

THE COMMERCIAL

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

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 7, 1899.

LAKE MANITOBA ROUTE

Recent articles in The Commercial dealt with the question of lowering the level of Lake Manitoba and the great advantage which would be gained by bringing the surplus water from that lake to the Assiniboine river, instead carrying it off at a point near the northern end of the lake. It was shown that a canal could be cut to the Assiniboine river whereby the surplus water of the lake could be carried off, at a moderate expenditure, and this canal would prove of immense value for commercial and other purposes, by increasing the flow of the Assiniboine river, so as to make practical the utilizing of an immense water-power at Winnipeg; by making the river valuable for purposes of navigation; providing a water power on the canal itself, in the Portage plains wheat country; by increasing the flow of the Red river between Winnipeg and Selkirk, thereby improving the value of the river for purposes of navigation; by opening navigation from Winnipeg to Lake Manitoba—a water system which could easily be extended to the head of navigation on the great Saskatchewan river, thereby opening up one of the vastest systems of inland navigation in the world, with all the benefits in connection therewith.

What renders this great matter of

special importance at the present time, is the fact that the Dominion government has undertaken to cut a ditch at Fairford, a point near the northeasterly corner of the lake, for the purpose of lowering the level of the lake by providing an additional outlet. It does seem worth while making an effort to induce the government to, make the cut at the southern end of the lake so as to bring the water to the Assiniboine river, thus securing the advantages before enumerated and others not mentioned.

Besides the great waterpower at Winnipeg, which was dealt with at length in a previous article, a smaller water power could be established on the canal itself, convenient to the great wheat fields of the Portage plains. The canal could be used for bringing fuel and lumber from Lake Manitoba to the farmers of the Portage plains, and to all the country from Portage to Prairie to Winnipeg. Besides abundant timber supplies tributary to Lake Manitoba and its connections, there are large quantities of an excellent quality of limestone on the lake. Gypsum is also found in large quantities, which takes a finish equal almost to marble. From this land plaster and plaster of Paris can be made. Salt is also abundant, and with cheap means of transportation, this commodity could be made in sufficient quantities at least to supply the home demand. The fishing industry is also an important interest.

Lake Manitoba affords the safest and cheapest route by which water communication could be established between Winnipeg and the North Saskatchewan river. The connection between the lake and the Assiniboine river would be the most important link necessary to develop this route. Engineers who have looked into the matter consider the opening of such a waterway as perfectly feasible, at a very moderate cost. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the benefits which the opening of such a route would be to the entire country. Only one point will be mentioned here, namely, that coal could be laid down in Winnipeg by this route at a cost of \$2 per ton or less.

A few years ago great interest was taken in proposals to develop the water power of the Assiniboine river at Winnipeg. It was shown at the time that this work would be a very profitable investment. If the Dominion government could be induced to bring the surplus water of Lake Manitoba this way, the value of the water power at Winnipeg would be more than doubled.

Recently attention has been drawn from the Assiniboine water power and concentrated on efforts to secure the improvement of Red River navigation,

particularly with reference to the St. Andrew's rapids. This is a very necessary and important work, but not more important than the Assiniboine water power. Many people labor under the error that the improvement of the St. Andrew's rapids would mean the development of a great water power there. This is evidently a false impression, as engineers say that the water would be all required, at least a portion of the time, for purposes of navigation. In the other case we have the water power within the city limits, and nothing to interfere with its value.

CIVIC REFORM

Much sharp criticism regarding the management of Winnipeg's municipal affairs was heard previous to the recent elections. It would perhaps be better if some other time than during the heat of an election contest were taken to discuss municipal affairs. While an election is on, personal prejudices and side issues are sure to be introduced. There is much need of reform in our municipal system, and the matter should be taken up in a calm and reasonable way, with an honest desire to improve the situation and follow up the matter steadily until the end is achieved. Spasmodic efforts, especially during election times, are not likely to lead to success. This might be accomplished by means of the formation of an association, not confined to property owners or any particular class of citizens, for the sole object of securing municipal reform.

It is generally admitted that what is needed for the improvement of our civic situation is organization on a business basis. It would undoubtedly be a very profitable experiment for the city of Winnipeg to pay one or more large salaries to a competent person or persons, for the general management of the city's business. Our present system is not adapted to the business of a city. Aldermen cannot be expected to devote their time to looking after the details of civic matters. The board of aldermen should simply be an advisory body, and if it were constituted on this basis there would not be so much ground for the complaint that good men cannot be induced to come out for aldermen.

Aside from the evident change necessary to secure better business organization, there are other reforms which could be inaugurated on a separate basis. One of these is the abolishing of the ward system. The ward system has a tendency to keep good men out of the field, and leads to bickerings and disputes within the council itself.

Another reform which is urgently required is the prohibition of personal solicitation of votes, either by the