

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JUNE 29, 1891.

RED RIVER NAVIGATION.

From recent information from Ottawa, it appears that nothing is to be done this year toward carrying out the improvements necessary to render the Red river navigable between Winnipeg city and Lake Winnipeg. Sir Hector Langevin, Minister of Public Works, has stated that it will cost \$913,000 to carry out the proposed improvements, and in view of this cost it is not the intention of the Government to prosecute the work.

This will be most discouraging news to Manitoba. For many years this matter has been urged upon the government, and if no specific promises have been made, a good deal of encouragement has been held out to the effect that the work would be undertaken. In fact the matter has been used as a bait in the last two general elections. The government has parleyed over the matter for years, and has been unable to make a specific promise as to when the work would be undertaken when pressed on this point, until further "preliminary surveys and estimates of cost had been secured." This has been the story so long, until at last it became evident that the government was only toying with the question, and this belief has now been confirmed by the official announcement that "it is not the intention of the government to prosecute the work." This information might just as well have been forthcoming long ago, and it would have been more creditable to the department, if such an announcement had been made years ago, instead of creating a measure of encouragement in the belief that there was really some intention of undertaking the work, while delaying the commencement on the ground that further surveys would have to be made.

Manitoba has received very little from the Dominion, and this work might have been undertaken by the government without any question on account of the cost. In view of the vast importance of the work to a large section of country, the highest estimated expenditure is not excessive. Like Winnipeg is a very large body of water, comparable in size with Lakes Erie or Huron. To all the country tributary to the lake, the improvements necessary in the Red river would be most valuable. Without the improvement of the Red river, the value of Lake Winnipeg as a navigable body of water, is largely lost. For the advantageous development of the many valuable resources of the lake region, the improvement of the Red river is necessary. Saskatchewan territory would also receive great benefit from the carrying out of the work, by the connection of Winnipeg with navigation on the Saskatchewan river.

While cash grants have been made by the Dominion very freely for the construction of railways in the east, Manitoba has received practically nothing in the direction of aid to railways, from the Dominion. When it came to a grant in aid of railway construction, the

province has been obliged to cash up. The only thing the Dominion has done, has been to give away our lands to railway corporations, as an inducement to build railways. The giving of these lands in aid of railways, is in no sense a grant from the Dominion, and cannot be taken as an offset to the cash grants given to railways in the east. The lands belonged naturally to the people here, and should have been held for free settlement. Grants of our lands to railways has been an injury to the country, in holding tracts from free settlement. While Manitoba has had to pay her share of cash bonuses to railways in the east, we have received nothing in the way of aid for railways from the Dominion. And now we are refused the carrying out of a very necessary public work, because of its alleged cost. In view of these facts, it is time we might enquire as to the value of representation at Ottawa at all.

As to the cost of the work as stated in the recent utterance of the Minister of Public Works, there is some reason to doubt. At any rate, others who have given the matter study, and who are competent to give an opinion, believe that the navigability of the river could be ensured at a much less cost. The danger of a heavy flow of water, such as experienced in the spring of 1832 and in other years previous to that date, is believed to have been greatly lessened by the extension of settlement and cultivation. There are now ten acres under cultivation in the country surrounding the Red river and its tributaries, where one acre was under cultivation in the flood years of the past. This settlement of the country it is well known, has an important influence upon the flow of the river. On this account it is not believed to be necessary to base estimates as to the cost of the proposed improvements, on flood years, though it is understood the estimate of \$913,000 has been arrived at in this way.

TARIFF CHANGES.

A number of weeks ago THE COMMERCIAL predicted that raw sugars would be placed on the free list, and that the revenue heretofore derived from this source would be made up by a "re-adjustment" of the tax on liquors and tobacco. This has proved to be the case, as announced in Minister Foster's budget speech delivered last week. The minister intimated at the outset that there would be no general revision of the tariff at present, though many changes were pressed upon them, which would be held over, owing to the lateness of the session. Exception would be made, however, in the case of sugar, which would be placed on the free list. The revenue derived from the sugar duties is nearly three and a half million dollars. This will be about half made up by increased tax upon liquors and tobaccos. The duty on malt will be increased one cent per pound, equal to three cents per gallon on beer, which is expected to give an additional revenue of \$300,000. The excise tax on distilled spirits will be increased equal to 20 cents per proof gallon, which will increase the revenue by \$600,000. On tobacco an increase of five cents per pound in the excise tax, and a like increase in the customs duty, will be made, which is expected to raise an additional \$400,000. The balance of loss of

revenue from the placing of sugars on the free list, is not provided for. It is also proposed to reduce the duty on salt to 5 and 7½¢ per 100 pounds. A temporary bounty is proposed on beet root sugar, to make up for the protection previously afforded in the duty. The full particulars of the tariff changes are not to hand at the time of writing, but they will be published elsewhere in THE COMMERCIAL, this or next week.

BEHRING SEA ARBITRATION.

It has been announced from London, that Sir George Baden Powell, member of parliament for Liverpool, and G. M. Dawson, of the Canadian survey department, have been selected as the arbitrators in behalf of Great Britain in the Behring sea controversy. The board of arbitration will probably meet in October. The British members of the board will meet almost immediately at Ottawa, whence they will proceed to British Columbia with the intention of spending two months on board a man-of-war cruising in the Behring sea, visiting the seal islands and all the principal stations frequented by sealers. At the expiration of their cruise it is expected that they will be sufficiently acquainted with the details of the seal hunting business, and with the needs and interests of the sealers to be able to arbitrate upon the question in a proper manner. We are not aware as to the special qualifications of the Canadian member of the commission. In the case of Sir George Baden-Powell, however, there is good reason to believe that a better selection could not be made. He probably possesses a great deal more knowledge upon the question than any other British politician. He has made a study of the question, and is in sympathy with the Canadians view of the case. There are few if any Canadians who are better posted upon this matter than Sir George Baden Powell, and his appointment should give general satisfaction.

THE WINNIPEG EXHIBITION.

The Rapid City Reporter says: "The Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition has every prospect of a successful issue. Now is the time for our farmers, stock raisers and gardeners to begin making preparations. Let them take time by the forelock and have our locality represented." The Reporter is right. It should be a great advantage for the different rural sections of Manitoba, and the territories as well, to be represented to the best possible advantage at this exhibition. It will undoubtedly be visited by a large number of outsiders. Excursions will be run from Eastern Canada and possibly from points in the United States to the south, to give people a chance to visit Manitoba at a low cost, in order to see what kind of an exhibition this country can get up. Districts making a good display, will therefore be giving themselves a valuable advertisement, besides contributing to the success of the show generally, which latter means that they will be assisting to make a good showing for the country as a whole. Prospects are exceedingly hopeful for a good crop, and the country will undoubtedly provide the material for an exhibition which will surprise all visitors. All that is wanted in energy, enterprise, and united