

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in 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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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, AUGUST 27, 1898.

## ACTION REQUIRED.

Recently the daily papers published the result of investigations made by Prof. Fletcher, in regard to the grasshopper invasion in a section of southern Manitoba. Prof. Fletcher declares that the hoppers are the genuine Rocky Mountain locusts, which did such destruction in Manitoba in the early days on a previous visit. He gives instructions for the extermination, or at least for the holding in check of the pest, and says if proper measures are taken by the farmers in the infected district, there will not be much danger of the hoppers spreading over the country and becoming epidemic.

It appears to the Commercial that this is a matter which should not be left to the spasmodic and haphazard attempts of individual farmers to control. We must accept Prof. Fletcher's statement that the hoppers are the dangerous species. This year they have appeared in a small area of country, but if left alone they may spread destruction over a vast area of territory in a year or two, and appear in such vast numbers as to become unmanageable. The trouble is simply local now, but it might become provincial in a year or two. It would therefore appear to be the duty of the provincial authorities to see that this invasion of the pest is promptly dealt with. There will be no danger if measures are taken now to prevent

the increase and spreading of the hoppers. The provincial department has acted wisely in having an investigation made, and now that we have a report from Prof. Fletcher, the same foresight which led to having an investigation, should induce the authorities to follow up the work and see that the threatened danger is averted.

## TALKING NONSENSE.

The Commercial has been favored with a printed copy of an article headed "Canada's Big Display." It deals with the Canadian exhibit at the Omaha exposition now going on. No doubt this article has been distributed to the press in the United States and Canada for reproduction, though it contains some glaring inaccuracies. One of the first statements is a reference to the wheat on exhibition, which is described as "No. 1 hard northern," a grade by the way which we have never yet heard of in this country. It is further said that this grade of wheat is produced all over Canada at the rate of thirty-eight to forty-five bushels per acre, all of which, everybody knows, is perfect rot. We are next told that "Commissioner Myers says that the Dominion can supply breadstuffs for all the nations of the earth. If the Canadian Commissioner in charge of the exhibit is responsible for these absurd statements, as would appear from the reading of the article, he should be called down. He appears to be thoroughly out yankeeing, the Yankee in "blowing." We did not read beyond the first paragraph of the article referring to wheat, and if it goes on at the same rate all the way through, it will certainly be surprising to Canadians who may read it.

## BUTTER.

A great change has come over the butter situation in Manitoba within a few years, due to the development of the factory system here. A few years ago the butter trade was the bane of the country merchants. The dairy butter, then almost exclusively made throughout the country, was handled by the general merchants, and the trade was considered a very unprofitable one. It was a frequent theme amongst merchants what to do with or how to get rid of the butter trade. The average quality of the butter was poor, and the handling of it was generally a losing business for the merchants. At a retailers' convention in Winnipeg a number of years ago, a large portion of the time was given to the discussion of the butter question, and from the remarks of those present one would have been led to believe that the merchants would have gladly wash-

ed their hands of the butter business, if any other way could have been found for handling the trade. But there was no way out of it. There were no cash buyers in the country towns for the butter, and when their customers brought them the stuff they had to take it regardless of quality. At the convention, held in March, 1890, the following resolution was passed:

"That this convention strongly advise the establishment of creameries as the best solution of the butter question; that until creameries can be established (to relieve the merchants of handling the butter), a higher price should not be paid for butter than it will realize in the wholesale market, and that the system of supplying tubs to customers be discontinued; and that butter be not taken on due or past due accounts."

We give this resolution as a bit of history of the butter trade in Manitoba. The words included within the brackets, in the resolution, are ours.

Now the scene is all changed. This year at many points the merchants have been scrambling over each other in their eagerness to buy the farmer's butter, and in many cases remarkably high prices have been paid, compared with the wholesale value of the commodity in receiving and consuming markets. At some points where creameries have been located the prices paid to farmers for dairy butter have been higher than farmers would receive for creamery butter, after cost of making was deducted. This has led to considerable rivalry with the creameries, and has made it difficult for the latter to please their patrons.

The cause of the change is no doubt due to a large extent to the establishment of creameries. The average quality of the butter made has been greatly improved, and it is more readily saleable for shipment. The starting of creameries has stopped a large make of bad dairy butter, while the reduced quantity and improved quality of the latter has led to a better demand for the dairy article.

While this keen competition for dairy butter in the country may be considered a good thing in one sense, it would be a great mistake to have the creamery industry destroyed by the high prices paid for dairy butter. It would put the butter trade back in the same old condition that it was in some years ago. It will be better for the reputation of the country to have as much butter made in the creameries as possible. There will be enough dairy butter made at points not accessible to creameries, to supply the demand for such grades. So far as the merchants are concerned, it would seem in their interest to allow the farmer to sell his milk or cream to the factories and pay the proceeds in cash.