

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part of Ontario west of Lake Huron, the Province of Manitoba and British Columbia and all Territories.

Twentieth Year of Publication.
ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY.

Subscriptions—Canada and the United States, \$2.00 per annum in advance or \$2.50 per month. Other countries, \$2.50 in advance.

Changes for advertisements or stops should be in not later than Thursday morning.

Advertisements purporting to be news matter, or which profess to express the opinion of this journal, will not be inserted. Office 219 McDermott St. Telephone 224. D. W. MURCHAN, Publisher.

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 Canada, and week by week, the Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission and retail and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, OCT. 19, 1901.

SETTLEMENT IN THE ARID BELT.

The fact that a good crop has been secured this year, and that is generally considered the semi-arid portion of our western prairie region, is likely to lead to a considerable influx of agricultural settlers to those districts. Already a number of farmers have located in these districts, and the live stock ranchers, who formerly had that portion of the country all to themselves, are making loud complaints about being crowded out by farmers. The experience of the past has shown that there is a considerable portion of our western prairie region that is not adapted to raising crops. The soil as a rule is very rich, but the supply of moisture is insufficient to render it fertile at all safe, one year with another. One season of sufficient moisture now and again will not make amends for several intervening failures through lack of sufficient rainfall. It would be a serious blunder to encourage the settlement of farmers in these regions. Farming can only be carried on successfully where the land can be irrigated. We have great hopes of the future of much of the semi-arid country, through the construction of irrigation works. The Commercial has for many years endeavored to draw attention to irrigation as a means of rendering large tracts of these lands fruitful and safe for farming purposes. Without irrigation, however, we cannot encourage the settlement of farmers in some of these districts. If the present conditions in this year should result in a large influx of agricultural settlers to districts where the irrigation of the land cannot be secured, the result will likely prove disastrous to such settlers. The country at large can hardly hope to receive much benefit from the location of settlers in districts where they are unable to become impoverished through crop failures. Thousands of farmers rushed into the arid regions of the Western States during the early tide of immigration to the West, where they continued a hopeless struggle against nature for years, until they were finally obliged to succumb to the inevitable. Much of the same region is now being reclaimed and rendered fruitful by means of irrigation. We should profit by the experience gained in the settlement of those States. We have abundance of territory not yet occupied, where the average rainfall is ample for agricul-

tural purposes, and where other conditions are also favorable. It is not necessary and it is not right to encourage settlement in the semi-arid region, except where the irrigation of the land can be secured.

CHEAP POWER FOR WINNIPEG.

If Winnipeg does not soon get cheap power it will not be for want of task. According to reports, there are several different schemes afloat for developing water powers on the Winnipeg river. This river, which connects Lake of the Woods with Lake Winnipeg, is almost a continuous series of cataracts and rapids for a large portion of its length. The proposals on foot now are to develop some of these water powers and transmit the power to Winnipeg. There is certainly power enough running to waste on the Winnipeg river to furnish all the force that is likely to be required here for all time. Speculation is already at work figuring out what the effect of cheap power will be upon our industrial future. Certainly the main drawback to the establishment of factories here would be removed. We are gradually getting the population necessary to support industries, but the problem of expensive fuel remains. Cheap electric energy, generated by water power, would overcome the drawback of costly fuel.

A few years ago an effort was made to secure the development of the water power of the Assiniboine river at Winnipeg. It was proved on paper about as clearly as anything could be shown, that an extensive water power had been developed right at our doors. Capital, however, was timid, and the Assiniboine water power proposals gradually were forgotten.

A little below Winnipeg, on the Red river, we still have the supply of rapids, where it is claimed a large water power could be developed much nearer to the city than the cataracts and rapids of the Winnipeg river. The latter, however, are the attraction at the moment. That Winnipeg will have an abundant supply of cheap power at some future date, from one or more of these sources, is quite probable.

INDUSTRIAL CORPORATIONS.

The industrial combines are not all proving satisfactory to investors. Some of these concerns have become enormously over-capitalized, and several of them have already failed to pay interest on their stock. When a period of commercial depression comes about, as it is sure to sooner or later, it is just probable that there may be quite a shaking among these concerns, the establishment of which has been going on so rapidly of late years.

WINNIPEG POST OFFICE.

It is rumored that the Winnipeg post office building is to be enlarged. It would seem indeed high time that something should be done to improve the situation at the Winnipeg post office. Whether it is lack of room, or lack of help, or incapable management, or a combination of two or more of these features, we do not know. Certain it is that there is something radically wrong in the handling of the business of the post office, which the public are anxious to have remedied as early as possible.

It has been freely reported that the post office is not only cramped for

space, but has been particularly short of help. If this is the case, it alleviates the local postmaster somewhat of the responsibility, but it is not at all creditable to the Dominion postal authorities that such a condition of affairs should be allowed to continue so long, particularly at such an important distribution point as Winnipeg now is.

RAILWAY RUMORS.

It is seldom that there is not some alleged railway deal or combination under discussion somewhere on this continent. Most of these never materialize. Recently persistent rumors and reports of a big combination affecting northwestern railroads have been made, and many well posted persons believe that this time there certainly is something on foot. It is claimed that J. J. Hill, of the Great Northern, is planning new moves, part of which means the operation of the new Canadian Northern system in harmony with the Great Northern. One feature of these reports is to be connection between the two lines at Emerson. While we do not know what truth there may be in the reports of J. J. Hill's connection with the Canadian Northern, it is quite possible that traffic connection between the two roads may be made at Emerson. The Great Northern now have a line to St. Vincent, just across the boundary from Emerson. The Red river valley branch of the Northern Pacific, was acquired by the Canadian Northern, can easily be connected at Emerson with the Great Northern line to St. Vincent. Indeed, it is claimed that preparations are now being made to make this connection. This might mean anything more than that the Canadian Northern had decided to work with the Great Northern, for traffic to and from the south, instead of with the Northern Pacific, as at present. On the other hand, it might mean that the repeated statements that J. J. Hill has a large stake in the Canadian Northern, as something more than mere rumor.

INSURANCE

INSURANCE AMALGAMATION.

Further information has been received in regard to the amalgamation reported in The Commercial, and the result of the same is that the Phoenix is a purely fire office, while the Atlas is a life office. The Atlas fire department, therefore, will be acquired by the Phoenix, while another office, the Pelecan, will take over the Atlas life business. The Atlas is 33 years old, and the Phoenix 119. The company will be entitled "Phoenix and Atlas Fire Office Limited," and will be one of the largest fire insurance organizations in the world. Following figures show the relative standing of the Atlas Co.'s life branch and the Pelecan Life Insurance Co. The figures were taken from the reports for the year ending 31st December last and the £ sterling converted at \$2.

	Pelecan	Atlas
Established 1797	1838	
Capital paid up	\$ 500,000	\$ 605,000
Net premiums	966,285	786,071
New business written	2,014,000	1,800,000
In 1900	1,354,085	1,322,025
New business written	2,832,204	2,832,204

The amalgamation will be known as the "Pelecan and Atlas Life Office." The Atlas life business in Canada, so the transfer of that section of the business of the head office will be taken over by the Canadian business which is exclusively fire, which risks at close of 1900 it had \$15,367,944.

INSURANCE NOTES.

The Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York is presenting its Winni-

peg friends and patrons through its manager, Mr. Sweattman, with a decidedly neat and handy pocket memo book.

Chas. H. Roberts, managing director of the Crown Life Insurance Co. is in Winnipeg this week for the purpose of establishing a branch of the company's business here. The Crown Life is a new Canadian company, which is now being organized in various thoroughout the Dominion. They have a strong directorate including such well known names as Chas. Roberts, who is president of the company, and John Charlton, vice-president. A board of directors has also been appointed, composed of F. W. Thompson, E. L. Drewry, Capt. William Robinson, and John J. Gault. A local manager will be appointed.

Railway and Traffic Matters.

Jan. J. Hill, of the Great Northern, has flatly denied the report that his road had formed a combination with the Canadian Northern.

An advance in grain rates is scheduled for October 21, but it appears that all the roads have made an effort to carry grain for the remainder of the year at the present rates. The head office at Chicago has not allowed any free movement of merchandise; in fact, the entire continent of North America has suffered a decrease in grain traffic during September, but handled more live stock—New York Commercial.

G. H. Streetz stated this week that the new Canadian Northern line from St. Charles to Carman is being extended beyond Carman to Somerset, and as soon as the grade is done to Carman his outfit will commence work on the other side of the town, heading toward the main line of the Canadian Northern. Speaking of the prospects for next year in the railway business, Mr. Streetz says that the indication already of immense mileage of new track being put down by both the Canadian Northern and the Canadian Northern companies.

Alexander Johnston, a Toronto contractor for the Northwest Territories, has been charged with fraud against D. H. Purdon, a contractor with a contract awarded Johnston and Sulby for a portion of the Northwest Territories. Johnston claims he was told that in order to carry out a contract it would be necessary to contract for \$2,000,000. Purdon felt favorably disposed, Johnston accordingly gave notes for the amount. Johnston was in time got the contract, but did no work, learning that no charter had been issued for the one hundred miles he was to build. Then he notified the Government that the contract was a fraud and that the \$2,000,000 was for legitimate expenses of the road.

Census of the Territories.

Ottawa, Oct. 16.—The census returns for the Northwest Territories are complete, with the exception of three sub-districts in East Assiniboia and six in Saskatchewan. The schedules for some Indian reserves.

The total number of Indians returned for the Northwest Territories was 24,823, 2,420 for East Assiniboia and 1,539 for Alberta, the last named being the only one of the Indian reserves. This is about 5,500 less than the Indian population of the same territories as reported in the report of Indian affairs for 1900.

The schedules received at the census department give the actual population of each census district as follows:

Alberta	61,737
Assiniboia	43,319
Manitoba	148,922
Saskatchewan	24,823

Total 147,511
The estimate for the four census districts of the Territories as published in Bulletin No. 10 of the census was 146,000, and the census commissioner, Mr. Flue, is confident that when all returns are in the total will exceed 150,000.

Ottawa, Oct. 16.—The census department has received the population bulletins for all returns which will make the population of Alberta 64,000. This will be the first of the Indian census bulletins gave Alberta figures as 36,500.

A seat on the New York stock exchange was sold on the 20th ult. for \$15,000.