

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 24, 1896.

THE OLD YEAR.

The year now within a few days of its close has not been an unsatisfactory one for Western Canada. There have been some ups and downs, it is true, and everything has not been just as we would like it, but now that its days are about numbered, we can look back with much reason for thankfulness and small reason for grumbling. Compared with many other parts of the world we in Western Canada have special reason for feeling satisfied with the past and hopeful for the future.

In a region so largely dependent upon agriculture as in Manitoba, everything hinges on the weather. The past season was not a model one for the farmer. The spring was one of the latest on record and farm work was greatly hampered by wet weather. In the early part of the season the outlook was considered rather discouraging for the crops. But after all a very fair harvest was secured over a large portion of the country. What the wheat crop lacked in quantity has been made up in the value received for the crop. Another great fact is, that the crop was handled at a minimum of expense. In 1895 we had a tremendous crop in Manitoba, but the expense handling it, and the low price obtained for the grain reduced the profits very much to the growers.

This year, while the crop was not heavy, the expense of harvesting it has been light, and the price received has been very satisfactory. In fact, with the exception possibly of the eastern districts of Manitoba, where the greatest harm was done by the excessive moisture in the spring, the net profit of the farmers will in many cases exceed the profit received from the big crop harvested in 1895. This is proved by the comparative ease with which collections have been made this season. Loan companies, implement houses and other concerns which do a large credit business with the farmers, report to The Commercial that payments have been well met, and business men generally appear to be agreeably satisfied with the result.

All this is very gratifying. Of course in a country like the agricultural districts of Western Canada, we cannot expect one or even two very favorable seasons to place all the settlers in easy circumstances. The great majority of our settlers came here with limited means. In order to start upon their farms they had to go into debt to loan companies, implement firms and others. All we can expect is that they will be able to gradually pay off these claims and improve their surroundings. The progress made in this direction during the past two years has been very satisfactory.

The improved position of our farmers is to a considerable extent due to increased production of dairy products and live stock, as well as to the large crop of 1895 and the high price for wheat received this season. The dairy industry has made excellent pro-

gress the past two seasons, and the farmers are reaping a rich reward from this in luster. The farmers have also gone more extensively into live stock, which has proved a source of much profit to them. Our best hope for the future lies in the further development of the live stock and dairy interests along with grain growing.

The year has not been without its drawbacks and disasters. One of the most serious drawbacks of the year was a severe storm which swept across the country just at the beginning of harvest, destroying the crops in its path. Many individuals suffered severely from this disaster, and some lost practically all their grain crop.

One of the important features of this year has been the great attention drawn to our mineral districts. There have been great discoveries in British Columbia, and a great interest has been taken in the development of the mineral interests there. The rich mineral territory close to the eastern boundary of Manitoba has also received much attention of late. Capital has been flowing into these regions, and the outlook is very hopeful for a wonderful development of our great mineral resources during the coming year. Our agricultural prairie lands are not the only source of wealth in Western Canada. This great prairie region is bounded both on the east and west by rugged but rich mineral regions. Many people believe we have here in the West the greatest mineral districts in the world. Now that capital has begun to flow in for the development of our mineral wealth, great things are looked for in the near future. The development of our mineral wealth is certain to be a leading feature during the coming year, and great prosperity to the country is expected to result therefrom.

In conclusion The Commercial wishes its readers the compliments of the season, and a full realization of their hopes for the coming year.

THE ARGENTINE CROP.

Owing to the great interest taken in the Argentine wheat crop, Mr. N. Bawlf, grain merchant, Winnipeg, cabled the other day to Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine Republic, for information regarding the crop. The cable was sent to John McNabb, formerly of Winnipeg, but now a resident of Buenos Ayres. The reply came as follows: N. Bawlf, Winnipeg:

Quality of new crop is inferior to that of last year. Prospects below an average crop. Estimated quantity for export, 20,000,000 bushels.

JOHN McNABB.

The annual average export of wheat from Argentine for the past five years has been about 33,000,000 bushels of wheat, and flour equal to 1,600,000 bushels of wheat. If Mr. McNabb's estimate is near the mark, it would indicate that the crop now being harvested in Argentine is a poor one.

Exports from Argentine for the past two years were much larger than the average for the past five years. The crop harvested in December, 1893, was the largest ever secured in that country, and exports ran away up during the season following as a consequence.

The following shows the wheat crop of Argentine for a number of years.

1883	10,000,000
1891	12,000,000
1885	14,000,000
1886	14,000,000
1887	14,000,000
1888	11,000,000
1889	40,000,000
1890	32,000,000
1891	36,000,000
1892	57,000,000
1893	80,000,000
1894	60,000,000
1895	75,000,000

A surplus crop of 20,000,000 bushels for export during 1897, would indicate a total crop of under 50,000,000 bushels, which looks very small. The average production of wheat in Argentine for the past five years has been 61,600,000 bushels and the exports of wheat and flour equal to 31,600,000 bushels, leaving 27,000,000 bushels annually required for home consumption.

EDITORIAL NOTES

THE last official crop report and review of agriculture in Manitoba calls attention to the fact that Manitoba is not self-supporting in the production of poultry. This is a matter which The Commercial has frequently called attention to. The production of poultry should be very profitable to our farmers, and it certainly seems that the supply should at least be equal to the home demand. The shortage is mainly in turkeys, while the supply of geese is also short of home requirements. Chickens are produced in sufficient quantity to meet the home demand, and sometimes we have a surplus to ship west, where there is always a good demand for poultry at profitable prices.

THOUGH Hon. Joseph Martin is "out of politics" for the present, he no doubt retains considerable influence in political circles, and particularly with his old friends at Ottawa. A recent event shows this. It has been customary in the past in Winnipeg to make a charge of 25 cents for moving goods from the railways to the customs examining warehouse. This was a matter of considerable importance to the business people of Winnipeg, and was an item of no small expense to those who frequently receive packages of imported goods. Mr. Martin looked into this matter and found that it was not the rule at other places in Canada. He promptly took up the question with the authorities at Ottawa, and succeeded in having this charge dispensed with, for which he will receive the thanks of the business men of the city.

IN REGARD to the question of Indian education, the difficulty is not in educating the young Indians, but in making them useful citizens after they have been educated. Some of those who have studied the matter say that the young Indians soon lapse into their old ways after they return to their people. This is what might be expected. If the young people could be settled in colonies by themselves, or placed out among the whites, no doubt good results would be obtained from them. The idea in sending