

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 1, 1884.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON.

The COMMERCIAL, on this the opening day of another year, thanks its many friends for the liberal patronage they have bestowed upon it during the past year, trusts that the happy relations formed may long continue, and wishes one and all "A HAPPY NEW YEAR," and many returns of the season.

NORTHWESTERN GRAIN STORAGE.

The COMMERCIAL has discussed the above subject so often, that it seems like monotony to again refer to it in its columns. In view, however, of the action taken on the matter by the Farmer's Convention lately held in this city it is necessary that it should be clearly understood at present, especially as the Provincial Government have the question under consideration, and a step taken now in the wrong direction might soon be difficult to retrace, and before long prove a great injury to the grain trade and agricultural interests of the Northwest.

The deputation from the Farmer's Convention who waited upon the members of the Manitoba Government, urged the necessity for constructing elevators throughout the province, and granting the power to municipalities to impose special taxation to overtake the expense of construction, and the reply of the Government distinctly states, that such a course has been under consideration by them for some time.

The COMMERCIAL does not doubt but the farmers who met in convention lately, and the members of the Norquay Government are both earnest and honest in their aims and endeavors to assist in solving the all-important difficulty of grain handling arrangements for the Northwest, but as matters now stand, we are equally certain, that the course now being followed will be playing directly into the hands of those whose interests lie in keeping the grain business of this country in a disorganized state, so that it can be manipulated by wealthy dealers and millers in the east. We suppose the present movement is the outcome of the resolutions of the Manitoba Council of Agriculture last summer, to

the effect, that it was to the interest of the agriculturists of the Northwest to have their system of grain storage at Port Arthur. It has since been the wonder of nearly all, who have had any experience in grain handling, how a Manitoba Agricultural Council could recommend, that the grain grown in this province, should have to reach a small town in Ontario before its quality or value in open market could be ascertained. The resolution we have no hesitation in characterizing as the essence of perverse stupidity on the part of the Council, and perhaps the outcome of a little wire pulling on the part of an interested few of its members. Anyhow, if its aims be followed out it must cause unlimited evil to the Northwestern agricultural interests, and aid in perpetuating a system which holds this country merely as a vast wheat field, the producers in which have neither the right nor ability to market their own products.

It must seem to any practical mind, that with a few millions of bushels of grain stored at say fifty or a hundred different points, where it must be held until spring before its grade or value can be fixed in another province, no organization of the grain interests of any new country can be effected. Yet such a system the farmers of Manitoba have clamored for, and asked to be taxed for, and such a system the present Manitoba Government hold out a hope of acceding to. Assuredly no greater blunder could be made, and such a blunder is like a snow ball rolling down a hill, gathering power as it goes, until it carries crushing disaster and destruction in its track.

It is an axiom of commerce that a country cannot become a great and successful grain exporting country unless one or more grain centers be established there, and the principle carries double weight in connection with the Northwest. With a hundred country elevators filled with grain our products must reach the hands of the eastern purchaser to have their grades and prices fixed; with a central system we can grade our own grain, and proclaim its quality to the World, and a very few years will make Manitoba No. 1, 2 or 3 as well known, and as much relied upon as the grades of any other country in the Universe. With a central system of storage a basis of value for bank advances is secured, and with it a great increase to the money circulation of

the country. Around this central system a circle of merchants and brokers would soon rise who by future sales, and other arrangements could obviate the drawback of having to ship to the seaboard during the winter, over an all rail route at ruinous freights, and thus, while furnishing a ready cash market for the farmer, still retain the basis of value in the country. In one year the competition of buyers would furnish daily and reliable market quotations, which would go outward to the farmer in his morning or evening paper, and furnish him with a correct guide as to the value of his grain, and guard him against being the dupe of any buyer in his local market. In fact the only arrangement that will ever thoroughly fix the margins, on which buyers can purchase from farmers to the satisfaction of both, is the establishment of a grain center in Manitoba, such as above described, and upon the quotations from which both can trade intelligently; and every barrier placed in the way of securing such a grain center retards the best interests of both grain raiser and grain dealer; and the scattering of grain storage all over the Northwest is one of the most unpardonable kind. It has been aimed at in the stupid restrictions as to the minimum capacity of country elevators on the line of the C. P. R., and now the farmers of the province, with the Council of Agriculture and the Provincial Government are lending their aid to carry out the stupid and suicidal policy.

There can scarcely be a doubt, as to where this central grain storage system of Manitoba should be located. Everything points to Winnipeg as the most convenient place. The managers of the C. P. R. offer the requisite rebates on grain going to the lake ports in the spring; the Dominion Government have made provisions for a qualified grain inspector at this city; a private party has even offered the land on which to construct elevators, free of charge; and all that is now wanted is less than \$200,000 of capital to provide an elevator of 1,000,000 bushels capacity for the crop of 1884. The people of Winnipeg cannot but see the great advantages at present to be gained by the construction of grain storage elevators here, and in the event of the opening of the Hudson's Bay Route the city would have gained the first and most important step towards becoming, in the not very distant future, the greatest