

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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Publisher

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 east 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, JULY 3, 1893.

Early Closing from the Employer's Standpoint.

In a recent issue *The Merchant* quoted from the experience of leading Toronto and Hamilton retail merchants in closing their stores at six o'clock every evening in the week. As the time is now at hand when this subject of early closing commands more attention from all classes interested than at any other time of the year perhaps, our merchant readers will probably welcome all information and practical testimony that may be gleaned from reliable sources upon this important question, which must sooner or later be solved by the general adoption of early closing. It is proposed to ask the retail associations in Toronto and other Canadian cities the question: What are you going to do about early closing this summer? Before answering it we would suggest your careful perusal of the following opinion and experience of a liberal-minded employer:—

"We have tried both plans and know whereof we speak when we say there is no reasonable excuse for keeping open late. We say close early, and when you come to think of it, six o'clock is not early. We open our store at 7.30 a.m. one half our force is on hand at the opening hour, and quit in the one hour before closing time; the other half comes an hour later in the morning and remains until closing time.

"This makes the day quite long enough both for employer and employee. We ask our customers for a moment, to put themselves in the position of a salesman. He lives two, three, four, or five miles from the store. In order to be on time in the morning he must necessarily leave home about six o'clock. The distance is too great for him to go home to dinner, and he lunches down town. Supper time comes. He is obliged to eat. He goes out and buys a supper; thus he is out the price of two meals a day without reducing the living expenses of his family, as they have also to eat, and the preparation for the family meal would not cost a penny more if one more were reckoned

in. Closing time comes; nine o'clock, perhaps ten, just according to the struggling trade. He boards the first car for home. It is well on to eleven o'clock before he arrives there. The children are all in bed; his wife is weary through waiting; he himself is 'too tired to talk.' They retire; and the same thing is repeated to-morrow, and the next day, and the next, until Sunday comes, and for the first time in a week he sees his home, his wife and his children in daylight. How happy he is on the seventh day, when he awakes and realizes it is Sunday morning. He turns over and takes another snooze; he is tired out, exhausted, and perforce takes the rest needed to recuperate his lost energy. Half the day is already spent. All the joys of the week have to be crowded into one short afternoon.

"How do you like the picture? How would you like to be a retail salesman? And yet, we assure you, the picture is not overdrawn; it was our personal experience for years. How we did welcome the early closing movement, both on our account and our employees! We have tried it and found it both feasible and profitable, and until our patrons demand that we keep open evening, we shall continue to close at six o'clock sharp (except the week preceding Christmas, and occasional evenings just before the regular holidays).

"We say give employees all the rest you can. They need it. They will do more and better work in ten hours than if you compel them to drudge for fifteen hours. Therefore, we simply ask that our patrons do their trading before six o'clock; if it should be impossible, then come Saturday evenings. We are open until eleven o'clock Saturday."

As a rule customers will habituate themselves to such hours of trading as the store adopts.—*Toronto Merchant.*

The Commercial Phonograph.

What is known as the commercial phonograph is now used in many of the leading offices in the United States. The persons who desire to dictate their letters, essays or statements, simply place the cylinder on the drum of the machine, adjust it ready for talking, and dictate at their leisure, letters or essays. Should the dictator at any time while dictating desire to stop and think about various points, all he needs to do is to touch a little button on the machine and cease making a record. When the thought is ready to be talked to the machine, the recording is continued.

The phonograph gives special advantage to the person who is dictating. It is a silent stenographer and is always ready to take your record—will take it exactly as you repeat it, word for word—and the only care required is, that the person who is talking to this machine should give articulation. The various letters having been dictated to the machine, the dictator drops them back into the box one by one on the cylinder on which they have been placed, and then the typewriter simply takes the cylinders out in the order in which they are numbered, and copies the records with the use of the typewriter.

The special advantage to begin with is that the person who copies the letter always has time to continue his work without having to stop and take the record from the person who is dictating it. There is no question as between the dictator and the person who copies the records, for the record itself decides. Should you desire to have the records copied in long hand, it may be done in the same way. It has been found that by using this machine that the average phonographer will copy about double the work of the average stenographer in the various offices where comparisons have been made.

Another advantage is that the clerk or proprietor may dictate the letters at his own home, and send them to the office in a box to have them copied there. Three or four different business offices may each of them have a phonograph, dictate their records, and have one

phonographer copy all their work and bring their letters back to them at an appointed hour. It is believed that by this arrangement, in many of the smaller places where they cannot employ a phonographer the entire time, that persons will be able to procure machines and give work for about two hours a day, and by clubbing together, have all their letters copied upon the typewriter. It will be especially desirable to have what is known as "phonograph exchanges" established in the smaller towns where there are but few offices that can afford to employ a phonographer the entire time.

The court stenographers find the commercial phonograph of special advantage to them. When their records have been taken for the day, they are able to dictate rapidly to the phonograph enough work to start two or three phonographers at once, and by late bedtime their reports taken in the courts for the entire day are all ready either to put into the hands of the printer for the night, or in typewriter form for the use of the attorneys or judges for the next morning.

British Grain Prices.

L. Norman & Co., of London, write as follows, on June 12.—Trade has ruled extremely quiet during the past week, and the situation remains almost unchanged. The fluctuations of the American market earlier in the week led to a depressed and unsettled feeling on our markets, and the later advance, although imparting more steadiness, has not yet been responded to here. Sellers at once took advantage of the spurt to ask ninepence to one shilling per qr. advance, which our buyers are not at all disposed to entertain.

The off coast cargoes referred to in our previous reports have passed off better than expected. There has been a fair demand for same, especially from the Continent, where several cargoes have been disposed of, and several others resold and ordered to discharge at Continental ports.

There is a general feeling that prices have touched bottom, and although it is possible that we may have to wait another month or so before an active all-round improvement asserts itself, the present range of prices is certainly favorable for buying forward.

In Canadian grain only business of a very meagre character has passed since our last. This is due not a little to the difficulty shippers experience in securing suitable freights. There appears to be very little parcel room offering, and the rates asked for entire cargoes are above shippers' views.

No. 1 hard Manitobas—We report sale of some two or three thousand quarters to London at 29s. Since then a similar parcel has been sold at 29s 6d. To-day, however, there are sellers at 29s 3d.

No. 1 white winter wheat—There are buyers for east coast port at 25s 6d, with sellers at 25s 3d. No transactions reported.

No. 2 white winter wheat—Buyers at 27s 6d, sellers, 28s.

No. 2 spring wheat—Buyers, 25s 6d; sellers, 26s 6d. Owing to the poor quality of this wheat Canadian shippers will have to reduce their prices to tempt buyers. River Plate wheat at 26s 6d to 26s 9d, rye terms, are far better value to millers, and there is accordingly a steady demand for same.

Barley—Fair trade passing for good 50 to 51 lb. Russian feeding barley at 15s 9d to 16s 3d per 400 lbs. At these prices Canadian shippers do not care to compete. Malting barley no enquiry.

Oats remain very steady. Sellers have advanced their limits threepence since our last, but we have no sales to report.

Money is very scarce in Chicago and all over the Northwestern and Southwestern States, 35 per cent being paid in Chicago recently. It is reported that considerable quantities of commercial paper has recently been sent from the west to Montreal banks for discount.