

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 22, 1897.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

The Manitoba department of agriculture has just issued a pamphlet entitled "Noxious Weeds and How to Destroy Them." This is the third edition of this pamphlet, which has been published and distributed by the Provincial Government, and this latest edition contains later and additional information regarding this important subject. The pamphlet contains a number of illustrations showing some of the bad weeds, so that those who do not know the weeds by appearance, will be able to recognize them from the descriptions and illustrations given. Full descriptions of all the noxious weeds known in Manitoba, are given, with practical information for their eradication where they have gained a foothold. This pamphlet should be in the hands of every farmer in Manitoba. No good farmer will allow weeds to rob him of part of the profit which he should receive from his crop. Weeds extract the moisture and vitality from the soil, which should go to the crop. The more weeds the smaller will the yield of crop be. This question of noxious weeds is a matter which Manitoba farmers require to study carefully, as the custom here, of cultivating large areas in a rapid manner, has been favorable to the production of weeds. In some districts weeds have gained quite a foothold, and it will require constant attention to keep them down.

TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES.

It has been announced definitely from Ottawa, that the Canadian ministers who visited Washington will report in favor of the appointment of commissioners to meet and confer with commissioners to be appointed by the United States, to take into consideration the question of trade relationship between the two countries. We will all hope that the appointment of the commission will speedily result in the bringing about of a much greater measure of commercial freedom between the two countries. In the meantime, however, the new tariff bill, which will largely increase the duty on commodities imported from Canada, is being pushed forward at Washington. This does not look very assuring for the improvement of our trade relationship with the United States in the near future.

One effect of the appointment of this commission will probably be to postpone the expected revision of our tariff. With a commission working on the question of trade relationship with the United States, our government will probably desire to postpone the proposed tariff revision until the outcome of the negotiations are known. As this can hardly be accomplished in time for action during the coming session of parliament, it will afford a good excuse for postponing action on the tariff question. If the government has decided not to take up the tariff question this session, it would be a wise

plan to let the country know it at once, as uncertainty regarding the tariff is adverse to commercial activity.

THE COMMERCIAL ANNUAL.

Our annual is now about ready for distribution. It contains a full report of the recent business men's convention at Winnipeg; also the report of the council and the president's address, presented at the recent annual meeting of the Winnipeg board of trade. Considerable space is devoted to our mineral interest, both in Northwestern Ontario and British Columbia. The grain trade, live stock trade, dairy industry, and the progress of agriculture, and general development of Western Canada is discussed in a long list of miscellaneous articles. Several articles deal with the lumbering, fishing and other interests in British Columbia. The number is profusely illustrated with new engravings. This annual number of The Commercial will be the largest publication ever issued here, and the edition will be the largest ever published by any paper west of the lakes. Extra copies will be forwarded to any address for 25 cents each.

EARLY CLOSING OF STORES.

A public meeting will be held in Winnipeg on Tuesday evening, Feb. 23, to discuss the question of the earlier closing of stores on Saturday evenings. The present movement was inaugurated by the Winnipeg Ministerial association. The city clergymen no doubt take the view that the present custom of keeping stores open until all hours on Saturday evenings, is immoral in its nature, or at least has a tendency in an immoral direction. In taking such a view they are probably not very far astray, though The Commercial will not undertake to discuss the matter on such grounds.

The clergymen first approached the city Retailers' association. The retailers, we understand, expressed their willingness to do what they could to assist in educating public opinion in favor of early closing, but they were not prepared to push the matter alone at present. They impressed upon the clergymen the necessity of educating public opinion in this matter, and pointed out that the clergymen could themselves take a leading part in accomplishing this end.

The result has been, that a public meeting will be called on the date named, and the Ministerial association, the Retailers' association and the Trades and Labor council of the city will all join in the movement. It is very appropriate that the city labor organizations have been invited to take part in the movement. The chief claim put forward by those in favor of long hours for stores, is that it is necessary to keep open late in the evening in order to accommodate the working men. It is represented that working men have not an opportunity to make their purchases during the ordinary hours, and that the stores must be kept open late to enable them to make their necessary purchases. It will be interesting to hear what the representatives of the labor organizations have to say to this charge. They are in favor of shorter hours for their own trades, and The

Commercial does not believe they will ask that long hours be enforced upon merchants and their clerks in order to accommodate them. The working men will no doubt find a means of overcoming difficulties of this nature, so that merchants will not be able to say that they are obliged to impose upon their clerks and assistants, as well as upon themselves, in order to accommodate the working men.

As regards the Retail association, The Commercial is not surprised that the retailers have not at once become enthusiastic in favor of early closing on Saturday evenings. The retailers in Winnipeg have had a hard fight to secure early closing on the remaining five business evenings of the week. In fact they are hardly through with this fight yet. However, a good deal has been accomplished in Winnipeg in favor of the early closing of stores, and the good work done here is bearing fruit in other parts of the province, as the early closing movement has extended to many provincial towns.

The movement in favor of educating public opinion in favor of the earlier closing of stores on Saturday, is no doubt the proper way of starting at this question, and in this respect the clergy can assist very materially. The Commercial believes that seventy-five per cent. or more of the business done on Saturday evenings could be done during the day, or even on a day earlier in the week, without the least inconvenience to the purchasers. The habit of making purchases late on Saturdays is simply custom with most people. If those who can make their purchases earlier, could be induced to do so, one hour on Saturday evenings would be sufficient to accommodate the few who, by reason of their employment, are unable to get out during the day. Thus, instead of the stores being kept open until midnight or later, they could be closed at eight or nine o'clock at the latest on Saturdays. The greater number of people who buy late on Saturdays, simply do so on account of a thoughtless habit, and they never take the thought that they are imposing upon the merchant and his employees by keeping up this custom.

Another matter which would materially aid in the earlier closing of stores on Saturdays, would be to make some day earlier in the week pay day in establishments where a number of hands are employed. The custom of paying on Saturday has a tendency to unnaturally expand business with the stores on Saturday evening. It would be a great help to city merchants if the Saturday pay day were changed to some day earlier in the week, say on Monday.

Since the early closing system came into effect in Winnipeg on all business days except Saturday, the amount of business done on Saturday evenings has greatly increased, so that now the stores are often kept very busy until very late on Saturday nights. In the summer season they are kept busy sometimes until about midnight, and they consequently cannot get their goods put away and their stores straightened up until Sunday morning has arrived. Thus the merchant and his assistants are debarred of