

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MARCH 11, 1884.

A RASH STEP.

All eyes have been turned during the past week towards the Convention of farmers and citizens, who have been in session in this city, and watching with interest the proceedings of the said convention. Such conventions, when conducted with a desire to reach real grievances and discover remedies for the same, are productive of much good, and only a political partizan of the most pronounced stamp will deny that the gathering of last week is liable to have good results. But the calm onlooker cannot fail to see that good results could only be reached when, as above stated, aims were confined to discovering and seeking remedies for grievances. That the language of every speaker in the Convention would be confined to such an aim, it would be unreasonable to expect, where so many men and interests were met. But it would be no more than reasonable to expect that the action of such a Convention, as expressed in resolutions should be guided by such aims, and it must be acknowledged that nearly all the resolutions pointed unmistakably in that direction. It is very much to be regretted that one resolution passed on Thursday should form such a decided contrast to all the other actions of the Convention. The following is the resolution we complain of: "In the opinion of this Convention the burdens laid upon the farmers of Manitoba are so great that agricultural operations cannot be made to yield a fair profit; that immigration before the removal of those burdens will benefit neither the Province nor immigrants; and that this Convention cannot advise immigrants to come to this Province till full redress of grievances complained of by this Convention shall have been obtained."

With an unanimity which could only be the product of mutual suffering the Convention boldly stated and demanded redress for grievances, and in its utterances against oppressive tariffs, burdensome monopoly, and unwarrantable interference with local rights: for the power of building a highway to the northern seaboard, and instituting other progressive reforms, it had with it the hearty sympathy of nine-tenths of the people in the province. But, unfortunately, the above resolution strikes directly at no grievance, aims to redress no evil, but is

simply a declaration which, once made, is as likely to bring injury to every member of that Convention as to any other person.

People of a morally philosophical turn of mind will tell us that the truth should be told at all times, let the result be what it will; and in passing this purely declaratory resolution, the Convention acted right. To this we should answer that there is such a process as economizing the truth, and choosing time and place for its utterance; and, allowing that every syllable of the above resolution is true, the Convention, besides showing but poor judgement, stepped away out of its sphere in pronouncing judgement upon a question which the interests of no member necessitated an opinion being expressed upon.

But with all due deference to the opinions of the Convention THE COMMERCIAL has no hesitation in questioning every assertion contained in the resolution. To say that the state of the agricultural classes at present is to be taken as the results of agriculture in the Northwest is sheer nonsense. The crop of 1882 was a partial failure, owing to damage from fall rains, and it may not be out of place to remark that of the damage thus sustained ninety-five per cent. was due to the carelessness and shiftlessness of farmers themselves. The September frost spread damage to the crop of 1883, also, and it is not unreasonable to state that more care in seeding early on the part of farmers, would have prevented a great share of that misfortune. To these two years of partial crop failure must be added the depressed state of produce markets all over the World this winter, and it can be seen that a number of circumstances have combined this year to test every weak point in Northwestern agriculture. There is not a newly-settled portion of North America which has not suffered severely (some much more so than the Canadian Northwest) this year from agricultural depression, owing to the state of produce markets; but it would, nevertheless, be nonsense to assume that agriculture cannot pay in North America. Still, such a statement is quite as reasonable as the assertions contained in the above resolution.

Too much popularity has turned the head of many a wise man, and we fear the general sympathy and popular feeling in favor of last week's Convention, somewhat, turned the heads of its members.

They felt with such a pressure of popular feeling in their cause, they could coerce and overawe any government, and like the reckless gambler in a daring game of bluff they ante up this most unnecessary resolution as a last stake. Should their game prove a losing one, they will have cause to regret their rash action, while in case of their proving successful, they have inflicted an injury upon the country they live in, and consequently upon themselves, which it will take years of prosperity to repair. The Northwest has many active enemies, and these will not fail to make the most of this damaging and unnecessary resolution of Manitoba farmers in convention. Such a course of recklessness may be commendable in a game of poker, but on the part of a convention, met for calm deliberation, the most generous construction that can be placed upon it is, that it betrays petulance and childish overbearing. It is, therefore, much to be regretted that such a resolution should have been allowed to blot the record of an otherwise moderate and sensibly conducted convention.

DISCRIMINATION IN FREIGHTS.

During these days of agitation about railway monopoly and other grievances, too many people jump to the conclusion that in every respect the farmer is the only sufferer from existing evils. It will be found, however, that, while they make less noise about a burden borne than the farmers do, the merchants and manufacturers, and especially the wholesale merchants of Winnipeg, have great reason to complain of many an injustice, and in none have they greater reason than in the matter of discrimination in freight rates against this city, and in favor of eastern cities. It is to the interest of all classes in Manitoba to see as large a wholesale centre as possible grow up in this city, and that wholesalers here be put as nearly as possible on a footing with their competitors in eastern Canada. But this is what the managers of the C. P. R. have not as yet, and still seem disinclined to do. By their freight arrangements eastern houses can secure a through rate from Montreal, and other cities, to any Northwestern point on the Company's line, while their Winnipeg competitors have first to pay the through freight to this city, and when re-shipment takes place, a heavy local rate. For instance, a car lot of one class of freight from