

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part 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. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

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## PREFERENCES.

An interesting legal case was settled at the Winnipeg court house recently and with it the long discussed and vexing question of commercial preferences. The case was that of Codville vs. Fraser, which was argued before Mr. Justice Blain. The plaintiffs recovered judgment against one Rice, a storekeeper at Minnetonka. The judgment was recovered on January 14, and a few days later execution was issued against the goods of Rice to levy the amount of \$525.98 and placed in the hands of the sheriff for execution. On Dec. 24, 1900, Rice, who was indebted to the defendant Fraser, executed a chattel mortgage to the latter on all the goods then in his store to secure payment of \$550, being the amount of his indebtedness to the defendant Fraser. Rice made default in the payments due under the mortgage and the defendant, under the terms of the mortgage, took possession of and removed the goods to Dauphin where they were sold, realizing 50 cents on the dollar. The plaintiffs brought action to have the court declare that the chattel mortgage given by Rice was fraudulent and of no effect as against them. They also claimed that the defendant should give an account of the proceeds of the sale held at Dauphin for the value of the goods. They argued that at the time Rice executed the mortgage in favor of the defendant Fraser he was in insolvent circumstances and that his financial condition was known to the defendant and that the latter knew it was the intention of Rice to give the mortgage as a preference to defendant. The evidence, however, showed that Rice had acted in a bona fide manner in yielding to the repeated demands of the defendant for security and that the giving of the mortgage was not his own spontaneous act. The question upon which the court was asked to pronounce was how far the transaction was affected by the Assignments Act of 1900.

His lordship held that under section 31 of this act the chattel mortgage was void and of no effect, and the plaintiffs were entitled to the benefit of the provisions of said act. He also held that the plaintiffs should be entitled to demand from the defendant an account of the proceeds of Rice's goods sold under the mortgage that the defendant should pay into court the amount found due by him on such

an account or so much thereof as might be found necessary to satisfy the judgment of the plaintiffs against Rice. The defendant was ordered to pay the costs of the action.

It has long been the opinion of the better element in the trading community of this province that the business of giving preferences in the form of chattel mortgages on mercantile stocks was unjust and unfair, and now that the courts have decided against such practice it is probable that there will be no more of it.

## HOW THE DEADBEATS WORK.

No credit, however, small should be given to the unworthy. This rule, if followed by merchants would eliminate a great deal of the trouble now experienced in handling book accounts. There are always in every community a certain number of people who have well known propensities for not paying their bills, and yet, strange as it may seem they are always able to get credit, and are sometimes permitted to run large bills by merchants who know them well enough to have managed them better. Their operations at a store generally commence with cash transactions and after they have established themselves as regular customers the trusting business begins. Probably the first small accounts are paid in a satisfactory manner and then a larger one is paid in part with at the same time largely increased purchases. From this time forth they are never out of the merchants debt, and when they have worked him for all he is worth they move on to the next victim.

## Manitoba Fruits and Flowers.

At the morning meeting of the Brandon Horticultural society's convention Superintendent Bedford, of the experimental farm, occupied the chair. Owing to heavy rain the attendance was small. Those present, however, seemed deeply interested in all that was said.

The first speaker was Superintendent Bedford, who spoke on "What the Experimental Farm has done to Encourage Horticulture." He pointed out the necessity of horticulture in this province, with its bleak prairies, and the many advantages to be derived from it. The experimental farms had been fortunate in having at the head one of the foremost horticulturists of Canada, Mr. William Saunders, and he had laid out such work for the different farms as was calculated to best further the interest of the country. On the Brandon farm the work had been the importation and testing of all known hardy forest and fruit trees, shrubs and flowers. So far 65,000 trees had been sent to the Brandon farm for testing purposes. These with the trees grown from native seed give a total of 80,000 trees now on the farm. This number includes over 300 varieties, which are entirely hardy, and 100 varieties of perennial flowers. In the list are 187 varieties of apples, tested, in addition to cherries, plums and small fruits. An experiment had been made with a plot of forest trees to ascertain the actual cost of growing an acre of trees for four or five years and it was found that expense can be materially reduced by keeping trees so close together that they shade the ground and so produce true forest conditions in a few years. The experimental farm had also encouraged horticulture by the distribution of seeds and plants of such varieties as are hardy and suited to the country. Up to the present 600,000 trees have been sent out from the Brandon farm to applicants; also 1,800 pounds of tree seeds. The farm had also illustrated the proper manner of growing trees in avenues, hedges, tree belts and forest clumps. It is generally acknowledged that the avenues on the farm particularly are the best in the country. The work along the lines mentioned had not been finished by any means, but would be continued.

## Apple Culture.

Mr. A. P. Stevenson, of Morden, then took up the subject of "Apple Cul-

ture." He gave a short history of apple growing in Minnesota and Manitoba, following it with some of his own experience. Mr. Stevenson is the most successful apple grower in the province and his remarks were listened to attentively. Mr. Stevenson has been raising apples for years. Clay soil, he said, was the best for apples, with shelter on the south to protect from scorching sun. His own location was not good, but he had fair success. It is necessary to give the timber of the trees protection in winter and this is done by wrapping with gunny sacking. If trees are not protected they get black heart and do not live many years. In order to get thoroughly hardy trees for Manitoba an apple is grafted on a crab apple root. Twice a year the trunks are washed with soap suds to destroy insects, which otherwise will make dangerous attacks. As to varieties the Whitney is the best Hybrid, which is hardy here. Lou and Excelsior are good trees and hardy. The hardest of the large apples is the Burnham. They have borne fruit in Manitoba for the last seven years. The Ontario apple is useless in this country. All trees that proved hardy here come from Minnesota. Among these are the Wealthy and Peerless, the former variety being the only apple which will grow here that also grows in Ontario. Apple trees must have shelter from the wind, which would blow the fruit from the trees even if the trees could be grown without such shelter.

In answer to a question the speaker explained that loam with clay sub-soil was a suitable soil for apples.

## Suitable Wild Flowers.

Mr. Bartlett, of the department of agriculture, spoke upon "Wild flowers that are suitable for cultivation." For shrubbery and hedges the wild bush rose, June berry, high bush cranberry, snow berry and silver willow had all been found useful and successful. In climbing plants, the Wild Virginia Creeper was the best for cultivation. In herbaceous plants the Wild Cucumber, of bedding plants, perhaps the Blazing Star and Cone Flower are most suitable for cultivation. A pretty plant for the garden is the Bird's Foot Violet, which is one of the earliest to bloom in the spring. The common Spring Crocus does well in the garden. The Purple Cone Flower, though not attractive by itself, looks well when grown in a bunch. The Asters require to be planted in clumps. All are easily cultivated. Several Orchids, Lady Slippers in particular, thrive well under cultivation and are the most remarkable and among the most beautiful of our wild flowers.

## Production of Quicksilver.

Dr. Alois Welskopf has recently communicated to the Zeitschrift für Chemie some useful information in regard to the production of quicksilver, which occurs in nature as a cinnabar HgS, in combination with sulphides of copper, silver and iron. It is found in sedimentary stone formations in Almaden, in Spain, similarly at Huancorilla, in Peru, and in Idria the same mineral occurs between the strata, and also mixed with bitumen and earthy deposits. Other important sources are the mines of the Napa Consolidated Quicksilver Mining Co., at New Almaden, New Idria, Altoona and Aetna, all in California, where the cinnabar is mixed with serpentine, trachite and basalt, and their adjacent chalk formations. It is also found at Kotterback and Dobschau, in Hungary, and at Monte Amiata, in Tuscany, as cinnabar; at Cornacchino and Montebuono as an ore containing from 0.4 to 1.2 per cent. of mercury. In Russia, at Nikitovka, in the district of Bachmunt, a cinnabar is mined which is similar to that of Almaden, the ore yielding from 0.6 to 20 per cent. of mercury.

The United States of America produced in 1899, 31,092 bottles of mercury, worth \$1,188,627, and in the year following 638 bottles less; but owing to the market condition, the value in the latter year was \$264,118 more. The prices in 1899 were the highest since 1890. In January, 1899, mercury was selling in San Francisco at \$42 per bottle (70½ pounds) for home use and \$37.50 for export; but in December the prices had advanced to \$51.50 for home use and \$47 for export. During the past twenty years all the American quicksilver has come from California, except 65 bottles from Oregon

In 1887, and Texas during the last year or two has supplied 1,000 bottles from the Terlingua quicksilver mining district. In Hungary the Rima Murer Gwerkschaft, including Dobschau, produce about 1,000 kilos. per annum. The Russian output is calculated to be 200,000 pounds of mercury, 1 pound equalling 16.33 kilos. From statistics collected from the Metal and Metallurgical Society of Frankfurt, it appears that the world's production in 1899 was as follows:—

	Tons.
Spain	1,387
United States of America	193
Austria-Hungary	500
Russia	350
Italy	200

The production for the ten years ending 1899 is shown by the following table, the figures as to quantities referring to metric tons:—

Year.	U.S.A.	Spain.	Hung.	sla.	Italy.	TI.
1890	794	1,810	542	232	449	3,838
1891	791	1,790	570	324	330	3,803
1892	971	1,657	642	343	325	3,838
1893	1,047	1,585	612	290	373	3,607
1894	1,053	1,499	510	194	234	3,438
1895	1,179	1,508	535	434	100	3,833
1896	1,038	1,624	564	492	180	3,802
1897	965	1,728	632	617	192	4,034
1898	1,059	1,691	491	362	173	3,775
1899	638	1,357	500	300	206	3,416

Price in London . . . . . 34.5 kilos. Price in San Francisco 1 bottle . . . . . 76.5 lbs.

Year.	High-est.	Low-est.	High-est.	Low-est.
1890	10	7 8	17 6	\$22.01
1891	9	6 0	7 10	38.20
1892	7	15 0	6 10	
1893	6	17 0	6 20	\$30.00
1894	6	15 0	5 10 0	27.50
1895	7	6 0	6 7 4	35.00
1896	7	5 0	6 8 6	35.50
1897	7	7 6	6 12 6	35.50
1898	7	15 0	7 0 0	38.00
1899	9	12 6	7 15 0	40.00

In addition to the sources already named, Mexico, China, Japan, Chili and Peru also contribute to the quicksilver supply, but the amount cannot be accurately ascertained. Thus in Mexico there is a large number of small mines worked by proprietors who do not lay open their statistics; but apart from these the following has been the production in metric tons:—

1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1897.
286	300	218	218	294
535	324			

To this information by Dr. Welskopf we may add that the importations into London for the five months of each season to April 30 have been:—

1891.	1900.	1899.	1898.	1897.
Government	33,327	21,892	20,096	34,099
Other Spain				
Italy	30	10	5	100
California	1,680	2,402	2,002	2,150
Horneo, Russia and indirect imports				178
Totals	35,109	23,919	27,679	33,066

The exports from London for the five months of each season to April 30 have been:—

1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.
3,850	12,014	13,967	12,658

Since the beginning of this year there has been an entire absence of any fluctuation on the London market. Indeed, it is necessary to go back to September 7, 1900, for a move, when the quotation was reduced 2s 6d per bottle to 91 2s 6d. The absence of these fluctuations has put an end to the profitable turn-over of quicksilver in second hands, and the bulk of it is now sold at or under a commission of ¼ per cent. This is unfortunate for the middleman who bought and sold quicksilver, as the importer in many cases deals direct with the merchant, and in one or two instances where second-hand stock is held at 91 5s the holder is hoping against hope that the sudden market fluctuations which used to be peculiar to quicksilver will occur again. The quotation of 91 2s 6d is, we understand, "pegged," and it will require some important movement in the market to alter it. It may be taken that the concession which Messrs. Rothschild gave to second-hand dealers, by which a margin of, say, 6d to 2s 6d per bottle was fixed between the official and the second-hand price, has been abolished in consequence of the firm having had to pay a larger sum for working the Almaden mines, the ten years lease of which was received last July.—Chemist and Druggist.

Jones—Oh! This money I had saved for my wife to go to the Buffalo Exposition!

Robber—Well, hand it over blame quick, or she'll go on your life insurance.