

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.

Eleventh Year of Publication
ISSUED EVERY MONDAY

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the country 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 great majority of business men in the vast district designated above, and including northwest Ontario, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the territories of Assinibota, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, MARCH 13, 1893.

The Value of Character in Business.

There is no absolute protection against the swindlers who prey upon the community. They would steal if there was no law against it, but to keep out of prison they will gather in their gains without violating any legal requirement or subjecting themselves to any legal penalty. The best safeguard is to give more attention to character. A good name always has a mercantile value, but in the rush and jostling of men eager for gain it is not as highly estimated as it ought to be nor taken into sufficient account in the granting of credits. A merchant in this city received a consignment of wheat from a person in the country with whom he had no previous acquaintance. He made a liberal advance upon it, and when he had sold it he paid the consignor the balance. It turned out that the latter had no valid title to the wheat, and when the case was submitted to us we decided that the consignee, in spite of the fact that he had received the consignment and settled for it in good faith, must pay its value over again to the real owner. The case was carried to the Court of Appeals and our judgment was sustained. When the merchant demanded of us what security a commission dealer had in his business if he could be compelled to pay twice for a lot of produce sent to him for sale, we answered that he must see to it that the consignor was a man of good character who had not appropriated another person's goods. As the sender of the grain did not ask for credit, the merchant supposed that it was unnecessary to inquire concerning the man's character. But he gained some knowledge by that very costly experience.

If all debts for which securities were not pledged at the time they were contracted were debts of honor, and there was no legal process for enforcing their payments, there would be far less money lost through broken credits than there is at present, and a premium would be put on integrity. A man without means, but with a good character, would find that the latter was worth more to him than a large bank account would be to deserve it, and the man

who would not pay his debts when he had the means would be ruled off the course, while he who was willing but unable to pay could not be hindered by a single hard-hearted creditor from engaging in business to retrieve his fortune. Instead of a bankruptcy law we would repeal the enforcing act, and let all debtors pay when they could or when they would. He who would but could not and he who could but would not may seem to stand on the same level without the compelling statute, but the difference between them would be as wide as that between honesty in misfortune and a knavish abundance. Weighed in the same scales the latter would surely kick the beam.—New York Journal of Commerce.

Minnesota Prison Binder Twine.

A resolution was recently introduced in the Minnesota House of Representatives, inquiring why, if the actual cost of manufacturing binder twine was not more than 8 cents per pound the twine could not be sold to the farm for 8 cents. In response to this resolution warden Wolfer, of the state prison, on Thursday morning, Feb. 23, submitted the following report on the cost of manufacturing twine:—

BINDER TWINE REPORT.

Showing the price per pound of the raw material used in the manufacture of binding twine and the cost of raking said twine per pound during the six months, from Aug. 1, 1892, to Jan. 31, 1893:—

| EXPENDITURES. | | |
|--|------------|-------------|
| 775,174 lbs. Kentucky hemp at .04892 | | \$37,843.99 |
| 79,558 lbs. Minnesota hemp at .2127 | | 1,692.16 |
| 8,223 lbs Illinois hemp at .035 | | 287.93 |
| | | \$39,824.13 |
| 4,319 gals. oil, average per gallon at .08 | | 507.96 |
| 46,293 lbs. starch at .025 | | 1,157.40 |
| | | 1,665.36 |
| Total cost raw material | | \$41,489.49 |
| Attendance | \$1,612.18 | |
| Insurance on \$55,000 valuation, 1 per cent, \$550 premium | 317.00 | |
| Postage, telegraphing, etc. | 163.46 | |
| Repairs, etc. | 262.72 | |
| Tools and machinery | 320.53 | |
| Fuel for motive power | 3,027.49 | |
| Convict labor, 11,194 days, at 55 c. | 6,166.70 | \$11,890.08 |
| Total expenses six months | | \$53,379.57 |
| Product 639,950 lbs. twine at .03883 | | \$24,853.79 |

Mr. Wolfe supplemented this report by the statement that to the cost as above stated, must be added the expense of handling, waste, and other expenses which cannot be foreseen or avoided; and it would be impossible, as a business proposition, to sell the twine for less than it would cost to manufacture.

This report is interesting in many ways. The actual cost of the manufacture of the twine under the conditions existing at the state prison has been an enigma, which is now solved. The report shows the capacity of the prison plant, from which may be readily deduced the relative importance of its competition. It also confirms the statement we have frequently made that most of the hemp used is procured from sources outside of this state, and therefore one of the primary objects for which the plant was purchased—the encouragement of hemp culture in the northwest—is not attained.—Farm Implements and Hardware.

Production of Precious Metals in 1892.

Statistics of the products of precious metals for the calendar year 1892 are given in a report just transmitted to Congress by Director of the Mint Leach. It appears from the figures given in the report that the value of the gold products from the mines of the United States was about \$33,000,000, approximating the average production of recent years. The product of silver from the mines of the United States amounted to about 58,000,000 ounces of the commercial value, at the average price of silver during the year, of \$50,750,000, and of the coined value in silver dollars of \$74,989,900, a falling off of 330,000 ounces from the product of the preceding year. The amount

of silver purchased by the government during the year under the mandatory provisions of the act of July 14, 1890, was \$54,129,725 fine ounces, costing \$47,394,291, an average of \$75 per fine ounce. From this silver 6,333,240 silver dollars were coined during the year. Gold imports aggregated \$18,163,056, and the exports \$70,736,592, a net loss of gold of \$53,570,536. Silver imports aggregated \$31,150,968, and the exports \$37,541,301, an excess of silver exports of \$6,090,333. It appears that during the period extending from February 19, 1892, when the last movement of gold from the United States began, to February 15, 1893, the exports of gold from the port of New York amounted to \$90,728,839.

On January 1, 1893, there was an estimated metallic stock in the United States of \$1,243,153,385, of which \$649,788,020 was gold and \$593,365,356 was silver. It appears that the stock of gold in the United States fell off during the last calendar year \$39,000,000, while the stock of silver increased \$16,000,000. The amount of money in circulation (exclusive of the amount in the treasury) was \$1,011,321,753 on January 1, 1893, an increase of \$18,929,134 during the year. There was an increase of over \$12,000,000 in the gold product of the world during the last calendar year, of which \$2,500,000 was from Australia, and over \$9,000,000 from South Africa. The total silver product of the world increased during the last calendar year about 7,000,000 ounces, occasioned by an increase of 4,600,000 ounces in the product of Mexican mines and 2,400,000 ounces in the product of the mines of Australia.

The New Franco-Canadian Treaty.

The draft of the treaty just negotiated between France and Canada was submitted to Parliament last week. It provides that Canada shall abolish thirty per cent. of the duty upon all French wines containing less than twenty-seven per cent of alcohol, and reduce the duties upon soaps, dried fruits, nuts, prunes one-third. France agrees to admit to the minimum tariff the following Canadian articles when imported direct: Canned meats, condensed milk, freshwater fish, preserved fish, lobsters in natural form, apples, pears, preserved fruits, building timber, wood, pavement, stoves, wood pulp, tanning extracts, common paper (machine made,) skins, boots and shoes, furniture, soft woods and wooden ships. Each country binds itself to give the other the usual favored nation treatment with respect to future arrangements. Algiers and the French colonies are included in the terms of the treaty, which is subject to the sanction of the French Chamber and the Dominion Parliament. France can terminate the treaty immediately if Canada increases the duty on wines without giving a year's notice.

The Washington Conference.

Last week, at Ottawa, the finance minister brought down the official report of the proceedings at the Washington reciprocity conference a year ago. The document is a refutation of the charges that Foster had deceived the House and country as to what actually had transpired, inasmuch as the exact correctness of the minutes of each day's proceedings is endorsed by Lord Pauncefoot, British minister to the United States, who was present at all the proceedings. It shows that Blaine refused to entertain any proposition for trade reciprocity that did not discriminate against Great Britain and hand over the making of Canada's tariff to the United States. To Foster's statement that Canada could not in honor discriminate against the land that protected her, Blaine replied that England was the republic's great rival, and he could make no concession in her behalf. The report further shows that Blaine refused to consider any measure of reciprocity in natural products and manufactured goods that did not involve a uniform customs and excise, and the raising of the Canadian tariff to the United States standard.