

that an agitation against the order would not do any good, and would probably only stimulate the movement. Let them alone, we said, and matters will come out all right in a short time. Now the Patrons are no more. Several of the leaders in the order, who used the institution as all such institutions are largely used to further their own ends, have found more profitable employment in other ways. A new association has been formed on the ruins of the deceased one but of this the future will decide. The platform of the new order would indicate that it is to be a political organization chiefly. Their platform as laid down at the organization of the association, is in the abstract good. The Commercial could heartily endorse, with a few exceptions, the planks in the platform of the new association, which takes the somewhat peculiar name of the Industrial Independent Association. Independence, honest franchise, economy in the public service, land for the settler, no spoils for politicians, railway commission, direct taxation—all excellent in principle to be sure. If the association can bring about the adoption of one or two of these principles, it will not have lived in vain. We fear for results, however. Some of the very men who helped to frame these resolutions, will stick like leeches to their party when the next election comes around, perhaps in opposition to some of the chief planks in their platform. Some of them may even be party candidates. Not at all unlikely this.

MANITOBA EXPORTS.

Trade reports from Ottawa recently contained figures of exports of products from Manitoba. As previously pointed out in The Commercial, however, these figures are worse than useless, because they are misleading. The report says:

"Manitoba's exports for 1897 are shown by the trade and navigation tables to have been \$1,965,000. The main items of Manitoba's exports of produce were, in 1897, as follows: Agricultural products, \$749,000; animals and their products, \$924,441; fisheries, \$200,000; manufacturers, \$47,600."

The Commercial once more protests against the publication of such false and misleading statements. Manitoba's exports were of course, vastly greater than the figures here given. Exports of wheat alone would reach nearly five times the amount of the total exports credited to the province. The discrepancy lies in the fact that exports from Manitoba are largely entered at Montreal or other eastern ports and are credited to those ports. Only exports made direct from Manitoba, which amount to a small part of the total, are credited

to the province. It seems absurd for the government statisticians to continue this custom of showing exports by provinces when such figures are altogether misleading. Statistics of exports can only be given in the aggregate for the Dominion as a whole, and they should be so stated. As Manitoba is an inland province, her share of the export trade of the country will always be ridiculously under-estimated, with the statistics compiled in this way. The exports from Canada as a whole are no doubt about correct, and the figures should stop at that. When an attempt is made to show exports by province the result is simply nonsense. Why these false statements are published year after year, is one of the things which it would seem difficult to justify on any grounds whatever.

THE MANITOBA NORTH-WESTERN.

The recent sale in London of the first mortgage bonds of the Manitoba & Northwestern railway has aroused much interest throughout the country. These bonds, it may be stated, cover the first 180 miles of the road, and the sale of these bonds means that this portion of the road has passed into new hands. The remaining 60 miles of the road is represented by the Allans, of Montreal, for the stockholders. For some years litigation has been going on between the bondholders, on the one hand, who claimed the road in default of the payment of the mortgages and the shareholders on the other hand, the latter represented, as stated, by the Allans. Meantime the road has been in the hands of a receiver. Last year the road cleared \$28,000, it is said, and a much larger surplus is expected this year.

The interest in the situation now lies in the query as to who are the purchasers of the first 180 miles of the road. So far this information has been entirely withheld. It would also be interesting to know what position the new owners will be in with regard to the owners of the westerly 60 miles of the road.

Many theories have been circulated as to who are the purchasers of the road. The Canadian Pacific Railway, the Grand Trunk, the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern are all mentioned as the possible purchasers, on various ingenious theories, one rumor being to the effect that the road will be extended to the Klondike by one of the United States roads mentioned. Of course it would hardly be possible to keep the Klondike out of anything earthly these days. A good deal of credence is placed on the rumor that the Grand Trunk is at the bottom of the purchase, with the object of extending the road to the Pacific coast,

via the Yellow Head Pass—the original route selected for the Canadian Pacific railway. It is also alleged that the Grand Trunk has arranged with Premier Greenway, of Manitoba, to control the proposed new road from Winnipeg to Lake Superior. All these theories must be taken with a liberal allowance of salt.

One point, however, seems reasonable, and that is, that the purchasers, whoever they are, have an understanding with the Allans about the remaining portion of the road, as without such an understanding the road would seem to be anything but a desirable purchase.

The price offered for the bonds of the first 180 miles is a liberal one, being 86 per cent net, and the sellers retain an interest in 191,000 acres of land, valued at equal to 10 per cent more, or 96 per cent in all. The fact that the bonds were quoted at 43 in the market before the offer of purchase was made, shows that a big price has been paid.

Whoever the purchasers are, it is to be hoped it will result in the early extension of the road as far as Prince Albert at least. It would open up a fine agricultural and stockraising country all the way, and thus prove a powerful factor in the development of Western Canada.

MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTS.

A petition has been received by the municipal commissioner, signed by ratepayers of the municipality of Ashnibioia, a rural district adjoining Winnipeg, asking for a special audit of the accounts of the municipality. The Commercial has no special information as to the affairs of this particular municipality, but speaking from a general point of view we believe the ratepayers are adopting a wise course in asking for a special audit. The auditing of municipal accounts is a matter which should be looked after by the government to a greater extent than is now done. This work, as now done, is little better than a farce in many rural districts. There should, we believe, be some provincial compulsory system for auditing municipal accounts, under the direction of competent persons.

Rumian's and Butler's departmental store, at London, Ontario, the largest in Western Ontario, has passed into the hands of a receiver.

Some of the eastern papers are reproducing the cuts used in The Commercial, along with the articles published in connection therewith. As a number of these subjects for illustration have been selected with a view to assisting the settlement and development of the west, their reproduction in the large eastern dailies should be of much service to the west.