

# 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.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying 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 majority of business men in the district designated above, 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, NOVEMBER 29, 1897.

## LAKE MANITOBA

At the last session of the Dominion parliament, a vote was made of the sum of \$25,000 for the purpose of increasing the outflow from Lake Manitoba, to prevent the overflow of the lake. It is well known that the waters of this lake have had a habit of rising to such an extent as to occasionally overflow large areas of land in the vicinity. This is said to be due to the somewhat circumscribed outlet of the lake. Nothing has been done, however, towards undertaking the work this season. Recently it was announced that Mr. Coste, chief engineer of the department of public works, would make a further investigation of the matter, with a view to reporting upon the advisability of going on with the work. It is to be hoped a very thorough investigation will be made, before any work is undertaken toward lowering or controlling the level of this lake. Considerable difference of opinion seems to exist as to the advisability of attempting to reduce the level of the lake at all. Some authorities like Prof. Tyrrell, of the Dominion geological survey, for instance, believe that the water is of more value than the land which would be reclaimed by the lowering of the lake. Then there is also the question of the value of the lake for the purposes of navigation. Lake Manitoba is a shallow lake and

any considerable reduction of the level would render it more difficult to navigate.

The work necessary to materially reduce the waters of Lake Manitoba would be quite an expensive operation. Thos. Guerin, who made an investigation for the Dominion government, estimated that it would cost \$281,000. This involved the cutting of a canal from Lake Manitoba to a point on the Fairford river, below the rapids, on that stream, and a second canal from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg. The provincial government also proposed cutting a canal to enlarge the outflow of Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin, but the provincial proposals did not cover the extension of the outlet from Lake St. Martin to Lake Winnipeg. The former work would cost about \$25,000, which is the sum voted by the Dominion government. It is claimed however, by expert opinion, that the enlargement of the outlet of Lake Manitoba to Lake St. Martin, without providing the additional and more expensive outlet from the latter lake to Lake Winnipeg, would simply result in flooding a large area of land about Lake St. Martin. If this is the case, what would be gained in one place would be lost in another.

About a year ago, The Commercial published a series of articles upon this question in which we advocated the opening of a canal from Lake Manitoba to the Assiniboine river, not only for the purpose of controlling the level of Lake Manitoba, but also as a link in a valuable and extensive system of inland navigation. The Commercial has had the opinion of three competent engineers upon the question; who are all convinced of the feasibility of the latter plan. A survey of the route from Lake Manitoba to the Assiniboine river was made by Colonel Ruttan, Winnipeg city engineer, some years ago, in connection with proposals to utilize the water power of the Assiniboine river at Winnipeg, and it was found quite feasible. Geo. H. Webster, C. E., claims that all the advantages which could be gained by the proposed canals at Fairford, could be secured by a canal from the southern end of the lake to the Assiniboine river, besides which the latter canal could be made of inestimable value for transportation and waterpower purposes. Before the proposed large expenditure is decided on in cutting the canals at the northern end of the lake at Fairford, the advantages of the southern route should be fully considered.

## CANADIAN GOLD FIELDS

It is reported from Ontario that Dr. Bell, of the government geological survey department, has discovered another promising gold territory. He

says that the section between the head waters of the Ottawa River and James Bay is more promising for gold mining than Rainy River district. Canada is fast coming to the front as one of the greatest mineral countries in the world. We have many thousands of square miles of country yet almost unexplored, so that we may go on discovering rich mineral districts for many years, at the same rate as for the past few years. If judiciously handled, the wealth of our rich mineral regions should provide the means for building railways and canals and otherwise developing the country. Why should the people of Canada be paying thirty or forty per cent. duty on many of the necessaries of life, to provide revenue for the nation, while our wealth is being carried away in millions to foreign lands?

## THE WATER-WORKS

In referring to the situation in Winnipeg regarding the water-works proposals, The Commercial has already enunciated the principle, that the avoidable destruction of property is not good business policy. As a declaration of principle, free from any local influences or side issue, the statement is one which would be accepted as a proposition needing no proof or argument. The Commercial is in favor of a system of water-works for Winnipeg, owned and controlled by the city. The establishment of a new system, independent of the present water-works company's system, will certainly result in rendering valueless a large amount of property. It is not possible to operate two systems in Winnipeg to advantage or profit. If all or a portion of the present system can be used to advantage, and can be acquired on reasonable terms, we believe it should certainly be acquired. It will pay the city in the long run, to deal fairly, if not liberally, with the company. The idea of referring the question to arbitration, as suggested by Mr. Georgeson, should be a fair and reasonable way of settling the bickerings between the city and the company.

The Commercial does not wish to be understood as making any defence for the Winnipeg Water-Works company. It is simply a good business principle we contend for, that there should be no destruction of property that can be reasonably avoided. Any such destruction would certainly result injuriously to the interests of the city. The citizens may have grievances against the company, but that does not alter the principle at stake in this matter. While asking for all reasonable consideration for property interests, The Commercial believes it was a serious mistake on the part of the company to threaten an advance in rates, should the citizens of Winnipeg