

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 20, 1890.

## RAILWAY OUTLETS.

It is rather early in the season yet to allow of any definite calculations being made upon the grain crop of the Canadian Northwest for 1890, and still there are special symptoms already visible which indicate a heavy coming crop. In the first place the acreage sown this year is far in excess of that of any previous year, there being somewhere between one million and one million and a quarter acres of wheat, oats and barley sown in Manitoba and the Territories. Of course, judging by the experience of last year's crop we might have a very large acreage in crop, and still have a comparatively small surplus of grain for export. But the causes which led to this shortcoming in 1889 do not exist this year. In 1889 the grain sown in April and early in May was put into a soil as dry as powder in most instances, and lay there in that dry state until late in June before it sprouted, owing to continued drought. In fact more than one third of the area sown never did make sufficient growth to promise a crop, and was plowed under, while the balance, except in exceptional cases, with the aid of a few light showers yielded but a short crop at best, and generally not half an average one.

The crop of 1890 has met with the most favorable circumstances in the beginning of the season. Scarcely was wheat seeding finished when the sleet and rains of the second and third week of May thoroughly saturated the ground all over the country, and caused the sprouting of practically every kernel of sound grain sown; and it must be remembered that, the short crop of 1889 was all over a magnificent sample, so that this year no damaged wheat has been sown, and a healthy strong growth from the start has been secured. There is still sufficient moisture in the soil to keep up a vigorous growth until well on in June, and after that only the occasional local showers are necessary to insure an abundant crop. In short all danger of serious injury to crops from drought is gone, and only the injury that might result from an early fall frost is to be feared. Such injury while it might affect the quality of a portion of the wheat crop, is not likely to materially reduce the aggregate produced; and when we take into consideration the fact that it would require but little over a half full yield all over to give the Northwest a surplus of grain for export of over fifteen millions of bushels, we can see the wisdom of looking ahead to see how this surplus is to be carried to eastern markets with that promptitude that will avoid serious business inconvenience.

Last week again warmer weather and warm rains have made a wonderful improvement on everything in the way of crops, and growth is both rapid and strong. It may be stated with truth that on the birthday of Victoria in no year of the history of Manitoba have the crops of different grains had such a start towards an abundant yield as they have this year, so that

a calculation short of a full crop is not a safe one to make.

Few people here will soon forget the serious grain block of 1887-8, when the only outlet was the Canadian Pacific railway, and yet with a competing line now in the country, a full crop of grain in 1890 would bring about a worse state of affairs than was then experienced. The management of the C. P. R. are now in a position to grapple with a heavy grain export in a manner in which they could not then, and the Northern Pacific and its connections could doubtless handle quite a heavy share, although the route via Duluth and the Lakes requires vastly improved elevator facilities at Sarnia before it can be of material value as a channel of grain export for this country. But with the quantity for export more than double what it was from the crop of 1887, it requires only a novice in figures to approximate the paralyzed state in which grain exporting would be in this country next winter, if the season turned out one of severe snow storms.

It may be argued that taking such a view as the above of the near future, is bidding the devil good morning before we meet him. But such is not the case, as a careful study from this view point, and a little prompt action based upon the adage of "prevention being better than cure," may prevent us from ever having to make the acquaintance of the much dreaded "Old gentleman."

It cannot be considered premature to view this question of railway outlets as we are likely to be effected not only for the present but in future years, for notwithstanding all that can be said to the contrary, the grain export business of this vast country must assume huge proportions within a very few years, even if we gauge the future by a view of the past, and remember that in 1881 supplies of flour had to be imported, as the country was not raising enough wheat to feed its own people, while one half of the oats used had also to be imported. It is evident that our outlets at present are insufficient, if a full crop is realized this year, and with the grain acreage doubling itself in three years, as it has during the past three, in what state will it be about 1893 or 1894, if we do not have greatly increased export facilities? The C. P. R. is still our main gateway of export, and will continue to be so with only its present competitors, for both the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern can only afford a share of their facilities for this country, while they have so much to attend to south of the boundary line. A twenty million bushel export in one year would overtax all these outlets, so that we must look eagerly for others. The Duluth and Winnipeg promises soon to have connections with this province, and that would prove a very valuable addition. But with that added, a continuation of good crops would leave us as badly off as ever in two years. Other roads from the east may secure connections here within a few years, but the relief each would bring would be only slight, and they are rather distant for our possible wants.

The outlet that above all others will be of value to us as an export channel is the Hudson's Bay railway, for there we would have a route over which we could send over all grain pro-

ducts in their purity to the European consumer, and that is what we will never be able to guarantee, so long as exports have all to pass through the hands of eastern middlemen. Inspection laws in Canada and the United States may be made as strict as possible, and still it is impossible to prevent the products of the far west from being subjected to the watering process before they leave the Atlantic seaboard. If our people could only see what is dumped on the British market for Manitoba hard wheat, and flour made from pure Manitoba hard wheat, they would give up all hope of our country ever securing a good reputation in Europe for growing cereals. One British buyer recently laid down the correct principle, that to buy flour made from a pure Manitoba wheat, you had to buy direct from a Northwestern mill, where the cost of importing inferior soft wheat is too great to allow of its being used to adulterate. To maintain the reputation our products are entitled to, it is thus absolutely necessary that we have the Hudson's Bay outlet.

The question that is agitating the average Manitoba mind at present is, when will we have this northern outlet. We have had such a multitude of promises and assurances regarding its construction that we are to be pardoned for being skeptical about any promises we now hear. But there is reason to hope if we only look in the right direction. That direction is towards the coming Dominion elections. It will then be necessary to secure the Manitoba seats for the Government, and the Hudson's Bay railway construction is very likely to be the lever used, if indeed it might not be made a financial buttress for election expenses. The crying wants of the Northwest would never force the construction of that road, no matter how loudly they appealed, but political party exigencies are powerful enough to force anything, and judging from the fact that aid for the Hudson's Bay railway is now a matter for the consideration of the Governor-General-in-Council, which means for the manipulation of Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues, we need not be surprised if the exigencies of the case would necessitate the early construction of that road. If we as a people have to depend upon such party jugglery to gain what we are entitled to, let us see that we do not bite at worthless promises as we did last Dominion election at the promises of railway monopoly ceasing. We have had sufficient experience to make us wise in that respect, and it is to be hoped that we will allow no senseless Grit and Tory balderdash to influence our votes. The Manitoban who after the last five years' experience can be charmed with either the Grit or Tory fiddle requires only his ears lengthened to make him an ass complete. The patriotic Manitoban will support the administration which will give most to his own province, even if the gift is the outcome of political exigencies. Of course party suckers will cry out for principle, but he is a sucker with a capacious gullet who looks for principle amid the official tomfoolery, duplicity and rottenness which exists at Ottawa, and which would be in no way mitigated by any change from Tory to Grit. Manitobans aim to produce number one only in wheat, and let them aim to look after number one only in politics.