

# 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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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, SEPTEMBER 6, 1897.

## ONTARIO CROPS.

Despite the damage by the heavy rain just about the commencing of harvest, Ontario will have the best grain crop for many years. The winter wheat crop, according to the latest official estimate, will exceed 1896 by about 10,000,000 bushels and will average 25 1-2 bushels per acre. Spring wheat is nearly 2,000,000 bushels greater than last year, in the aggregate, and the area of both winter and spring wheats is stated to have been larger than in 1896. The area sown to oats shows a further increase, and the crop will aggregate 88,971,000 bushels, which is the largest on record. Peas are about the same as last year. Barley shows a moderate reduction in the aggregate crop, owing partly to continued shrinkage in the area. They hay crop is 600,000 tons greater than last year. The principal feature of the Ontario crop record for a series of years is the extension of the area, given to corn and oats and the shrinkage in spring wheat and barley.

## OUTLOOK FOR WHEAT PRICES.

At the time of writing wheat prices have not held at the top notch which they reached recently, but a moderate reaction from the rapid advance was only what might have been expected. The advance was so rapid

that it would have been surprising if there had not been some reaction.

The wheat outlook is still very strong. Reactions will come, but nevertheless we look for a strong market for some time. The statistical position of wheat is very strong, and from this point of view alone, good argument can be adduced why wheat prices should be maintained at a higher level than they have been for some years.

The great feature of the position of wheat lies in the fact that the wheat producers of North America hold the key to the situation this year. Stocks of old wheat are short we may say the world over, and in nearly all countries outside of North America crop reports indicate diminished supplies of new wheat. On the other hand Canada and the United States have produced good crops. North America holds the principal wheat surplus this year, and everything indicates that prices will be maintained, if not further advanced.

## FLAX SEED.

A year ago the price of flax seed at Chicago was 64c to 65c. Two years ago it was quoted at 98c to \$1.00 per bushel. Three years ago the Chicago quotation for flax seed was ranging about \$1.45 to \$1.50 per bushel. This season there has been a wide range in prices, with a very strong upward movement. Last week \$1.03 was quoted at Chicago, while a week previous as high as \$1.20 was quoted.

## APPLES.

Ontario farmers are contracting winter apples at \$1.50 per barrel in the orchard, or equal to \$2 on board cars. A year ago prices opened at 50 to 60 cents per barrel and dropped to 30c to 40c in the orchards. The apple crop of Canada represents only about 40 per cent of an average yield this year, but it will pay the farmers better than the big crop of last year.

## CRANBERRIES.

Cranberries are not likely to be the drug that they were last year. Indications are that prime Cape Cod will open in New York about \$5.50 to \$6 per barrel with light colored cranberries ranging downward as to quality and color. Growers believe that in the Cape Cod district the crop will be about the same as that of 1895, or from 150,000 to 175,000 barrels. This is considerably lighter than the crop of last year, when the shipments amounted to about 200,000 barrels, and when at least 25,000 barrels were left unmarketed. The New Jersey crop is also reported to be light. The Wisconsin crop is not as much of a factor now as it used to be, as the

wild cranberry marshes have been destroyed and less attention has been given to cultivated fruit.

## IRRIGATION IN THE TERRITORIES.

Last week The Commercial gave an illustration intended to draw attention to the question of irrigation in the western portion of our Territories. The Dominion department of the interior has been giving much attention during the past two or three years to the matter of irrigation in the West. Extensive surveys have been made with a view to carrying out a comprehensive system of irrigation. It would not do to go about irrigation work in any haphazard way. It would mean a great waste of labor, and waste of water as well, to begin extensive irrigation work before a general survey of the country had been made. The knowledge gained by the survey work will supply the information necessary to ensure the using of the available supply of water to the best advantage, thereby providing for the irrigation of the largest possible area.

The last report of the Interior department gives much space to irrigation in the Territories. The first point referred to is the fact that it is wrong to speak of any part or portion of the Territories as arid, in the sense that the country is barren. The soil is generally good, and the whole region produces a good growth of grass every year. The fact that a large stock raising industry has been developed in the so-called arid belt, will go to show that the country is not sterile or barren. It is only arid in the sense that the average rainfall is not sufficient for successful agriculture. The moisture from the melting snow and the spring rains is sufficient to produce a good growth of grass for grazing purposes, but, one year with another, there is not sufficient rainfall to make farming a profitable business in the southwestern portion of the Territories.

This same insufficiency of rain for agricultural purposes is a benefit to the live stock interest. Grass which in a moister climate is unfit for grazing after it is killed by the frost in the fall, remains nutritive in this western region. The grass becomes cured on the ground in such a manner that its nutritive qualities are retained, and cattle grazing upon this dry grass will keep in prime condition for the butcher until late in the fall or early winter. In fact, in a mild, open winter, cattle will keep in condition fit for the butcher nearly all winter. It is a well known fact that in seasons of more than the average rainfall, grazing