

WINNIPEG BOARD OF TRADE.

Report of Proceedings at Annual Meeting
Held Tuesday, Feb. 5, 1901.

The annual meeting of the board of trade was held Tuesday afternoon, D. K. Elliott, president in the chair.

After the reading and adoption of the minutes of the last annual meeting the president read his annual address as follows:

The members of the Winnipeg board of trade:

The report of the council is now before you, and in accordance with the prescribed custom I wish, in retiring from the office of president, to say a few words on matters of general interest to members of the board.

First it is eminently fitting that I should refer to the lamented death of our late beloved sovereign, Queen Victoria. As a ruler and a woman she was held so highly in the esteem of her subjects that the most sincere sorrow is experienced throughout the empire at her death, and in no portion of it more than in this loyal city of Winnipeg. Britons everywhere receive with confidence Edward VII as their King and Emperor, believing that the destiny of the empire, and the rights and liberties of the people will be wisely guided and safely guarded by him. God save the King.

State of Trade.

The business of the year past has in many respects fallen short of our expectations. The increased area placed under crop last spring inspired us with the reasonable hope of a corresponding increase of business, but the early drought, which affected every part of the country, retarded the growth of the grain, and this followed by the heavy autumn rains seriously reduced the yield of all cereals. The shortage of crop, and consequent decrease in business has told heavily against the business interests of this city, which are so largely dependent upon the wheat crop of the west. When it is remembered that our total export of wheat for the crop of 1900 will not exceed seventeen million bushels, and that principally in the lower grades against thirty million bushels, largely of No. 1 hard, of the 1899 crop, it will be readily seen that the purchasing power of the farmer and his means of paying off existing liabilities have been very much curtailed.

It is gratifying, however, in spite of this to note that there is no trace of panic, nor any doubt in the minds of our people as to the future. All feel that the country is no longer on trial, but that stability and confidence are firmly established, and the past year may have its compensations in lessons of carefulness and frugality, taught to everyone, merchants and farmers alike. A reference to the last crop bulletin issued by the provincial government, shows that farmers too, are confident of the future, as is evidenced by the fact that there are already prepared for the crop of 1901, apart from the work of the coming spring, over one and a half millions of acres of land. I give the following extract from Dunn's Review of Jan. 5th, 1901, referring to failures for the past year:—"Considering the severe loss to wheat growers in Manitoba, that province makes a splendid exhibit."

One of the best indications of the financial strength of a country is the view taken of it as a field for investment by loan companies and capitalists, and I learn on good authority that money is being loaned on farm security as freely as ever, both in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, and indeed that the west is looked upon as among the best and safest parts of the Dominion for such investments.

Winnipeg bank clearings continue to show a satisfactory volume, and although the average decrease in Canada for the past year is nearly 4 per cent, that of Winnipeg is only about 3 per cent. During the past year two of our leading banks, the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Dominion Bank, have erected premises that would do honor to any city, and the Merchants Bank of Canada have now

in the hands of their contractors a magnificent building of eight stories, that will be, for many years to come, if one may judge from the plans, a prominent exhibition of the confidence felt in our country by the leading monetary institutions of Canada. In addition to these a number of fine warehouses and manufacturing blocks have been erected, and we believe the coming year will see a material addition to their number.

I feel, therefore, that we can look out on the future with great cheerfulness, believing that the energy and ability displayed by our business men in making Winnipeg what it is at present will yet place us in the forefront of the cities of Canada.

Civic Affairs.

The city council and the board of trade have worked very closely together during the year just closed; while each has its distinct sphere it frequently occurs that one requests the other to co-operate for joint action, and I have pleasure in saying that there has been the fullest accord between the two bodies, and in consequence questions have been solved and purposes accomplished, where a want of harmony might have delayed them indefinitely. I have always felt that this board should take a live interest in civic matters; there has been spent during the past two years, and will be for some years to come, a large amount of money on public works, and too close attention cannot be paid by our members to the results of such expenditure.

My personal opinion, without pretending to express the views of the members of this board, is that the day labor question will have to be seriously grappled with in the near future, and a decision arrived at as to the relative merits of it and the contract system of prosecuting public works.

Periodical agitation regarding city bookkeeping would indicate that public opinion tends to a careful examination into the whole system by the city council, and if necessary the assimilation of its forms to those adopted by other large bodies. Very large amounts of money are being expended, and it is high time that the best possible system of keeping separate accounts of the city should be adopted.

I would like to say a word of commendation regarding the general work of the parks commission, the result of which is shown in the handsome boulevards and the beautiful little parks of the city. In this connection we are, to my mind, making a mistake in depending upon private enterprise for large parks and places of recreation. There are a number of beautiful spots in close proximity to the city still available, and I am pleased to find that this matter was under consideration at the last meeting of the parks commission.

Postal Matters.

One important feature in the development of a new country is the necessity for a liberal and rapid expansion of the postal service, and it is a source of satisfaction that this department of the federal government has shown a proper conception of the growth of the country, and the requirements of its business interests. Daily mails have followed as quickly as possible daily train service, and the representations of your postal committee have been met by a ready response from the department. A glance at statistics shows that there were in Manitoba and the Territories in the year 1880 one hundred and forty-seven post offices; ten years later the number had increased to five hundred and twenty-three, and in 1900 to the large number of eight hundred and sixty-nine.

It is becoming daily more evident that the present office building in this city is altogether inadequate for the business transacted. Winnipeg has long occupied the third place among the cities of Canada in point of postal revenue, and during 1900 reached the grand total of \$116,020.92. The Hon. Mr. Tarte, after examining the building some four years ago, with a committee of this board, stated to them that the premises must be enlarged, and it would appear that the time for doing this should not be postponed any longer.

It has become in late years the acknowledged practice to group the different government offices in one building, and I feel that an earnest effort should be put forth to induce the government to adopt this rule here, and remove the custom house from its present inconvenient location to more central premises in connection with an enlarged postoffice building.

Relation With Governments.

The most cordial relations exist between this board and the department of inland revenue, and indeed with nearly all departments of the federal government, and during the past year our secretary was requested to go to Ottawa and assist in framing amendments to the Grain Act. The department of trade and commerce also frequently asks for the assistance of the board in getting information on subjects connected with its work.

The board has also taken up with the Manitoba government a number of important matters, and as in the past our delegations have been heartily re-



D. K. Elliott, Retiring President.

ceived, and full consideration of our views has been secured. One subject still in abeyance is the amendment to the Assignment Act, relating to the appointment of a second official assignee. The practice has been recognized in the past of acceding to the wishes of this board in the person appointed to this office, and I fully expect that the government will soon introduce legislation necessary to place our nominee in office.

St. Andrews Rapids.

The work of St. Andrews Rapids is steadily progressing, and it is hoped that before the end of the present year such progress will be made that we will see the long-desired removal of impediments to navigation, and the wonderful resources of Lake Winnipeg brought into easy access through the inauguration of direct steamship communication with the lake.

Immigration.

The work of this department of the Dominion government is being prosecuted vigorously, and its splendid results are shown in the large number of 38,324 added to the population of the west, during the year 1900. Of these 11,000 were Canadians, and 5,136 came from the United States, and are principally well-to-do farmers, who have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the country, and can adapt themselves to the state of affairs existing here. They bring with them a large amount of money and personal effects, and in most cases either enter directly upon land previously selected by them, or purchase improved farms, and engage at once in the cultivation of their properties.

It is reported by the department that the foreigners who have come to our country are rapidly becoming self-sustaining, and exhibit a keen desire to remain upon and cultivate their farms, and it is evident that they will prove a valuable addition to our population.

There have been 8,827 land entries and sales during the year, aggregating nearly two millions of acres, and in addition to this the C. P. R. company have made 2,283 contracts, containing 432,000 acres, and amounting in cash to \$1,377,715.48.

Railroad Matters.

While the year 1900 has not seen a marked activity in railway building, yet some important branches have

extended in different parts of the country, opening up new districts, and giving needed accommodation to others.

Commencing east of us we find the C. P. R. company has built a small spur east of Rat Portage, to one of the well-known mines in that district, and that the Lac du Bonnet branch, of about twenty-two miles, has opened up communication with that largely timbered country, drained by the English and Winnipeg rivers, both of which are tributary to this beautiful lake. Draining tiles, and superior brick for building and pavement purposes are being manufactured, thus adding another to the large and varied number of our industrial concerns. Coming to the prairie country, a line is being extended from McGregor to a point on the Great North West Central, and the Pipestone branch has been carried forward 100 miles into the well-known fertile and finely situated Moose Mountain district. It has been found necessary by the C. P. R. to build a substantial steel bridge, supported on masonry piers, across the Red river, on account of the increasing traffic and larger engines used, and I have good reason to believe this will be followed soon by a large and commodious depot. It seems unfortunate that some reasonable arrangement could not have been arrived at between the city council and the C. P. R. and been ratified by the ratepayers for the building of a subway on Main street. The condition of things now existing is anything but satisfactory to either the railway company or the citizens, and in addition to this, it has, I believe, caused the postponing for some time longer, the erection of a splendid hotel in this city. The volume of traffic, both through and local is increasing so rapidly that the C. P. R. has practically decided to establish early next summer, two daily transcontinental trains, one a fast limited, making but few stops, and the other to accommodate local traffic.

Great progress too, has been made by the Canadian Northern Railway Co., who, during the year 1900, constructed 224 miles of railway, and who expect before the end of the present year to have their line in operation from Port Arthur to Winnipeg, and from Winnipeg to a point within a very short distance of Prince Albert. They are now advertising for tenders for the construction of a magnificent steel bridge, with a draw span of 350 feet, to cross the Rainy river, and tenders are likely to be called for in a few days for a bridge across the Red river at Winnipeg. With the completion of these works, and the additional mileage to be constructed this year, this company expects to have not less than 1,100 miles of railway in operation, thus bringing them into the rank of the third railway in Canada. It is pretty generally understood that a large portion of the fine timber, through which the road runs, will be brought into this city, and lumber mills established here for its manufacture, thus giving employment to a large number of men. Mining interests too, should be greatly benefited, as the Canadian Northern runs largely through mining country, tributary to the Seine river, and the improved transportation facilities should be of great value, both in shipping in machinery and exporting the product of the mines.

Thus it will be seen that very important railway works have been carried on during the year, and if we are to believe current reports, even more will be accomplished before another crop is harvested.

Chamber of Mines.

An institution which has come into considerable prominence during the past year is the Chamber of Mines, which was formed in this city early last spring, and is composed of thoroughly representative men, from all parts of Canada. The disinterested work of this voluntary association is meeting with favorable results; reliable information is being obtained, and disseminated in the best possible form throughout the world, and this doubtless will be an important factor in inducing capitalists to invest in and develop the great mining region between this city and Lake Superior. The value of the work being accomplished has lately been recognized in the form of liberal grants and donations in support of the movement, made to the chamber by the Dominion government, the government of Ontario, the Canadian Pacific Railway company, and other influential corporations.

Dominion Board of Trade

Last year in his able report on the proceedings of the International Con-