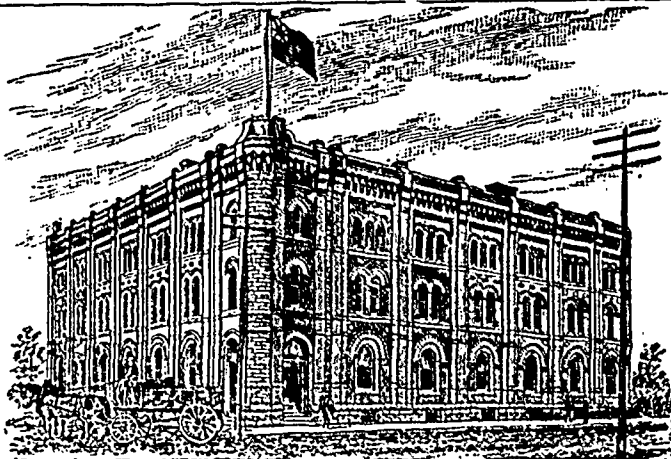


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THE *Portage Liberal* is more honest than many of its contemporaries. It says: Last week we copied an article from the *COMMERCIAL*, Winnipeg, and forgot to credit it to the proper source. Though we have received no reminder of our omission, we prefer to make this explanation." THE *COMMERCIAL* can readily comprehend the publication of a copied article, without the usual credit, as the same thing has happened more than once in this journal, much to the chagrin of the editor. The systematic appropriation of articles from other papers, however, without giving credit, is a dishonorable custom, and one which is an injury to the journal following such tactics.

It is pleasing to note that an attempt is about to be made to establish the hop-growing industry in Manitoba. It is stated that a Mr. Snellgrove, of Brighton, Ont., has leased land near Portage la Prairie and will next spring begin the cultivation of hops, with the idea of supplying the trade throughout Manitoba and the west. A sufficient quantity of roots will be shipped in from the east as soon as the spring arrives, to plant fifteen acres of land, and if everything works satisfactorily it is the intention to plant an increased area the following season. The success of the enterprise can hardly be questioned if carried out in a proper manner. The adaptability of Manitoba for hop-growing has frequently been pointed out, and the wonder is that the cultivation of hops has not been entered upon here ere this. Wild hops of good quality, it is well known, grow and thrive in this province.

THE town of Port Arthur, Ontario, has voted a bonus of \$25,000 to the Port Arthur, Duluth & Western Railway. The sum of \$200,000 mentioned in the telegram last week was an error. The Port Arthur people have great hopes upon the construction of this road, and what it is going to do for their town. The large majority vote in favor of the bonus shows the general favor with which the road is regarded at Port Arthur. The board of trade also strongly endorsed the bonus scheme. The projectors of the road intimated that they

would not likely be able to go on with the undertaking, at least this season, unless the bonus were granted, but with the bonus once voted, they assured the electors that 50 miles of the road would be built at once. Both the Dominion and Provincial Governments have granted substantial aid to this road, and with the local aid now offered, the projectors should be able to go on with their enterprise. The road is intended to develop the rich mineral country extending southwest from Port Arthur. We hope the road may prove every benefit to Port Arthur which the residents of that place seem to expect from its construction.

A NEW difficulty has arisen in the ranching districts of Alberta, in the troubles between the ranchers and homestead settlers. The fact is not disguised that the large ranchers are adverse to the settlement of the country by farmers, who come in to cultivate the soil and carry on operations in farming or mixed farming and stock raising. The ranchers would prefer to have the country remain open and unsettled—a wide, uncultivated plain, over which their herds could graze at pleasure. On the other hand the village people are interested in seeing the country more closely settled than it ever can be as a merely range region. Under the new system of leasing lands to ranchers, settlers are permitted to enter and homestead on such leased lands, and carry on farming operations thereon, notwithstanding the existence of the lease. Parties holding leases are required not to throw any obstacles in the way of settlers entering upon such lands. It now appears that some of the large leaseholders are fencing their holdings, and this is looked upon as an interference with settlers, or a hindrance to the further settlement upon leased lands. Certainly it would seem that actual settlers would not care about homesteading upon lands so enclosed, and if the fencing of lands covered by lease is found to be a hindrance to settlement, something should be done to provide a remedy therefor. When it is stated that some of these leases cover as much as 100,000 acres of land, it will be seen

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that the question is a very important one. Anything which tends to retard the settlement of such large tracts of land, should be discouraged and removed if possible.

THE *Brandon Sun*, with a good deal of logic, continues to argue against the dual school systems in vogue in Manitoba. Nearly all the territorial papers are also doing their best to call the attention of the Dominion to the evils of the dual school system as it exists in the territories. Really, it would seem that in this free and enlightened country, a national system of education should be preferable to a dual and sectarian system. If the sectarian system is wrong, now, while the country is young is the time to remedy any evils and lay the foundation sure and solid. The people of the east, who are now agitating the school question in their own provinces, should at the same time bring pressure to bear upon the Dominion Government, with a view to remedying the situation in the territories. There is one very weighty argument against the dual school system in Manitoba and the territories, which does not have the same force in the eastern province. This is the question of economy in public education. In western Canada with its small population scattered over a vast extent of territory, it is a very expensive matter to provide necessary educational facilities. In spite of this, we find that in districts where the population is scarcely large enough to support one school, an attempt is being made to keep up two schools. This is one of the evils of the sectarian school system in the west. Education, at best a burden in a new and thinly settled country, is made doubly burdensome by this apparently unnecessary dual system of education. In a free and civilized country, it should be almost the first duty of the government to provide a system of public education for its subjects of the rising generation. In a country of various religious differences, what more natural, then, than that the Government should provide a national system of public instruction, entirely free in all its departments from clerical or sectarian influences?