

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 vast region lying 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 majority of business men in the district designated above, 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 13, 1897.

SOFT COAL MINING

A recent article in Black Diamonds, a coal trade paper published at Chicago, gives an insight into the great coal miners' strike in the United States which could not be gleaned from reading the newspaper press reports. The journal referred to says: "Too many miners and too much coal, are facts which confront both operator and miner, and the more quickly the latter realizes and thoroughly grasps the situation the better it will be for his welfare. With 75 per cent. of the mines of Illinois and Indiana and 90 per cent. of the mines of those of Ohio shut down, and yet a plentiful supply of commercial coal obtains, it is about time miners and mine owners awake to the situation."

This would indicate that there has been an enormous over-production in the United States, and in order to keep their mines open and compete with others, the operators have been screwing the miners down to starvation rates. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how any permanent good can be accomplished by the strike, unless a rate of wages can be kept up which would necessitate the closing down of many of the mines permanently. No matter how the strike is settled, it would seem necessary that a considerable number of the miners will have to find some other employment.

PRICE OF BREAD

The big advance in wheat has not been received with rejoicing everywhere. In France the increased cost of bread stirred up an agitation among those excitable people, which for a time threatened the existence of the government, and has only been eclipsed by the remarkable outburst of excitement and jubilation in that country over the reported alliance with Russia. Thousands of striking miners in the United States also bewail the increased cost of bread. The saying "It is an ill wind which blows nobody good," also appears to have its counterpart.

WHEAT STOCKS

The regular monthly report of the world's stocks of wheat, prepared by Bradstreet's, makes a most bullish exhibit of the statistical position of that cereal. Total wheat supplies in the United States and Canada on September 1, (no account is taken of wheat flour), are placed at only 25,013,000 bushels, as compared with 61,000,000 bushels one year ago, 53,531,000 bushels two years ago, 88,358,000 bushels three years ago, 70,447,000 bushels on the like date in 1893, 40,464,000 bushels in 1892, 28,451,000 bushels in 1891, 27,710,000 bushels in 1890, and as contrasted with 27,892,000 bushels on September 1, 1889, making United States and Canadian wheat stocks aggregate the the smallest recorded on September 1 of this year.

Another strong feature is the continued shrinkage of stocks. Usually wheat stocks increase considerably during August, but this year there was a decrease of 1,027,000 bushels in stocks during August, while in August, 1896, there was an increase of 769,000 bushels, 13,468,000 bushels increase in August, 1894, and 12,384,000 bushels gain in that month in 1892. Stocks of wheat here and in Canada were practically unchanged during August, 1895, but fell off sharply in the like month of 1893.

The total quantity of wheat available for immediate distribution in the United States and Canada, in Europe and afloat for Europe, on September 1, for a series of years, as reported to Bradstreet's, were as follows:

Sept. 1, 1897—	66,913,000
Sept. 1, 1896—	97,076,000
Sept. 1, 1895—	119,499,000
Sept. 1, 1894—	151,622,000
Sept. 1, 1893—	149,107,000
Sept. 1, 1892—	111,010,000
Sept. 1, 1891—	86,851,000
Sept. 1, 1890—	69,182,000
Sept. 1, 1889—	73,568,000

This shows that so-called world's wheat stocks were smaller on September 1, of the present year than at any time included in the tabulated statement given above.

TRADE WITH THE WEST INDIES

In an interview with a representative of The Commercial a couple of weeks ago, Mr. W. A. Hastings, of the Lake of the Woods Milling company, expressed the opinion that a line of steamships from Montreal to the West Indies would be more valuable to Canada than the line to France. This opinion is one that can be well established by argument. Canada is above everything else a food-producing country. Of course we have wonderful natural resources in timber and minerals, but notwithstanding this, our exports show that our great surplus products for export are food-stuffs. We export wheat and other grain flour, butter, cheese, meats, poultry, eggs, fish, live stock, apples, etc. We are becoming noted as a food-producing country.

France is not an importer of these products. In seasons of a light crop, like the present year, she may be obliged to import wheat, but that is not the normal situation. France competes with us in exporting eggs, butter, etc., to the British markets. On the other hand, while the population of the West Indies is not large, the products which we have for export are not produced there. The islanders have to import their supplies of flour, oats and many other lines of foodstuffs. The islands also afford a good market for our fish, while the bounty-fed French fishing industry is the greatest drawback which the Newfoundland and Maritime provinces fishermen have to compete with.

At the recent meeting of the flour millers of Ontario in Toronto, a motion was passed appointing a deputation to wait upon the Dominion Government to urge the desirability of making an effort to increase our trade with the West Indies and British Guiana. The millers evidently believe that one of our best markets lies in that direction. This lends additional weight to the statement made by Mr. Hastings, regarding our trade with France. The islands undoubtedly afford one of the best markets for our surplus food products, and we should make an effort to secure a liberal share of the trade which they offer, which is now almost monopolized by the United States.

NEW AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

A new harvesting machine, which reaps and threshes at one operation, is reported from the east. It does not seem likely that such a machine could come into general operation in Manitoba, except in exceptionally warm and dry seasons. As a rule, grain is too soft and green to be threshed at the time it is cut here, and it is only fit to thresh after stand-

