

THE COMMERCIAL

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

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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 26, 1901.

THE QUEEN'S DEATH.

On Tuesday afternoon the news was flashed to Winnipeg and every other part of the civilized world that Victoria the much loved Queen of the British Empire, had passed away at 6:30 that afternoon. London time, at her private home, Isle of Wight. The news cast a general gloom over the city quickly followed by visible tokens of public mourning in the display of black and lowering of flags to half-mast. Her death was not unexpected but was nevertheless a severe shock to the empire over which she had ruled with such distinction for upwards of sixty years. Public functions of every kind have been suspended until after funeral and all civic, provincial and Dominion officials have put on the badges of mourning. In Queen Victoria the world has lost a friend who has striven harder to make it pure and good than any other person of her time.

FORESTRY IN CANADA.

The movement to interest the people of Western Canada in the question of forestry is one which should meet with the hearty approval of all persons who are interested in the future of our country. The Commercial is in hearty sympathy with every effort put forth in the interest of protecting and preserving our natural forests as well as in encouraging individual effort in tree planting. It is a matter of satisfaction to note the greatly increased public attention which has been given to the question of forestry during the past few years. The Dominion as well as the various provincial governments appear to have at last realized the importance of protecting our vast forests. Efforts are also to be made to encourage tree planting on the part of the individual, in the settled districts. The policy recently decided on of establishing large forest reserves, to be maintained for all time, has not been adopted a moment too soon. Already we have reached the danger line in some respects, in the work of removing the forests.

To the residents of the great prairie section of Western Canada, the preservation of our forest areas is of the utmost importance. Natural forest areas, such as Riding Mountain, Cypress Hills, Turtle Mountain, and other forest districts bordering on or situated within the prairie belt, should be set aside as permanent reserves for

all time. This has already been done in some cases. The removal of these forests would be almost the greatest calamity that could befall the prairie region. The result would be to render large sections of country valueless for agricultural purposes. The forests are the reservoirs of our prairie rivers and streams. The beneficial influence which they exert upon climatic conditions renders it necessary that they should be preserved.

The movement to organize forestry associations throughout the country should be productive of good results. These associations will probably be affiliated in some way with the Dominion association, organized at Ottawa a year ago. The formation of these associations should result in arousing additional interest in the question of forestry, and should be particularly beneficial in encouraging individual effort in tree planting. The creation of a healthy public opinion in connection with the question of forestry will also support and further stimulate federal and provincial governments in taking measures not only to protect our natural forests, but to encourage tree planting by our farmers. All the governments can do, and they can do a great deal, will not fully meet the requirements of the occasion unless supported by public opinion. Public opinion has been crystallizing on this point during the past few years, and the present movement will greatly assist in educating our people to a proper view of the matter.

It is understood that the federal government has decided to adopt a system for the encouragement of tree planting by our farmers. This will certainly meet with the hearty approval of those interested in forestry. A great deal has been accomplished through the work of the experimental farms, toward encouraging our prairie farmers to grow trees. What has been accomplished in Manitoba, we believe, is mainly the result of the work of the farms. The government experimental farms at Brandon and Indian Head have demonstrated that trees can be grown to advantage on the open prairie, and that bleak prairie surroundings can be changed to the appearance of homelike comfort in a few years, by the cultivation of groves and belts of trees. The experimental farms have also taught the people what kinds of trees to plant and how to care for what is planted. We therefore now have the knowledge which should enable our people to go ahead and plant and grow trees successfully. The trees, cuttings and tree seeds sent out by the experimental farms have also been a great encouragement to the prairie farmers in the matter of tree planting. Many farm residences are now surrounded with young, thrifty trees, as a result of the efforts of the experimental farms. The receipt of a little package of tree stock in this way has been the cause of interesting many farmers in tree planting and has led them to make their first efforts to grow trees. Any further efforts on the part of the government either through the experimental farms or in some other way, will certainly only meet with general approval from all those interested in the welfare of our country. There is no reason why our most open, prairie districts should not become places of beauty, and in time no doubt every farm will have its groves, avenues and shelter belts of trees. There is no way in which a farmer can add more to the value of his property and the beauty of his surroundings, at a loss expense in cash and labor than by planting and caring for trees about his place.

1900 AS A BUSINESS YEAR.

Reports of all kinds regarding the volume and nature of the trading operations of the year 1900 are beginning to come to hand and furnish some very interesting information regarding the most eventful and concluding year of the 19th century. Every year the business of collecting and classifying commercial and industrial data is becoming more of an exact science and the mass of such information presented in the columns of the press and official publications of all kinds is becoming so great that it is impossible for any person now to even read let alone digest all that is offered for their consideration. However, it is not difficult to get at and retain the main facts in any particular line of statistical study and the information when gathered is always useful as showing the growth and tendencies of that particular line to which they apply.

As compared with 1899 the year 1900 passed into history as having been in some ways less satisfactory to the commercial and industrial communities of Canada and especially the western section of it. The boom in prices of almost every kind of commodity which characterized the former year came to an end early in 1900 and during most of the succeeding months trading was carried on in some line at least on a falling market, which is always an unprofitable business for the traders. Before the year was half over it became apparent that the crops in the great grain raising sections of the west were to be adversely affected by drouth and the uncertainties which accompanied this feature had a stagnating effect upon trade and reduced the year's turnover to a considerable extent. The harvest and threshing season came around and brought realization of the fears of the earlier months of the crop growing period the wheat yield of the west being cut down to a lower point than it has touched for several years and the harvest was accompanied as well by a damaging spell of rains which reduced the quality of a great part of the grain which the farmers succeeded in harvesting. As against this partial failure of the crops the west had a splendid cattle and live stock year and the producing classes were enabled by the sale of these to make good much of their loss on wheat. The year was also marked by considerable industrial activity in both eastern and western Canada and freedom from serious strikes.

As a rule one of the best indications of the general results of a year's business is the number and character of the failures and embarrassments which have marked its passage. Looked at from this point of view 1900 was still not so satisfactory as 1899 or even 1898 but was nevertheless a fairly successful year. The total number of failures in Canada during 1900 is given by one leading authority at 1,255 with \$11,613,208 liabilities, whereas the preceding year's failures only numbered 1,257 with \$10,658,675 liabilities. The total for 1898 was 1,300 failures with \$9,821,323 liabilities, but the four years prior to that were each marked by a much larger number of failures than 1900 and proportionately larger liabilities as the following table will show:

Total, 1900	1,255	\$11,613,208
Total, 1899	1,257	10,658,675
Total, 1898	1,300	9,821,323
Total, 1897	1,800	14,157,498
Total, 1896	2,118	17,169,681
Total, 1895	7,591	16,802,989
Total, 1894	1,550	17,616,216

In Ontario in 1900 there was also one banking failure with liabilities of \$275,000; in Quebec, 4, with liabilities

of \$841,971, and in British Columbia 1, with liabilities of \$277,000.

The table of failures by provinces shows as follows for the year:

Provinces	No.	Liab.
Ontario	546	\$2,282,948
Quebec	459	4,355,470
British Columbia	115	176,308
Nova Scotia	90	557,823
Manitoba	89	614,261
New Brunswick	48	210,907
P. E. Island	8	87,321

Among the interesting features of business year may be mentioned the fact, and it is an important fact, too, that there is a rapidly growing improvement in the business methods of the country. The science of trading is each year becoming better understood and correct principles are more generally applied by traders than ever before. This is in no small degree due to the ceaseless campaign of education which is being carried on by the trade papers of the Dominion. The difficulties and dangers of crediting are becoming more and more understood and the dangers of the system avoided. It is safe to say that never in the history of Canada has the cash principle been so generally in vogue as it is at present and never has it been so popular with the purchasing classes.

These are a few of the features of the business life of Canada for 1900. It might be added that the country was at the end of the year equipped with better stores and factories than at its beginning, better conveniences and facilities for carrying on business, more experienced clerking staffs, and better stocks of goods than ever before.

STOCK TAKING.

The season for taking stock is now on and in almost every branch of business this process is in a more or less advanced stage of progress. Some concerns have it entirely over with and are launching out on another year's business. It is a surprising fact, but nevertheless it is a fact that there are still some people in business in this country who never take stock. How they manage to get along without it nobody knows, and, of course, it is generally found that such people sooner or later come to grief. It is also a fact and much more commonly the case that the stock taking business is performed by some in a slipshod sort of a way and the inventory which they make is not worth very much as an index to the amount and value of the stock which they have on hand. These people too are very frequently found at the end of a hard year or when some sudden disaster has overtaken them figuring in the bankruptcy reports. They can hardly expect anything else. Their manner of doing business begets failure. It is a pleasure to know in spite of these facts that there is a growing number of merchants and tradesmen who make a careful inventory each year of the goods they have on hand and are able to give their creditors at least once every twelve months an exact idea of their resources and financial condition. The fact that they follow such correct business methods is often in itself a guarantee of the safety of their position and inspires confidence in the minds of those from whom they buy.

It is one of the fundamental necessities of mercantile life that these periodical inventories be taken and it should be as thorough an inventory as possible when it is taken. Goods should be priced at their current value not their invoice value, and there should be no padding of the statement in any way. Anything less than this simply means that the proprietor of the establishment does not understand the principles upon which success in business are attained.