

# THE COMMERCIAL

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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 Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada

WINNIPEG, MARCH 25, 1899.

## A MISTAKEN NOTION

The recent action of the Winnipeg board of trade in regard to the matter of the Kettle River railway proposal has led to much newspaper comment both east and west. Some of the British Columbia newspapers resent the action of the board, on the ground that the proposed railway is a purely British Columbia enterprise, and the Winnipeg board was over-reaching its proper functions when it undertook to pass upon the question at all. This, we think, is rather a narrow view to take. Nearly every member of the Winnipeg board of trade is interested to a greater or lesser extent in the southwestern portion of British Columbia. Many of the members of the board have very large interests in that region, and it seems not altogether out of place that they should have considered the question worthy of their consideration.

In one respect several of the papers which have referred to the Winnipeg board of trade in this connection, are quite astray in their statements. They speak of the board as having changed its mind in regard to the proposed Kettle River railway enterprise. There is nothing to show that the board ever held any other opinion than one favorable to the construction of the road. The council of the board

passed a motion in opposition to the construction of the road, it is true, but when the matter was brought up in a full meeting of the board, quite the opposite opinion largely prevailed. It is quite natural to suppose that as a general rule the expressions of the council would represent the opinion of the board. This instance, however, proved an exception to the rule.

So far as the board of trade is concerned, the discussion resulting from this Kettle River railway matter would indicate the wisdom of having an expression from the full board, before the policy of the council in regard to such important matters is publicly announced.

## WHAT SHALL WE GROW

The low price which has ruled for some time for wheat should lead to some thought at this time as to the advisability of giving more attention to the cultivation of other crops. Within a short time seeding will begin in Manitoba. Shall we continue, as we have done in the past, to give almost our entire attention to the production of wheat? or shall we cast about for other crops? At the moment the prospect does not appear very encouraging for the wheat grower. So far as we are able to judge of the future, indications would seem to point toward low prices for wheat for the next crop. Of course, it is a very difficult matter to undertake to prognosticate probable wheat prices so far ahead, and conditions may be greatly changed before another Manitoba crop comes to market. At present however we see a very large area of growing winter wheat with favorable crop conditions both in Europe and America. While this crop may suffer serious damage between now and harvest, indications point to a big crop of winter wheat for 1899. This crop will begin to come to market in June, so that the date is not really very far off for the beginning of a new crop year.

But aside from the probability of a large wheat crop this year, with accompanying low prices, it would seem wise policy for Manitoba farmers to vary their production a little more. There are certainly other interests which should profitably engage their attention besides growing wheat. The Commercial referred only a week or two ago to the increased demand for flax seed which will be experienced this year. Owing to the establishment of a large linseed oil mill at Montreal, the demand for flax seed will be much greater than ever before. The proprietors of this enterprise expect to secure their seed in the West, and they have an agent now here, with the object of endeavoring to interest the farmers in this

crop. The quantity of flax seed produced here will require to be vastly greater than it ever was before, if this increased demand is to be supplied. There is no fear of over production of flax this year, and there is certain to be keen competition and a good cash market for every bushel of seed.

Another crop which should receive more attention is oats. Heretofore this crop has been grown in a haphazard and careless way in Manitoba. Any kind of cultivation has been thought good enough for oats. The result has been poor crops of this grain. During the past two years the supply of feed grains has not been equal to the home demand. Our oatmeal mills have been standing idle for lack of raw material, while the demand for oatmeal has been supplied by meal imported from the United States. Besides oatmeal, large quantities of feed grains have been also imported from the United States. This is not creditable to the intelligence of our grain producers. While they have been giving their time and study to growing wheat, we have had to import other grains, which could be grown to good advantage at home. That our soil and climate are not the trouble, is shown by the fact that where care has been given to other crops, they have given as favorable returns as wheat. At the Manitoba Experimental farm last year from 100 to 120 bushels per acre were obtained from a number of different varieties of oats, thus proving that the crop is all right if properly cultivated. The leading varieties of peas yielded 50 to 60 bushels per acre, and this crop has always proved a successful one at the farm though it is almost an unknown crop among Manitoba farmers. Barley returned from 60 to 70 bushels per acre. These and similar statistics, obtained year after year proved that there should be no difficulty in obtaining relatively just as good crops of feed grains in Manitoba as is obtained from wheat. The fact that we have been obliged to import feed grains is therefore due to the custom of growing wheat to the neglect of other crops.

We should grow more flax seed, grow more oats, grow more barley, grow more peas, and not only grow more of these crops, but manufacture them after they are grown. Manufacture the barley, oats and peas into beef, mutton, pork, poultry, eggs and dairy products. As for the flax seed, after it is crushed and pressed, there remains one of the most valuable animal feeds that can be obtained anywhere. Poultry twelve cents per pound in Winnipeg, and the market partly supplied with Ontario poultry! A large number of car loads of