

THE COMMERCIAL

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, especially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion 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. By a thorough system of personal solicitation, carried out annually, this journal has been placed upon the desks of the majority of business men in the district designated above, including Northwest Ontario, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the Territories of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, OCTOBER 25, 1897.

APPLES

Owing to the light crop of apples in Ontario this year, supplies for the Winnipeg market have been coming in principally from the States. Missouri and Kansas apples have been the principal lines in the market. While some very fine looking apples have come in from these states, it has been remarked that they have not as fine a flavor as the Canadian apples. The latter are rather small this year, and there is also a greater tendency to scab than usual, but the flavor is superior to the southern fruit.

SHIPPING FRUITS

A cargo of California fresh fruits was recently landed in London, England, in splendid condition. This shows what can be accomplished by skill and care in handling, combined with cold storage facilities. And yet, Canadian fruit growers, both east and west, have been unable to supply the Manitoba market with sound fruit. Fruit shipped from Ontario to London, did not arrive at its destination in good condition. Before trying to work up an export trade, Canadian fruit growers should study the business sufficiently to enable them to supply the home market with properly handled fruit. It would no doubt pay some of them to take a trip to California to see how the work is done there.

POTATO SUGAR

A chemist of the old world is alleged to have discovered a simple process of making sugar from potatoes. This, however, does not mean that Manitoba will soon be able to produce sugar profitably. We can grow sugar beets here just as well as potatoes, but it is doubtful if beet sugar manufacturing could be made to pay here. It is also doubtful if there will be any particular value in the discovery, as sugar is already very low in price, and it is not likely that potato sugar could be produced more cheaply than beet sugar. Beets are if anything more easily cultivated than potatoes.

CANNED LOBSTERS

Recently there has been considerable trouble with canned lobsters, on account of the tendency of the goods to discolor and deteriorate in quality. The lobster industry is one of great importance to Canada, the value of exports of this class of goods for 1896 being about \$2,500,000. On this account an inquiry was made by the federal government into the cause of the trouble. Quite an exhaustive blue book has now been issued upon the subject. The cause of the trouble is alleged to be micro-organisms, which can only be destroyed by repeated "bathing" of the cans in boiling water, from forty minutes to an hour.

MANITOBA FARM LANDS

That there is money in Manitoba farm lands at their present value, is a proposition which there is scarcely any reason to doubt. Lands which will repay their purchase price from one crop, and leave a nice surplus besides, certainly show good value. We have recorded several instances where purchasers have paid for their farms, including improvements upon the land when purchased, from the proceeds of a single crop. That this fact is beginning to be appreciated is shown by the increased sales of farm lands this fall. Rich farm lands for \$6 to \$10 per acre, within a few miles of a city like Winnipeg, seems absurd. There will be more money in these lands than in Klondyke mines, some of these days.

DRAINING OUR LANDS

The Toronto Monetary Times suggests that the city of Winnipeg should pay half the costs of draining the lands about the city, in order to encourage the settlement of these lands. The Commercial would beg leave to demur from any such proposal. Winnipeg has quite enough to do to provide necessary improvements within her own unnecessarily wide boundaries. Municipal taxes are already much higher in Winnipeg, pro-

portionately, than they are in the rural municipalities, and an enormous expenditure is still necessary to provide street and other improvements which are sadly needed. Winnipeg is already taxed to provide provincial funds for purposes which are of no value to the city, including such peculiar items as wolf tax, etc. Some provincial legislators even suggested that the city should be taxed to provide hail insurance for the farmers. While we are not surprised that rural legislators should try to "stick" the city and town corporations as much as possible, it does seem surprising that a financial journal should think it the work of the city to drain the rural districts surrounding. While it is true that there are thousands of acres of rich land around Winnipeg which require drainage, it is also true that there is much vacant land which does not require drainage. The Commercial has always advocated the drainage of our low districts by the proper parties, but certainly not by the already overtaxed city of Winnipeg.

RAILWAY EXTENSION NEEDED

Sir William Van Horne, when in Winnipeg recently, expressed the willingness of the company to extend the Stonewall branch northward, if sufficient aid were extended to the company. He claimed that the road would not pay operating expenses, and that therefore they could not undertake it without some aid from the government. There is no district in Manitoba more badly off for railway communication than the country north of Stonewall. The land is good and the district is an excellent one. Moreover, it is a district which has been partially settled for many years, and the residents have been discouraged by their long isolation. It is earnestly to be hoped that this greatly needed road will be built before another year passes by. We would not, of course, presume an opinion against the statement of Sir William Van Horne that the road would not pay, but it might be supposed that the extension of the Stonewall branch twenty to forty miles, through a rich country, already containing many settlers, would add materially to the profit from operating that branch.

FIRE GUARDS

Recent prairie fires have called attention to the matter of preparing fire guards. A municipal system of preparing guards should be encouraged as much as possible. Plowing guards is evidently not the best plan. A guard wide enough to be effective would be costly, and the plowed guards form breeding places for weeds. A machine for burning fire guards