

# 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 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 vast 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, SEPTEMBER 25, 1893.

## The Experimental Farms,

Prof. Saunders, chief of the experimental farm department, Ottawa, was in Winnipeg recently returning from making his annual tour of inspection through Manitoba and the Territories and British Columbia. Asked by a reporter for a general account of his observations he spoke as follows:

During my journey west I visited the experimental farms, beginning at Brandon. The crops on

### THE BRANDON FARM.

are good, although not so heavy as they would have been but for the very hot weather which prevailed from the 5th to the 12th of August and ripened much of the grain prematurely. As far as the threshing has been completed the crop of wheat at Brandon has run from 20 to 28 bushels per acre; barley from 42 to 62 bushels; oats, from 66 to 80 bushels. These figures cover the results of a number of varieties in each case, which have been threshed.

The crop in the Brandon district will average considerably less than that on the experimental farm, for the reason that the management is not so good generally among farmers as on the experimental farms. We have a large proportion of fallow lands than most of the farmers of Manitoba; and both at Brandon and Indian Head the importance of summer fallowing has been impressed upon us very strongly this year, the crop averaging much heavier on land so prepared.

### ON THE INDIAN HEAD FARM.

the grain will average heavier in weight and the crop is somewhat larger. The crop of wheat at Indian Head, as far as the threshing is completed, has ranged 30 to 31 bushels per acre; of barley, 37 to 38 bushels; of oats, 75 to 77 bushels.

Many of the best farmers in the district north of Indian Head have better crops of wheat than those on the experimental farm, for the reason that their land is heavier and equally well prepared. Several of those who have threshed have had forty bushels; others in the neighborhood of thirty bushels. This,

however, only applies to land which has been summer-fallowed. On spring and fall plowing the crops will not average much more than half these figures, and the average crop, putting the good and the inferior together in the Indian Head district, will, I think, be about twenty-five bushels per acre. This is probably a low estimate. Some judges there put it at thirty bushels.

The root crop at both farms will be light on account of continued dry weather. Potatoes are of excellent quality, but medium in size and only medium in regard to weight of crop.

The corn crop at Brandon will run about 10 tons to the acre; that on the Indian Head farm very much lighter; the weight in this case has not been ascertained.

The good crops of this district extend about as far as Balgonie where they begin to be lighter.

The crops a few miles south of the line of the C.P.R., are as a rule, uniformly lighter than those on the north. I visited also

### THE EDMONTON DISTRICT.

I found the grain crops there very good, and was very much pleased with the country. This was my first visit to the section. I found a great change in the general appearance of the land after reaching Olds, about 60 miles north of Calgary. From this onward the growth became stronger and the country more diversified with woods, shrubs and streams of water.

The district north of the Red Deer is remarkably well watered by lakes and streams; and the growth of the grass and pea vine is surprisingly long. The whole of this fertile tract, extending from Olds to Athabasca Landing, must eventually furnish homes for a large population; and whenever mixed farming is carried on I feel satisfied that it will prove remunerative. The fertility of the soil and character of the growth shows that the district is eminently fitted for stock raising and dairy work. During the four days I remained at Edmonton I drove 123 miles through the country and visited nearly all the principal settlements in the district. On examining the wheat carefully I found the heads very plump and well filled; this also applies to barley and oats. As the crop has since been harvested without frost, there is no doubt the quality of the grain in this district will be excellent.

### THROUGH BRITISH COLUMBIA.

the grain crops are. The oats are not up to the average; dry weather for about five or six weeks previous to my arriving there has resulted in a short growth of straw and the shortening of the heads. The wheat, however, which was seen was very good and plump, but this crop is very limited in this province. Barley appeared to be plump and generally a good crop.

The fruit crop has been disappointing. The apple and pear crops are both light; cherries have been a medium crop. The best results this year have been obtained from plums, which are fairly good in every district I visited, and in some localities quite heavy. On the experimental farm there are some very fine crops of plums on trees three years planted. The orchards there have been very much enlarged during the past year, and the number of varieties of fruit now under test is over 1,100. These tests are being carried on in the valley land, and also the bench land upon the sides of the mountains, where 500 fruit trees are put at heights ranging from 100 to 800 feet above the valley level; these are doing remarkably well, and have made a very strong growth. Judging from the dates of putting in and the general character of growth, it would appear that the trees and shrubs on the higher land bud earlier and the fruit will probably ripen earlier than those in the valley, although sufficient experience has not yet been had to make this very positive. There is so much land in British Columbia of this character on the mountain sides which is unfit for general agricultural work that the success of this experiment has awakened much interest among the fruit growers of the province.

Good progress has been made in the forestry work, especially in the planting of hardwood timbers. During last winter the department of the interior transferred to the experimental farm 800 acres of additional land for this special work. During the spring over 3,000 young trees were planted on the hill sides, mainly black walnut, ash, hickory, cherry and other valuable hardwood timber trees of the east. As the forests of British Columbia contain very little hardwood, the results of these tests are looked forward to with much interest.

Hop growing is fast becoming an important industry in that section. After visiting the hop yards at Agassiz and in the neighborhood, a journey was made to the familiar hop district of Washington state, especially those at Puyallup, White River Valley and Kent, where a very large acreage is being devoted to this purpose. We also visited the hop yards in the drier districts of British Columbia, notably at North Yakima. This section of country a few years ago produced nothing but sage brush, but by irrigation the land has been made to produce large crops of hops and fruit. The hops in both these localities are fine and the crops are heavy. Comparing them with those seen at Agassiz and in the drier district of British Columbia and Spence's Bridge, I am of opinion that hops can be grown quite as fine in quality and as good in every respect in corresponding locations in British Columbia as they can in the State of Washington. This opens up an excellent field for the employment of capital and labor in that province.

At Spence's Bridge some very fine apples were secured for the World's Fair. One specimen in particular, the largest I had ever seen, weighed twenty-five ounces, and was very handsome in form and color. This will probably be, if not the largest, at least one of the largest apples on exhibition at the fair. I also remained

### A DAY AT CALGARY

on the journey east, and visited the irrigation works in progress there. On Mr. Hull's farm, which has been partially irrigated during the past season, I found very fine crops of oats, barley and wheat, manifestly much superior in every respect to those grown in the neighborhood without irrigation. The straw was strong and long, and the heads and grain fine and well developed. Much interest has been awakened there on the subject of irrigation, and two large ditches are in process of construction which it is estimated will irrigate some thousands of acres of land in the neighborhood of Calgary.

The forest trees at Brandon and Indian Head farms, as well as the general experimental work in progress in all departments, have made good growth, and already make these farms very attractive spots to visitors. A larger number have visited the farms than ever before during the past season, and a great interest is being taken in the work going on there.

All the western farmers have made good progress in all the departments of experimental work going on. The acreage in native and other hardy grasses has been considerably increased, and the practicability of growing these for pasture and provender will, it is believed, soon be satisfactorily demonstrated.

The crop of small fruits, both at Brandon and Indian Head, has been very good during the past season, but not much progress has yet been made with the apple trees under test, a large number of them having been killed by the past severe winter. The survivors are making strong growth, and we are still hopeful that we shall be able eventually to find some varieties which will be hardy enough to prove useful to the country.

The demand is greater than the supply of free seed grain, which the board of railroad commissioners have undertaken to secure to the destitute farmers of the state of Kansas. Only one county has thus far volunteered to call a mass meeting for the purpose of procuring the grain for free distribution. All the rest of the counties heard from have declined on the ground that they were unable.