

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part of the Province of Lake Superior, the Territories to the west of Lake Superior, the Territories of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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RAILWAY SUBSIDIES.

The lengthy discussion of the railway subsidy question by the Winnipeg board of trade will draw further attention to this important matter. The fact that three sessions of the board were devoted to the discussion of a resolution bearing on this question, will indicate that in Winnipeg at least considerable attention has been given to this matter. The motion debated at this great length by the board declared first that the policy of granting subsidies to railway corporations was wrong in principle; secondly, the government was asked not to grant subsidies; the proposed Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the Canadian Northern Railway being particularly mentioned in this connection. Coupled with this was a clause declaring in favor of state-owned railways.

While it is true that this resolution was not adopted, the very full discussion of the matter will undoubtedly be productive of good results, in calling further attention to what may be termed one of our national abuses; for certainly the policy of subsidizing railways, as carried out in Canada in the past, has been an abuse of the most flagrant order.

The result of the discussion by the board was an exceedingly non-committal resolution, which declared neither for nor against the policy of subsidizing railways. So far as the future policy of the board is also still an open question. This was purposely left in this state, so as not to embarrass the board in any future action which may be decided upon regarding the Grand Trunk Pacific, when more is known regarding this proposed road.

There were several reasons for the adoption of this expressionless resolution, instead of the original motion. The coupling of the clauses against railway subsidies with an expression in favor of state-owned railways, was opposed against the motion. While a number of the speakers expressed themselves in favor of the principle of government roads, they were not prepared, with the information at their disposal, to advise action on this principle. The opinion which prevailed most generally seemed to be, that the board had not sufficient data upon which to base an opinion in the mat-

ter of state railways. It is true this part of the resolution was separated from the clauses relating to railway subsidies, but this was done just as the vote was being taken, when it was too late to affect the result.

Regarding subsidies, the sentiment which prevailed was to the effect that it would be unwise for the board to declare any policy at the present time, particularly as the Grand Trunk Pacific was specially mentioned in the motion declaring against subsidies. It was thought that it would be better to wait until the board had some more definite knowledge of the Grand Trunk Pacific project.

So far as the policy of subsidizing railways is concerned, the general opinion among the members of the board seemed to be decidedly against this policy. In the debate extending over three sessions of the board, an argument was advanced in favor of such subsidies, while nearly all the speakers declared decidedly against the principle of bonusing railways, as it has been done in the past in this country. This, as far as it goes, is encouraging to those who hope for an

subsidy for the benefit of the West. The West is developing rapidly as it is, and will continue to develop whether the Grand Trunk Pacific is subsidized or not. The country has reached a stage of development now when railway subsidies should not be necessary. The railways will be built because they will prove profitable commercial enterprises, or course promoters of contemplated railways will demand subsidies, because it has been customary in the past to grant them. Besides this, these subsidies have been a grand thing for the promoters. We believe, however, if subsidies were entirely discontinued, the development of the country would not be in the least retarded. A policy which has been a fruitful source of scandal in the past, and a cause of immense loss to the people of Canada, may well be dropped without causing regret to any one—except possibly the promoters. So far as the west is concerned, we believe the people would declare decidedly against subsidizing the Grand Trunk Pacific, if they were given an opportunity to vote on the

drawing award. We do not see how a railway could be made to exert a great influence toward binding the business of the Dominion together, but not such a railway as Mr. Mann would build. A railroad owned by the people and operated for the people would be such a factor. The Intercolonial railway was built for this very purpose, during the early days of the confederation of the eastern provinces. If the people of the East feel any alarm over the possibility of a rupture, let them start in and continue the Intercolonial right across this broad Dominion, thus binding the people together, by a bond which belongs to the people. A railroad which, besides belonging to the people, would equalize rates throughout the country and ensure fair treatment to every part of the Dominion, would undoubtedly be a great factor in binding the East and the West. Instead of subsidizing lines to a few more transcontinental lines, which more than likely will unite to oppress the people, let the money be spent for a road which will serve the people and unite the people of the different provinces together in a lively self interest.

A WORTHY INSTITUTION.

This was held in Winnipeg last week a meeting or convention which is worthy of notice. We refer to the annual meeting of the Western Horticultural Society. This organization has been working along in a solid way for a number of years, the object being to encourage expertly in the West. Last year the society held its first exhibition of fruits, vegetables, flowers, etc. in Winnipeg, and this proved to be a great success so far as the exhibits were concerned. The number of exhibits was about 2,000, and well up to \$1,000 was distributed in prizes. This work was undertaken and carried out practically by the society alone, without outside aid. The exhibit of fruit particularly was good, and was a surprise to many persons who did not know the capabilities of the province in the production of fruit.

The question of making this exhibition an annual event, was discussed at the meeting last week. While the members are anxious to continue the work, the difficulty of this is not that of finances. The exhibition is a very interesting and valuable one, and its educational influence must be very considerable. The members feel that their efforts in the interest of encouraging horticulture in the West should receive liberal encouragement. The association has done a great deal, particularly in the direction of encouraging fruit growing in this province. Still, perhaps, but surely this work is making progress. The list of fruits which it is found can be grown in Manitoba is steadily increasing, and much that has been learned and accomplished has resulted from the efforts of this institution. The exhibition which it is proposed to hold in Winnipeg next fall will show what Manitoba can do in the production of fruits, flowers, vegetables, honey, etc. The work of the association is in the interest of the country, and it is an institution which is worthy of the sympathy and encouragement of the people generally. Grants have been given institutions which are less worthy of assistance than the Western Horticultural Society, and the Commercial believes the province would be justified in bestowing liberal grant toward assisting the fall exhibition of this society.



ELKWATER LAKE, CYPRESS HILLS, ASSA.

early reform of our policy of dealing with railways.

From one point of view it is perhaps a matter for regret that a more pronounced opinion was not expressed by the board. If a resolution had been passed declaring on the principle of railway subsidies, in accordance with the evident conviction of a majority of the members, it would have been of a negative character. It would perhaps have been particularly fitting that the Winnipeg board of trade should have been the first to utter a word of caution in regard to subsidizing the proposed Grand Trunk Pacific. We have heard too many times in the past about the great deal in the East has spent in order to open up and develop the West. Some eastern journals still keep up this line of talk. The people of the West do not admit the truth of these assertions. But this is a matter which The Commercial does not propose to waste any time discussing. What we wish to point out is, that already the Grand Trunk Pacific has been alluded to as an enterprise for which the people of the East will have to pay, in order to develop the West. This is why we think some action by the Winnipeg board of trade in opposition to a large subsidy to the proposed Grand Trunk Pacific, would have been opportune at the present time. The people of the East need not fear about being called upon to pay a big

question. Further, we believe a large majority vote could be secured in the West in favor of a government road.

BIND THE PROVINCES TOGETHER

According to a press interview, Mr. D. Mann, the well-known railway promoter, has fears for the future of Canada as a united country. He sees the possibility of a split between the East and the West, resulting in the formation of two separate states. Mr. Mann, however, also sees a way of obviating or lessening this danger. His plan is to have more railways constructed, connecting the East and the West. These railways, according to his views, would tend to unite the East and the West in a community of interest. Mr. Mann is, of course, a railway promoter, and he is alleged to be interested in a transcontinental railway scheme. He is, therefore engaged in the laudable work of helping to bind the Dominion together, in which work he and his associates have been liberally assisted by grants, both federal and provincial and the end is not yet. Mr. Mann is not exactly a philanthropist. He no doubt finds this work very profitable to himself and wishes to continue in the business and receive all the grants that can be induced to come his way.

Now for the argument that the construction of railways is necessary to keep the East and the West from