

THE COMMERCIAL

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Office: 181 McDermot Street.

D. W. BUCHANAN,
Publisher.

The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast, than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, MARCH 5, 1898.

REDUCED FLOUR RATES

The reduction of 20 to 25 cents per 100 pounds on flour from Winnipeg and common points to British Columbia points will prove specially welcome to Manitoba millers at the present time. It is a well known fact to those familiar with the grain trade (the agitators to the contrary notwithstanding) that wheat usually brings a considerably higher price, comparatively, in Manitoba than in the agricultural districts of the Pacific coast states. Owing to the low prices prevailing for wheat in those states, the millers of Oregon and Washington states have been able to supply a large part of the flour trade of British Columbia and the Klondike. They have also the advantage of low water freights. Since the reduction in the duty on flour last June, the Manitoba millers have had a very hard fight to maintain a hold in the British Columbia markets, and at times they have been compelled to sell flour at an actual loss, or else withdraw from the field. The present reduction in rates will help the millers here to the extent of 20 to 25 cents per barrel.

The reduction in wheat freight rates from Manitoba eastward, of course, has the effect of advancing the price of wheat in Manitoba, compared with wheat prices in the Pacific coast states, thus making it more difficult for our millers to compete with Pacific coast millers in British Columbia markets.

THE INTERIOR ROUTE

It seems necessary to correct an erroneous impression in connection with the visit of a delegation representing the Winnipeg board of trade, to Eastern Canada in the interest of opening an interior route to Yukon. The newspapers have generally spoken of the delegation as advocating the Edmonton route. When the matter was under discussion at the meeting of the board here, it was distinctly understood that the board did not advocate any particular route, or any particular starting point. What the board and the delegation advocated was the opening of a route from some point on the North Saskatchewan, in the discretion of the government. In speaking of the action of the board and the delegation, the newspapers have concluded that this meant the Edmonton route, and have spoken of it in this way, thereby placing the board in a wrong position.

THE KLONDIKE FEVER

The rush to the Klondike is one of the most remarkable movements within the memory of the generation now passing away. It is also likely to prove one of the most disastrous movements of a like period. That there will be a vast amount of suffering and a considerable loss of life in connection with the rush to the northern gold region is quite certain. This is a deplorable fact that is already being verified.

Probably a large majority of those who are going to the Yukon territory have but the faintest idea of the nature of the country. Many more have no knowledge whatever of the requirements of a northern country. They are, by their past mode of life and their surroundings, quite unfitted to face the rigors of an arctic climate, even if they had the knowledge necessary to the proper protection of themselves in such a country. Thousands of those going to the north country have come from warm climates, some direct from tropical countries. Such people cannot be expected to endure the changed conditions to good advantage.

Besides the severe climate, the rough and inaccessible nature of the country is sure to lead to great hardship. The region cannot be reached under the most favorable circumstances without undergoing considerable personal discomfort and hardship. Added to this the great difficulty of getting in supplies necessary to provide for the people who are being attracted to the region, is a most serious question.

The amount of hardship, destitution and suffering which is almost certain to be experienced in connection with this Klondike business, is likely to be

far greater than many people at present realize. The people of Canada will undoubtedly have a serious problem on their hands a few months hence in providing for and bringing out many of the ill-guided ones who go to the Klondike region. If the country were readily accessible, the climatic disadvantages would not be of such importance. But in a rough, rugged, wild and largely unexplored arctic region, lying a long distance in the interior, the situation will be serious for those who become stranded there, as thousands undoubtedly will. The cost of living must of necessity be very great, even for such accommodation as can be had in such a country.

A good many who start for the northern gold regions will never get there. Some will find the expense of outfitting beyond their means. Some will give up the effort from physical inability to endure the hardships of the trip, as a number have already done. Some will drop by the wayside to rise no more. Thousands will become stranded for lack of means, after they do reach the Klondike region, and something will have to be done for these people, to provide for them and bring them back to civilization.

Why many of these people are going to this region is something which cannot be well understood. They would hardly be able to tell themselves if they were asked. They imagine in some vague sort of a way that they may make a strike, but how they know not. There will not be work for them even if they wanted work; but people do not go into a wilderness to look for work. As for getting gold, the rich gold strikes so far discovered have no doubt all been taken up, and there will be no chance for those going now to secure claims unless a number of new fields are discovered, and even then only a few would be likely to secure claims. There is likely to be more money spent in getting there than will be taken out, at the rate inexperienced persons are rushing to the Yukon country.

At the same time, for practical prospectors and mining men, who know how to provide for and take care of themselves in a northern country, there are no doubt prospects for making some good strikes. It is not necessary to go direct to the Klondike to prospect for gold. There are likely to be just as good strikes in any part of the great gold belt from Cariboo northward and eastward. In fact it would seem to be the best plan for practical prospectors to keep away from the crush entirely, and after providing necessary supplies, to strike directly into the gold territory at the nearest point and begin the search for new finds. Each new strike