

# 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  
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ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also  
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facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, MAR. 31, 1900.

## THE BUDGET.

The most remarkable feature of Mr. Fielding's budget speech is of course the announcement of a further increase in the British preferential tariff, from 25 to 33 1-3 per cent. This announcement will take the country by surprise, without doubt. The British preferential tariff, when first announced was received with favor by a large section of the people, and the government has evidently concluded that a further extension of that principle will be received with like favor. In these days of growing imperial sentiment, it will be remarkable if this move of the Canadian government is not taken as another effort in the direction of encouraging an imperial Zollverein, or imperial trade compact of some nature. A section of the Canadian people are opposed to the granting of a preference to Great Britain, unless on the basis of a reciprocity of preferences. Free trade Britain, however, has really no preference to offer. We already have her open market for our products. In order to give us a preference, she would have first to proceed to levy a tariff tax on products from other countries. Virtually she would have to revolutionize her entire fiscal policy, something which even the enthusiastic imperial sentiment of the period will hardly lead her to consider.

The increase of the British preferential tariff to 33 1-3 per cent, which is to go into effect on July 1 next, means a very important reduction of the duty on imports from Great Britain. It means that where three dollars would be collected in duty on imports from other countries, only \$2 will be collected on British goods. With such a large portion of our total imports coming from Great Britain, this increase in the preferential tariff really means an im-

portant reduction in our customs tariff. To this extent it should be received with favor by those in favor of less tariff taxation. The result will no doubt be to increase imports from the mother country, where the bulk of our exports go, so that the preference is given to our best customer at the same time that our tariff is reduced.

The real practical feature of this increase in the preferential tariff, to the people of Canada, is the fact that it provides for a reduction of tariff taxation—it is a further relaxation of the high tariff policy. This, we say, is the practical feature of the extension of the preferential tariff principle. The question also has its sentimental side, which, however, does not detract from its practical value as a measure of tariff reform. The fact that Great Britain, who is our best customer, will be the principal, or rather the sole gainer by this decrease of our tariff, will certainly not be taken amiss by the Canadian people.

It will be interesting to note how this further extension of the British preferential feature of our tariff will be taken in the United States. It is not our fault, however, if any interest in the United States should feel aggrieved at this recent development of our tariff policy. We have for long years sought in vain for freer commercial relations with the United States, but our every effort in this direction has been coldly repelled.

Mr Fielding's statements regarding revenue, expenditure, etc., show a large increase, as was expected. The prosperity enjoyed by the Dominion is shown in the increase of revenue from \$40,555,000 in 1898 to \$46,741,000 in 1899, making a net increase of \$6,186,000, and providing a surplus, over expenditure, of well up to five million dollars. Over \$9,000,000, however, was expended on capital account, which is not charged against revenue.

## Labor Legislation.

A delegation from the Winnipeg Trade and Labor Council and the labor party waited upon Premier Macdonald and members of the provincial cabinet last week to urge the passage of an act regulating factories and workshops within the province and providing for the establishment of a labor employment bureau. The delegation asked that legislation be introduced providing for the safety of workshop and factory hands from accident as nearly as this could be secured, proper sanitation, abolition of child labor, for children under 14 years of age; inspection of factories and workshops and other reforms. The proposed labor bureau would do away to a large extent with the employment agency business as carried on at present and would be entirely under government control. The premier promised to give both matters full consideration and to do what he could to have existing abuses remedied.

## Ogilvie Milling Co. Re-Organization.

The Ogilvie milling interests in Canada are to be consolidated under the name The W. W. Ogilvie Milling Company, Limited, and the headquarters are hereafter to be at Winnipeg. F. W. Thompson, manager of the western business heretofore, is to be general manager of the entire business. Montreal and other eastern interests will be controlled by a local board of directors.

## Freight Rates.

Tramp steamers will be scarce on Canadian Atlantic routes this season and shippers who have availed themselves of these in the past for getting their commodities to market will be considerably put about to secure shipping space. As high as 52s 6d has been offered for lumber space from Canada to points in the United Kingdom.

Ocean grain freight rates are high as is shown by the following scale of prices which was quoted last week at Montreal: Liverpool, 2s 3d; London, 2s 9d asked, 2s 6d bid; Glasgow, 2s 11-2d to 2s 6d; Avonmouth, 2s 9d; Manchester, 2s 3d; Hamburg, 2s 9d; Antwerp, 2s 6d; Leith, 3s to 3s 3d; Dublin, 2s 9d; Belfast, 2s 6d; Aberdeen, 3s 3d; and Cardiff, 2s 6d.

The Montreal Trade Bulletin says. "There has been further freight engagements of grain from Duluth, Fort William and Chicago to Montreal at 63-4c to 7c per bushel from Fort William and Duluth, and at 61-2c from Chicago."

## Railway Matters.

W. F. Tye, of the Canadian Pacific Railway engineering department, has returned from a trip of inspection over the line to Fort William. Surveys are now being run over this line, preparatory to the laying of the double track. The company will have construction gangs at work on the Pipestone extension, the Lac du Bonnet line, and the MacGregor extension as soon as the frost is out of the ground. Work on these branches was started last year.

## Dairy Trade Notes.

The creamery at Moose Jaw, Assiniboua, will open for the season on April 1.

Cheese factories in the Belleville district, Ontario, expect to resume operations about April 1.

Preparations are being made to open Thelmet's and Neault's cheese factories at Ste. Rose du Lac, Manitoba, the coming season. The factories will consume the product of between four and five hundred cows.

The remarkable advance in the price of butter at Montreal and other eastern centres which took place about three weeks ago is still exciting interest. Prices advanced about 10c over the ordinary level, creamery changing hands at as much as 73c per pound. Butter which had been shipped to England was brought back and sold at a profit. Good butter has been very scarce since the opening of the year. Fresh stock is now coming in more freely and the situation is much easier.

John McKechnie, of the Vulcan Iron Works, Winnipeg, has returned from the east. Mr. McKechnie was in the railway accident near Toronto a short time ago, but his friends will be glad to learn that he has about recovered from the injuries received.