

The Commercial

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SIGNS OF PUSH.

Western enterprise is set forth by the organization of boards of trade in the little towns all over the country. In the East only the principal business centres have sufficient enterprise to organize a board of trade; but in Manitoba and the Territories every little town has its board. The great usefulness of a board of trade in a business community has been realized, and with that push which is characteristic of life in the new West, each community is desirous of availing itself of every feature which can possibly assist in the furtherance of the general welfare. Boards of trade have therefore been organized during the past year or so in towns all over the country. Some are inclined to smile at these efforts on the part of the smaller towns, but they should remember that small communities have their interests, which need looking after as well as the larger centres, and that these interests are as important to the small town as are the interests of the larger towns to the population of such places. Besides, some of these small towns may have a bright future before them (and what community is there in the West which does not expect great things of the future?), and now is the time to lay the foundation and assist legitimate development by every possible means. In this work a board of trade will prove a very useful auxiliary, and often a means of accomplishing ends which would not otherwise be secured. Aside from any special feature which it may be desirable to investigate, an organization which calls the business men of a town together to discuss their common commercial interests, should prove beneficial to all concerned. Two heads are better than one, and ideas will be developed in a general and systematic discussion which would not otherwise be thought of. There is no reason why the formation of boards of trade in the smaller towns should be discouraged, but rather the movement is one which should be commended.

BEYOND THE SOUTHWESTERN.

The proposals of the Brandon Conservatives for a compromise of the difficulties between Manitoba and the Do-

minion, have brought the question of the extension of railway facilities in Southwestern Manitoba again to the front. The extension of the southwestern branches of the C. P. R. has long been a burning question. The need of these railways was felt so keenly, that frequent representations have been made both to the Government and the C. P. R. authorities to hasten their extension. Many promises have been made by the Company regarding the extension of these branch railways, but these promises have generally been dismissed with the statement that money could not be procured to build them, although the Company seems always to have been able to obtain plenty of money to build roads for the benefit of Minneapolis or eastern interests. However, by an act passed at the last session of the Commons, and assented to on June 23rd, 1887, it was provided that the road should be built fifty miles from Deloraine by September 1st, 1888, and the remainder of the line completed by September 1, 1889. In default of fulfilling these conditions the Company would lose the valuable land grant attached to the road. It therefore appears that these "concessions" which, with other considerations, should form the basis of a compromise, are no concessions whatever, the Company being already bound to build this road.

The country beyond the terminus of the Southwestern branches is one of the best settled districts in the West. All that region lying south of the main line of the C. P. R. and beyond the Southwestern branches westward to the Moose Mountains, is well settled. There was a heavy stream of immigration into this particular district in 1881-82, and during those years a great portion of the land was occupied. Settlers went in as early as 1881, with the promises of the early opening up of the country by railways. These branch railways were already located on the maps, showing the Government and railway lands. Seven years have passed, and yet little has been done toward extending the roads. Last season nothing at all was done. Although the country was largely taken up, yet very little could be done in the direction of improving and cultivating the land, owing to the distance from railways. Some have even been obliged to abandon their land. Take for instance the country south of Moosomin station, on the main line. This region is well settled all the way to the United States boundary

line, a distance of 125 miles. The nearest railway stations are Moosomin or Deloraine, the latter the present terminus of the Southwestern. Many of the settlers are over 100 miles from a railway. This entire district is adapted to agriculture, and all that it requires is shipping facilities to develop the country. The extension of the Southwestern through this district would undoubtedly add at least 1,000,000 bushels of wheat to the exports of the country in a single season, and that without an increase in the present population of the district. This season the heavy crops have almost been a calamity to those who had sown grain to any extent. One farmer in this district, who resides about 25 miles from the railway, and who had sown wheat quite extensively, informed the writer that he would grow no more grain than he would require for his own use in the future, as the heavy crop which he had harvested last year rendered the labor of hauling to market something unbearable. The settlers are at a loss to know what to do with their grain this year, and they intend devoting their attention to stock until such time as the country is opened up to railway communication. The importance of railway communication will be seen when it is stated, and that at a very modest estimate, that this district is capable of producing more wheat than is now grown in the entire country. The settlers are mostly of a superior class, and would soon make their presence felt in expanding our grain shipments, if they were given an opportunity. Whatever intentions there are for carrying on railway construction next season should be made known to the settlers before seeding time next spring, so that they can govern themselves accordingly, for unless there is a good prospect of the branches being extended, very little grain will be grown beyond say twenty miles west of the present end of the track. But then unless very much better facilities for handling grain are provided by next season, it will matter little about the extension of the area under crop.

In considering this valuable country now so much in need of railway facilities, there is another important matter which should be borne in mind. Not only is the region an excellent one agriculturally, and already well settled, but it contains large deposits of coal. A considerable portion of Southern Manitoba is open prairie, and the opening up of these coal