interest than raising cattle and sheep, as these animals are exported alive, or we may say, they are ship-

ped away as raw material, while the hogs are sent abroad in the manufactured form.

In the coming tariff revision it is to be hoped that the importance of the hog-raising and packing industry of the country will be duly considered, and no changes made which will injure the industry. The industry, though one which is well adapted to the country, has only assumed importance, as we have shown, during the past three years. It is therefore yet in its infancy, and will no doubt go on rapidly developing for some years to come under the present conditions. It is also worthy of note that farmers in Canada are receiving better prices for their hogs than are being paid at principal packing markets in the United States.

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

On December 15 the municipal elections will take place in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. In the city there appears to be less than the usual interest in civic affairs, judging from the slim attendance at meetings held recently to discuss important matters concerning the city. This is very much to be regretted. Winnipeg is very much in need of an awakening. Important questions of vital interest to the city have been allowed to drag along from year to year, "and nobody seems to care." It is really time that something were done to stir the people up to make a combined effort to place municipal affairs in a better position. It would perhaps not be a wise thing for any local association to take up the question of civic government alone. If the Retail association should take up the matter, it would at once be alleged that the retailers wanted to "run" the city and forthwith opposition would be aroused to the movement. If the board of trade, or jobbers' union, or labor association or any other organization should take up the matter, the same cry would be raised. Perhaps it would be a good idea to organize a new association for the special purpose of stirring up interest in municipal affairs and securing a better system of civic government. Through this association meetings could be held and literature circulated, with the object of bringing about the desired reforms. At the present time the city is urgently in need of a system of water works, street improvements and other important public works. The by-laws to be submitted to the electors to provide funds for carrying out some of these works, will likely be defeated, not because the citizens do not want the improvements, but because there is a lack of confidence in our municipal system. It is feared that the undertakings could not be carried out successfully under our present municipal system. And yet in the very face of this fact there appears to be less interest shown than ever on the part of the citizens, in the affairs of the city. It is too late to make any changes this year. The only thing that can be done now is to endeavor to secure the election of the best men on Dec. 15th. The men who are most prominently identified with the interests of the city, who have the largest interests at stake in the city, and who are known to be successful in their private affairs, can

most safely be trusted to look after the interests of the city.

THE CIVIC BY-LAW.

On December 15, the citizens of Winnipeg will be called upon to endorse or reject three by-laws, to provide for the raising of sums of money for civic improvements. One of these by-laws provides for raising \$650,000 for a system of water-works. Another asks for \$300,000 to establish gas works, and the third asks the citizens to provide \$75,000 for an electric light plant. The Commercial has already expressed itself upon the water-works question. The Commercial has for years urged the establishment of a municipal system of water-works at the earliest possible moment. This is something which is urgently required by the city, and it is furthermore something which, if properly carried out would be a source of profit as well as comfort to the citizens. Instead of increasing taxation it should reduce it, even after greatly reducing the water rates to the citizens, as compared with the cost of water supplied by the present private company. The sanitary condition of Winnipeg is bad. In fact it is at times so bad as to be a disgrace to the city. To remedy this state of affairs we must have an efficient system of water-works owned by the city. There has been much talk about street improvements of late. Goodness knows these improvements are badly needed, but there is no use undertaking any system of street improvements until the water-works question is settled.

As regards the gas by-law, this is not nearly so urgent a matter as the water-works question. Besides this, there is a possibility that almost before the gas works could be completed, gas as an illuminant might be out of date. Gas has already been superceded to a considerable extent by other illuminants, and in Winnipeg to-day the use of gas is probably less than it was some years ago. If gas continues to hold its position as an illuminant, it would certainly be a profitable investment for the city to establish gas works. The only question is the possibility of its being superceded by some other system, or by the cheapening and improvement of some system of electric lighting. At present gas can more than hold its own with electricity, and it is a better light. If we are to have gas works, the mains should be put down before any comprehensive system of street improvements is undertaken.

Regarding the proposed electric light plant, the city should no doubt control a system of electric street lighting, and a saving could be made as compared with the present cost of street lighting by contract. There is no reason why the city should not also find it a profitable investment to establish a general system of electric lighting for private use. The only question is the cost of the steam plant for the electric system. In view of the possible development of our water-powers at an early date, the necessary power could be supplied very much more cheaply than by steam.

Flour is being held at comparatively high prices in the markets of the Pacific coast states.