

The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, specially 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 country 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 great majority of business men in the vast district designated above, and 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, APRIL 3, 1893.

Cheap Coal for North Dakota.

A party at Grand Forks, North Dakota, writes the *Northwestern Miller*, of Minneapolis, as follows:—

"The late session of the legislature has passed and the governor has approved a bill which will have a profound effect on the milling business of the state. This is an act fixing the maximum rates that millers may charge for the transportation of coal mined within the state. This act makes a very material reduction in rates compared with those now in force, especially on the Great Northern. It provides that for the first 50 miles or less the rate shall be 75¢ per ton; for any distance not to exceed 100 miles, 95¢; 150 miles, or less, \$1.15; 200 miles or less, \$1.35; 250 miles or less, \$1.55; 300 miles or less, \$1.75; 350 miles or less, \$1.95.

The nearest coal available to Grand Forks, aside from that in the Turtle Mountains, is near Minot, 121 miles west of this city, from which the old rate was \$2.25 per ton. Under the new law the rate will be \$1.55, a reduction of 70¢ per ton, which brings the rate for this coal to a point where it can be profitably mined and used as a fuel by our mills and other manufacturing industries. The cost of mining lignite coal ranges from 75 to 90¢ per ton, which will bring that class of fuel to our doors at a net cost of \$2.30 to \$2.45 per ton.

Lignite coal is found in great quantities underlying the entire western third of the state. The veins crop out near the surface along nearly every stream in this section, and, as they are usually from six to ten feet in workable thickness, the coal is cheaply and easily mined. It has been the general opinion until lately that it would be found useful only for domestic purposes and local consumption, but the experiments of John M. Turner, at the Mandan roller mill, have demonstrated it to be perfectly adapted to the generation of steam effectively and cheaply. Special grate bars and the utilization of waste radiated heat collected in a

jacket and returned under the boilers, reduced the fuel cost per barrel from 13 to 3, and additional experiments promise a still further reduction.

Along the Northern Pacific, where the old rates on this class of coal were favorable, the use of lignite was extending rapidly. The Mandan and Bismarck mills are using it. The Jameson mill, of the Russell Miller Company, is also generating power with it, but the special appliances for burning are, up to date, in use only in the Mandan mill of the North Dakota Millers' Association. Lignite coal, though possessing but from 66 to 75 per cent. of heat as compared with the best grades of Ohio and Pennsylvania bituminous coals, has the good qualities for steaming, of making a steady and heavy body of flame. It catches quickly and burns fiercely, with a less intense, but better distributed heat in the fire box and boiler tubes. The greatest objection to it, that the abundant ash peculiar to all lignites, is largely neutralized by a special arrangement of the grate bars. General Manager Turner, who has pioneered the use of this coal so successfully as a steam fuel, is confident that the late reduction in coal rates removes the last impediment to its employment for that purpose, and, as he has already demonstrated its utility as a practical fuel, at a cost which will permit competition with water-power, his intention is to use a larger amount of it than ever, and other mills of the association will have their furnaces fitted with the new coal burning device.

British Agricultural Returns.

The complete volume of the agricultural returns for Great Britain and the abstract for the United Kingdom has had most of its salient features anticipated, but the volume contains a very able and suggestive introduction by Major Craigie, who has added to his report a number of short and interesting histories, giving details of the changes in our agriculture for the past 20 years. Major Craigie commences with the characteristic changes which have taken place in the two great sections of the cultivated area in Great Britain between the years 1872 and 1892, the figures for which are:—

	1872.	1882.	1892.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Arable	13,428,000	17,402,000	16,327,000
Pasture	12,574,000	14,821,000	16,358,000

Total cultivated area 31,004,000 32,223,000 32,685,000
These figures show that the surface under the plow has undergone a steady diminution, which in the aggregate amounts to no less than 2,101,000 acres in 20 years. On the other hand, the grass area is now larger by 3,782,000 acres than in 1872.

Turning to the figures for the United Kingdom, we have the following succinct table as to the changes in 20 years:—

	1872.	1882.	1892.
Population, No	31,156,000	35,208,000	38,129,000
Cultivated area, acres	40,839,000	47,655,000	45,978,000
Corn crops, "	11,398,000	10,620,000	9,320,000
Wheat crops, "	3,830,000	3,161,000	2,290,000
Grass, "	22,833,000	24,063,000	27,553,000
Cattle, No	9,710,000	9,832,000	11,619,000
Sheep, No	32,217,000	27,448,000	33,643,000

The decline in values is dealt with very clearly in the following extract: The average prices of wheat, barley and oats in the year now closing compared with 1891, have fallen per quarter in the case of wheat 6s 9d, in the case of barley 2s and in the case of oats 2d. A wider comparison with the prices of each of the years which have been selected for the foregoing comparisons in the distribution of crops and live stock shows:—

Year.	Wheat. per qr.	Barley. per qr.	Oats. per qr.
1872.....	57s 0d	37s 0d	23s 2d
1882.....	45s 1d	31s 2d	21s 10d
1892.....	30s 3d	26s 2d	19s 10d

No average prices of meat or other produce are obtained on any similar system, but the general range of the prices quoted at the Metropolitan Cattle Market in the same years may, perhaps, be given as under. The estimated

prices for the current year, which cannot yet find a place in the completed tables, are all below 1892, but for beef they show very little variation from the prices of the past six years. Mutton prices are lower, and those of pork are higher than in recent years.

	Beef.	Mutton.	Pork.
	Per 8 lbs.	Per 8 lbs.	Per 8 lbs.
1872	4s 2d to 6s 10d	4s 10d to 6s 8d	3s 0d to 4s 9d
1882	4s 0d to 6s 0d	4s 4d to 7s 0d	4s 1d to 6s 0d
1892	2s 11d to 4s 0d	3s 7d to 6s 7d	2s 11d to 4s 7d

These tables show how great has been the drop in values during the past 20 years, and it must be admitted that the decline in the different periods seems to a great extent to correspond with the increase in the imports of foreign produce. For the twenty years the changes in the quantities imported are:—

	1871.	1881.	1891.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Live animals	90,600	117,500	171,600
Dead meat	99,000	341,600	489,600
Butter, Margarine and Cheese	127,500	104,500	270,500
Wheat	1,069,500	2,837,500	3,315,500
Flour	109,000	568,000	830,000
Corn	311,000	1,674,000	1,341,000
Other Grain and Meal	1,183,000	1,232,500	2,072,000

Misrepresenting Goods

There is little question but that, theoretically, the average merchant, subscribes to the highest ethics of shop keeping, says the *Michigan Tradesman*. He finds, indeed, a certain moral satisfaction when giving his concurrence to the opinions of speakers and writers on trade topics, who assume to teach from an elevated point of view, and though it is a question when, after all, in the practical application of such theories, there is not a great deal of divergence from theory itself, possibly the temptation to have a lower code of business ethics than what is conceived to be absolutely just, has its strongest force in the matter of representing goods to customers.

An esteemed English contemporary suggests that there is a song of a not very elevated character which carries the refrain, 'It's all right, if you love the girl,' and we fear, it adds, 'there may be here and there a tradesman who sings as a lullaby to his own conscience, 'It's all right, if you sell the goods.' But is it? Is it even all safe and prudent and good policy?"

While this may be regarded as shifting the question to a very much lower plane, it has the advantage of attracting more attention. Our English contemporary argues that the chief reason for lowering the ethical consideration of the practical side of this question is that "we all know how to live uprightly and won't, whereas we do not know how to make fortunes and wish we did." It, undoubtedly, is true, that business morally has a much better chance if the odds are in favor of its paying a dividend in hard cash.

The solution of this question in a way that deals fairly with the consumer and satisfies him and justifies the merchant's own conscience, even when tried rigidly by the standard of the highest business ethics, is to handle only good goods.

We have no question that a man is a better man, better satisfied with himself, better contented with his business, more successful in his business, more popular with his customers, and more likely to obtain large custom, if he sells goods that he does not feel he is compelled to misrepresent in order to make them move. Good goods at fair prices, when put into practical effect, therefore satisfies not only the moral but the material side of the merchant's life. There can be no possible reason why a merchant should not adopt that motto as his own, and put into practical operation. Poor goods at any price do not pay in the long run. Good goods at fair prices always pay.—Ex.

The Cumberland tin mill, of Baltimore, one of the McKinley industries, about which so much has been written, has gone into the hands of a receiver.