

The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, specially 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.

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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 Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, MAY 29, 1893.

Origin of Fife Wheat.

Growing out of the discussion regarding the origin of Fife wheat, THE COMMERCIAL was referred to a Mr. Fife, of Peterboro, Ontario, as one able to give some information upon the subject. Mr. Fife writes as follows:—

In reply to your enquiry about the introduction of Fife wheat my remembrance of it is as follows:—

David Fife, of the township of Otonabee, in the county of Peterboro, Ont., was a Scotchman, born in the town of Kincardine, on the Frith of Forth, and came to the township of Otonabee with his parents and brothers in 1820.

About 1845 or 1846 he was in correspondence with a friend in Glasgow, Scotland, who was interested in unloading ships that brought in wheat from different parts of the world to that port. This friend sent some wheat to David Fife, of Otonabee, that was taken from a ship that came from the city of Danzig, in Russia, on the Black sea.

This grain was sown by Mr. Fife, and the produce from this was also sown and rapidly came into favor. It was not subject to rust, and was more productive than other varieties of wheat then grown. Mr. Fife tried to give it the name Danzig wheat, and sometimes Russian wheat, but these names did not become general. The neighbors, and others at a distance, gave it the name Fife wheat. I remember an article written about that time in an agricultural paper by the late George Eason, who was a neighbor of Mr. Fife's, in which he claimed the name Fife wheat should be the name by which that variety should be designated, as a rightful honor to the man who introduced the seed and made its superiority known. This variety of wheat rapidly came into favor throughout Ontario, and soon spread into the western states.

If any one should ask for proof that the wheat now growing in Manitoba is obtained from that grain introduced and propagated by Mr. Fife, it might not be forthcoming, as I am not aware that any one keeps a record like a

herd book or any other register, but I have no doubt but it is.

I may say that this family of Fifes stick to the clan and shiro name, and spell their name Fife and not Pyfe, as some people in Manitoba do.

I remain,

Yours respectfully,
J. A. FIFE, M.D.,
Peterboro, Ont.

Deleterious Adulterants.

The *Medical World*, in an article on adulteration, says. Simple adulteration is not likely to be quite as harmful as is the employment of powerful antiseptic agents for the purpose of preventing certain foods from decomposition. The problem has not yet been solved of finding a harmless preservative agent, excepting common salt, wood smoke and the action of heat. Prominent among the powerful preservative chemicals, and the one most commonly used, is salicylic acid. It is extensively used to keep certain malt liquors, cider and artificial drinks. It is also used to preserve a large variety of canned foods, especially vegetables. These articles can all be preserved without its use, but the processes are somewhat expensive and difficult; hence the resort to the cheaper and easier method. It is occasionally used in certain dietary preparations in quantities sufficient to preserve them. So severe is salicylic acid's action upon the coat of the stomach, producing great irritation and small gastric catarrh, that it is now seldom prescribed at all.

The *Druggist's Circular* also writes on the same subject. In reference to adulterated sugar it says renewed attention is called to the almost universal practice on the part of manufacturers of tinting refined sugar with ultramarine, or other blue pigments or dyes. This fraudulent practice, well known to students of adulteration, enables the refiner to supply at moderate cost, a demand, real or fancied, for extremely white sugar. The masses of the public are too apt to judge of the value of even food stuffs by the appearance only, and make no effort to ascertain how the result they desire is attained.

The pigment generally used for this purpose, as already mentioned, is the artificial mineral substance known as ultramarine, a sulphur compound, the precise nature of which is not fully understood. That it has some medical action may readily be inferred from the presence in it of sulphur, an element more active perhaps than it is popularly supposed to be. So far as we can learn, this inference has not been disproved, and even if a scientific commission should decide that it was harmless, individuals might still object to being dosed with blue paint when they demand only sugar. Aniline dyes are also said to be used for the same purpose, and some of these at least are dangerous.

Winnipeg Growing.

J. W. Harris, assessment commissioner for Winnipeg, reports his completion of the assessment rolls for 1893. He says:—The real property assessment for this year amounts to \$18,603,910, as against \$17,845,450 for last year, showing an increase of three quarters of a million dollars (\$758,460) upon real estate. This is due principally to the erection of new buildings and general improvements made throughout the different wards, and is a fair and reliable index of the substantial growth of the city. The buildings alone raise the assessment over half a million dollars, while the slight increase in the assessment of land of about a quarter of a million dollars can be attributed mainly to the extension of the street railway lines, and other improvements of a public nature. Last year our personal property assessment was \$2,482,650. The assessment has by act of parliament been done away with, and an assessment known as a "business tax,"

based principally upon the annual rental value of the premises used for business purposes, substituted therefor. The amounts upon which this business tax is to be paid have, as prescribed by legislative enactment, all been capitalized in such a manner that the rate of taxation struck by the council can be applied to these items in the same manner as to the real estate assessments. A comparison can therefore be made between this and the former personal property assessment for which it was substituted. It amounts to \$3,019,440, showing an increase of about half a million dollars, or equivalent to an increase in the revenue of the city from this source about \$10,000. There is always a possibility of loss in the collection of taxes from personal property assessments; and as the new system of a business tax is applied to a great many more persons than was the former personal property assessment, it is reasonable to assume that losses in collection of these taxes, owing to parties leaving the city and from other causes will be correspondingly increased. It is therefore perhaps well to consider the excess from this line of assessment more as a margin of safety than as actual increase in the revenue of the city. After making all reasonable allowance for loss that may occur in getting this new system into working order, I think it is quite safe to assume that the revenue of the city will eventually be largely increased as a result of this change. As to the practical working out of the system, it is yet too early a date in its history for the expression of a positive opinion upon its merits. The exemptions amount to \$1,310,000. The population of the city totals 32,037, an increase of nearly three thousand (2,855) over the figures of last year. I would respectfully request that for the accommodation of the ratepayers the rolls as usual be left in my care until after the close of the court of revision."

The Whiskey Trust Bust.

Five of the largest distillers have withdrawn from the Cattle Feeding Distilling Company in the United States. One of the distillers says: "We served notice on Saturday on the company that the lease has been cancelled, and we immediately took possession of the distilleries and will hereafter operate them in our own name and independent of the whiskey trust. We will paddle our own canoe and supply the trade. E. S. Eastin, for the Manhattan; John H. Francis for the Peoria, and H. and J. Schwabacher, for the Northern Distilling Company, have all taken similar action and will hereafter operate their distilleries independent of the trust. There are fully \$100,000 due these companies for rent and there was no other course left us. These five houses are the largest and best in the country. They have a total capacity of 16,000 bushels, and are capable of manufacturing 80,000 gallons of spirits every day. We believe that the result of the litigation pending and instituted by the attorney-general will result in the forfeiture of the charter of the Distilling and Cattle Feeding company. In short we think the trust is bust."

Freight Rates and Traffic Matters.

The *Montreal Trade Bulletin* of May 19 says: "Grain freights have been very quiet this week, ship agents being disappointed over the tardy demand for space, Liverpool rates being down 31 to 1s 6d and 1s 9d. Glasgow is quoted 1s 3d to 1s 6d, London 2s to 2s 3d, and the Continent 2s 3d. Sick flour 7s 6d to Liverpool and Glasgow and at 9s 6d to 10s London. Provisions, 12s 5d to 15s, butter and cheese 20s Liverpool, London and Glasgow, and 25s Bristol. Hay 25s Liverpool, and 35s Bristol. Cattle space has been taken at 45s to Liverpool and Glasgow and 40s to Bristol. Deals 35s to 37s 6d. Eggs 15s Liverpool. Wheat through to Montreal from Chicago is quoted at 53c, and corn 52c. From Fort William the rate is nominal at 7 1/2c."