

The Commercial

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SUPERFLUOUS JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

It is a good policy to put no check upon legitimate enterprise in a new country like Manitoba, and the formation of joint stock companies having for their object the agricultural, mercantile or industrial development of the North-west is to be encouraged as much as possible. Still men of business acumen cannot but smile as they read the columns of the *Manitoba Gazette* and see the numerous charters applied for, for what might well be considered superfluous companies. It seems that many get it into their head that the possessor of a charter of any kind means the ownership of something of value, and that some have become convinced of the folly of such an opinion is evident from the fact that not half of the companies who secure charters ever put them to any practical use. At present there are charters in force for numerous objects which if carried out would prove of great public value, but which not being acted upon only prevent others with a more practical intention from accomplishing the same objects. The application for charters sometimes reaches even the ludicrous, when the objects are taken into consideration. A company recently organized for the establishment of a Winnipeg Zoological institution got full fledged with parliamentary powers, but when the capital was called for not a dollar was forthcoming, and the whole scheme fell to the ground. This is the case with many such organizations, and will be so long as charters are so easily obtained as at present. In the present days of war over provincial railway right, it may not be out of place to remark, that from all the charters granted by the Provincial Government, Manitoba has only reaped the benefit of some eighty-five miles of railway, fifty of the Manitoba & North-western, and thirty-five of the Portage, Westbourne and North-western. Even in the very necessary commodity of railway charters, therefore a very large proportion have been superfluous, if not purely ornamental affairs to show up upon real estate dealers' maps.

The *Montreal Gazette* says that the total exports of cheese from that city to Great Britain during the season now closed was 714,485 boxes, compared with 547,485 in 1881. The

exports of butter for the same periods were, 1882, 68,308 packages; 1881, 132,970 packages, showing the large decrease of 64,762 packages. The exports of cheese for 1882 have been the heaviest on record, and of butter the lightest.

THE COMING CITY ELECTION.

It is a noticeable fact in western towns, that have grown to the proportions of prominent cities, that the pioneers of the same seldom have held the power of municipal government, but the same has, as a rule, drifted into the hands of more modern settlers. Some people go so far as to assert that such a state of affairs is indispensable to the rapid progress of any city, and that even in the rushing West pioneer settlers are too apt to fall back into a state of fossilism. Such people probably follow Meredith's quaint thread of reasoning regarding the dwarf on the dead giant's shoulders seeing further than the giant ever saw in life. Be that as it may, it is a fact, that in many western cities where the pioneers have grown wealthy and retired, and still hold the power of government in their hands, progress has not been so marked as in others, where new blood struggling for success in life has shaped their fortunes.

Winnipeg supplies no exception to the rule of old settlers having grown wealthy, and it is questionable if any other city of this continent furnishes an example of where so many of those who have borne the burden and heat of pioneer days have been so well rewarded. In the matter of fossilism or fogysm among the old settlers, however, it is to some extent an exception, as numbers of these still hold a place among the city's most active business men.

As the election of city aldermen approaches, the voters of Winnipeg in selecting their council, will not have to contend with the question of old settlers versus new blood, but many other issues of an irrelevant nature will no doubt be imported into the contest, and none will be more intricately employed to mistify voters regarding their real interests, than that of Dominion politics. It is much to be regretted that matters of that sort should find any place in municipal politics, and we have but one hope that the importation of such issues will carry no material weight, and that in a determination of the commercial classes, that the element which they form shall have a controlling power in the city council. This claim, at first sight, seems a sweeping one, when we take into

consideration the vast proportion of city taxation which is derived from real estate owned by parties who are not engaged in any regular business; and were matters to be conducted upon the principle of have your say, according to what you pay, considerable strong argument could be employed against it. But it must also be remembered that a very large proportion of this real estate is owned by non-residents, and if a comparison be made between the taxes paid by those resident, and that paid by the commercial classes, the latter will undoubtedly be the greater. In the question of proportion of taxation, therefore, the right to a controlling power in the city council belongs to the commercial men of the city; and in the question of what class are most likely to act for the city's progress, there can be no doubt in the mind of any unbiased voter. The days are gone and past when Winnipeg's progress has to depend upon a boom in the price of the surrounding swamp lands. The worst enemies of the city are compelled to admit that it is now a trade centre of some magnitude, and in a very few years it must become a great manufacturing and wholesale centre, second to few, if any, in Canada. Such a city must have its affairs controlled by men directly interested in its commerce and manufactures and whose success in life depends upon the rapid development of the same. It is too late in the day for the municipal election of the Manitoba capital to be contested upon the opening and improving of certain thoroughfares for the benefit of individuals, or the locating or moving of a railway depot to enhance the value of some unscrupulous speculators in real estate. Commercial progress is the great hope of the people of Winnipeg, and they can aid much in this at the coming municipal election by electing a majority of their aldermen from among the financiers, merchants and manufacturers of the city. The interests of non-commercial property owners are safe in the hands of a council composed of that class, and they will certainly be beyond the influence of the schemers of their own number.

There still exists in the city a number of retired business men, who have been useful in their day and generation, and from whom the wreath of municipal honors will be taken with regret by the citizens; and it is to be regretted that our system of city government does not supply some honorary but irresponsible positions for