

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 25, 1895.

LOW SUGAR PRICES.

Some people talk about wheat as though it were the only commodity which has declined to a remarkably low basis of values of late. The fact is, low prices are the rule in staple commodities all through the list, and the decline in several leading commodities of commerce is proportionately greater than is the case with wheat. Take for instance the one article of sugar—the only commodity which we will undertake to discuss at the present time. Sugar is an article of very large and general consumption. It is the great staple commodity of the grocery trade, and therefore the price is a matter of great importance to consumers generally. While wheat has declined to remarkably low values, it does not begin to compare with sugar in the matter of low prices. While 100 per cent would about represent the decline in wheat from high water mark in Manitoba, since the beginning of railway days in the province, we would require to add 50 per cent to this to show the decline in sugar during the same period.

The first number of The Commercial published in October, 1882, quoted the jobbing price of granulated sugar in Winnipeg at 11½ to 11¾ cents per pound. At this same time wheat was quoted at 85 cents per bushel. This is as far back as it is necessary to go in considering changes in prices. The year 1882 was the beginning of a new era in Manitoba, being we may say the beginning of the railway era. It is therefore a good date to begin calculations showing changes in prices. A year later granulated sugar was quoted as high as 11c here, while the price of wheat was about the same as the first date quoted.

Coming down to the present date, we find granulated sugar quoted at 4½ to 4¾ cents by jobbers, or a decline of 7½ to 7¾ cents as compared with the price in the fall of 1882. Wheat at say 53 cents per bushel in Winnipeg represents a much less proportionate decline.

The principle cause of the recent decline in sugars in Canada generally and in the Winnipeg market particularly, is owing to importations of German granulated sugar. Notwithstanding that Canadian Refiners are protected to the extent of 64 cents per 100 pounds, they have been unable to compete with the German granulated sugar in this market. Large quantities of the German sugar have been brought to Winnipeg, and it has been readily purchased by the trade here and received with favor by the consuming public. An effort has been made in some quarters to cry down the quality of the imported article, but the fact that it is having a good sale and is taken by the trade and the consuming public freely, shows that the talk of inferior quality will not keep the people in line with the tariff-bolstered

home refining industry. People know a good sugar when they see it and they have purchased the imported sugar freely because it is good and cheap. Canadian consumers have paid a handsome bonus in protective duties to the home refiners in the past, enabling some of them to retire as millionaires; but if they cannot compete with the German sugar with a duty of 64 cents in their favor, they cannot expect the consumer to pay a higher price for the home-refined article. The following will show the jobbing price of granulated sugar in Winnipeg in October each year, in cents per pound:

1882	11½ to 11¾c
1883	10½ to 11
1884	8½
1885	8½
1886	7½ to 8
1887	8 to 8½
1888	9½
1889	9½ to 9¾
1890	7½ to 8
1891	5½ to 5¾
1892	5½ to 5¾
1893	6½ to 6¾
1894	5½ to 5¾
Present price	4½ to 4¾

INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION GRANT.

There is something extremely niggardly in the treatment meted out to the Industrial Exhibition Association by the Provincial Government. It is disgraceful to those responsible for the situation, that the directors of the association are obliged to go annually on a begging expedition to the government. The grant asked from the provincial government is a mere pittance, compared with the large sum annually drawn from the city to support the exhibition, including the corporation grant and the free donations of citizens. The Industrial is to all intents and purposes a provincial exhibition, and it should receive freely a much larger grant from the province than has been asked for. The directors do not come empty-handed to the government. They show the large amount given by the city of Winnipeg in aid of this the only really provincial exhibition in the province, and though the amount they ask for is a mere trifle, it is with the greatest difficulty that any aid can be secured.

The government has granted a sum to be donated to the small country exhibitions, which the city is taxed for to pay her share. The grant individually to the country exhibitions is small, but in point of their importance is large enough in comparison with the sum asked for the Industrial. The citizens have not made a howl about paying a share of the tax for the country fairs, neither have they protested against the large grants made of provincial funds to the rural municipalities, which practically go to reduce taxation in these municipalities. But when the government is asked for a trifling grant in aid of an exhibition which is mainly in the interest of the country at large, though almost entirely supported by the city, there is humming and hawing and the urging of paltry excuses. Winnipeg is entitled to really more than the amount asked for, on the basis of population, in keeping with the statutory

grants to country fairs, quite aside from the special importance of the industrial as a provincial fair. To be plain, the real trouble with the government is the hay-seed influence they are afraid of. There is a certain element which, not satisfied with the large expenditure the city has gone to to maintain this provincial exhibition, would even object to a trifling provincial grant because the Association is largely in the control of Winnipeg people. If these people would take a reasonable view of the case, they would rather be ready to commend the efforts of the citizens in this matter. We cannot believe that any large number of the rural members can take reasonable ground to oppose the Winnipeg Industrial, though the element opposed to it seems strong enough to over-awe the government, the Winnipeg members included.

We do not use the word hay-seed to apply to the country members of the legislature generally, but to a certain influence in the legislature which is opposed to anything which emanates from or is supposed to be in the interest of the towns and cities. It is the same influence which has secured the passage of legislation in some of the western states, intended to curb the business interests, but which usually reacted in such a way as to do more harm to the farmers than to those it was intended to injure. There should be no such antagonistic interests in the legislature, and the appearance of such is to be regretted.

THE WINNIPEG FAIR.

As briefly announced last week, the directors of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition Association have again decided to hold the annual fair in the summer season this year. Quite a respectable minority were in favor of holding the exhibition in the fall instead of in the summer, but a decisive majority declared for a summer fair. The date selected for the opening of the exhibition is July 15, and the fair will continue during the first five days of the week.

The Commercial was the first journal to advocate a summer fair for the Winnipeg Industrial, and the success which has attended the exhibition since the adoption of the summer fair idea, seems to have borne out the correctness of the arguments advocated in favor of the summer season as the best time to hold the annual exhibition. It is true that the fall season as a time for holding the exhibition in Winnipeg has not been fully tested. At the same time, the arguments seem to be so overwhelmingly in favor of a summer fair, that The Commercial believes the directors have not made a mistake in deciding as they have done. At some date in the future it may be found advisable to hold a fall exhibition. In a new country like Manitoba and with our present small population, however, the summer fair seems to be the best adapted to the requirements of the situation. It is too much to expect the farmers to leave their work in large numbers during the busy fall season, to attend an exhibition extending over a number of days. The fall season is suitable for local exhibitions,