

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, APRIL 21, 1885.

A MANITOBA IMMIGRATION BUREAU.

One scheme after another has utterly failed, in uniting the owners of unoccupied lands in this province in an effort, to secure immigrants who would settle on and cultivate these lands, and thus add to the wealth producing power as well as the population of Manitoba. The Red River valley colonization company one of the best directed attempts made proved as much a failure as others less deserving of success, and many men anxious about the settlement of our vacant lands, and willing to make liberal sacrifices to promote the same, are about shut out to the conclusion, that no effort of any private company or other organization will ever prove equal to the undertaking.

That any organization of private land owners should find difficulty in operating a scheme of immigration and settlement, even when their efforts were united, is not to be wondered at. The memory of boom days are not yet obliterated in the east, and in countries from which immigrants are drawn, and invitations or inducements held out by such an organization, would no doubt be looked upon as having a taint of the "Spider to the Fly" coaxing which boomsters were wont to apply to the tender foot. It will take some years yet to wipe out these suspicions in the minds of intending immigrants to the Northwest, although after the three years Manitoba land owners have passed through there is not the slightest foundation left for such suspicions. It is almost certain however, that efforts to secure immigration are much more likely to be successful if they are put forth by a Government, which can have no aim but the settling up and development of the territory under its control. Just in the same manner as grain holders will feel safer with their grain stored in the elevator of a company authorized only to store and not to deal in grain, will intending settlers, feel safer in buying lands from a Government which is not dealing in these lands with the intention of making a profit. It must be evident, that a Government starts out in the business of immigration with great advantage over any organization of private land owners, seeking only the sale of their

own lands, and possessing no interest in the work beyond that.

It is a certainty that of the immigrants who have come to the Northwest during the past two years, Manitoba's share has not been one quarter of what it should have been, and the reason for this is easily discovered. The C.P.R., the Hudson's Bay Company, the Northwest Land Company and numerous other less important corporations have been interested in carrying all immigrants away west of the province, and every one of these has been an organization putting forth strenuous efforts, and spending money freely in securing immigrants for their lands, while for the settling of the unoccupied lands in Manitoba literally no effort has been put forth, and practically not a dollar spent. So long as such inactivity lasts our lands will lie vacant, no matter at what prices they are offered, and no matter how many immigrants may be brought to the Northwest by corporations interested only in lands in the territories beyond.

The movement in favor of the establishment of a Manitoba Bureau of Immigration by the Provincial Government is a wise one, and as the province, by the so called better terms lately accepted, becomes a land owner, and will have lands for settlement and improvement, every taxpayer becomes directly interested in the work of immigration and settlement. It is to be hoped therefore, that, if such a bureau be established, well directed efforts will be put forth to make it a power for the settling up of the province, and that efficiency in this respect combined with economy will be characteristics of its management.

But there is another addition to the powers of this proposed bureau with which many wish to vest it, and that is to place in the hands of the Government for sale all the vacant lands in the province, the owners of which will allow them to be so placed at valuations fixed by competent appraisers. On this head there has been considerable difference of opinion, many being afraid that the workings of the bureau would be in favor of such land owners, while the expense of the same would have to be borne by the taxpayers. It certainly is possible that it could be so mismanaged, but mismanagement would be necessary to make it so, and its prevention could be secured by a commission being paid on the sale of all lands thus entered at the Government Bureau. The

proper arrangement between the Government and the land owner of the proportion of expense of advertising and other management to be borne by each should not be a matter extremely difficult to reach, and once it is reached there is no further cause for complaint left on this head. It should be kept in mind, that every person in Manitoba, land owner or not, will profit directly or indirectly by the settling up of the vacant lands of the province, and this is not a time for any of us to follow that senseless policy of cutting off the nose to spite the face. The speculative greed of many of our land owners has no doubt greatly hindered settlement on our vacant lands, but they have all paid pretty well for their folly, and a remembrance of their misdeeds should not cause others to injure themselves for the sake of inflicting further punishment upon them. •

Heartily we say, let us have a well organized, effectively worked and economically managed Bureau of Immigration for Manitoba. If so organized, worked and managed, it will soon prove one of the least expensive and most profitable pieces of government machinery in the possession of the province.

IN A FOG.

The last issue of THE COMMERCIAL seems to have had a curious effect upon our evening contemporary, the Times. For the past year or so it has been the custom of that journal to reproduce a very considerable portion of the contents of each number of THE COMMERCIAL without giving the slightest hint to its readers as to where its copied items came from. But last week its editor got lost in our editorial columns, and after floundering around in an attack upon one article got mixed most terribly with another and, finally, after mixing the two until he knew not which he was pounding at, finished up with a string of statistics regarding the exemption laws of different States, supplied to him, no doubt, from some clerk of a provincial department.

It would be madness to attempt to follow our contemporary into the fog of trade questions he has stumbled through. He has, no doubt, done his best. But not much can be expected from a journal whose extravagant and sensational statements during our trade troubles of 1883 did more injury than all the calumnies of