

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 25, 1893.

UNDESIRABLE IMMIGRANTS.

We do not know what data the grand jury at Brandon had before them when they condemned the Barnardo plan of boy immigration. We can hardly conceive that the jury would make the complaint they did without authentic information which would go to bear out their remarks. THE COMMERCIAL, however, has been unable, after some investigation, to verify the severe denunciation of the Barnardo immigration by the grand jury. From what we can learn, we cannot conclude that the Barnardo boys are responsible for any increase in crime in Manitoba. While making this statement, THE COMMERCIAL will own that we may possibly be wrong and the grand jury right, as our investigation of the question has not been very thorough. It has been stated that only one Barnardo boy was charged with an offence at the Brandon assizes, which does not appear to be a serious matter. If this is all the grand jury had to go upon, besides prejudicial hearsay, they were not warranted in making the denunciation they did. Perhaps even the grand jury did not consider the gravity of their charge. So far as THE COMMERCIAL is aware, there may be as great a tendency to crime among boys brought up in the country as is the case with the Barnardo boys. The fact is that owing to a certain prejudice, an offence committed by one of these boy immigrants is heralded all over the country, while a dozen similar crimes by others would never be heard of beyond perhaps the usual local press notice. THE COMMERCIAL has always taken the stand in favor of a strict inspection of immigration, with a view to discountenancing the settlement of unsuitable persons in our midst. This applies to all immigrants, old and young. It would be far better to have our population increase slowly, than to have it increase rapidly by the immigration of the vicious and immoral, the shiftless, or persons physically or otherwise unsuited to our climate and general conditions of life. As for these Barnardo boys, we believe the majority of them are liable to succeed better in this country than many foreigners. In the first place they are young, and they will have ample time to acquire a knowledge of the country before they would arrive at an age when they would be warranted in starting out in farming or any other calling for themselves. Secondly, the plan of placing them with responsible farmers in the country, gives them a great advantage over many other immigrants. Whatever may be said about the Barnardo boys, we believe that the country has suffered very much more seriously from the placing of certain colonies of foreigners in our midst, which are made up of persons quite unsuited to the country, and altogether undesirable as settlers. Occasionally a Barnardo boy may prove a failure, while in the case of some of these settlements of assisted adult foreigners, almost all the members of the colony have proved failures.

MAINTAIN TARIFF FREEDOM.

The *Chronicle*, published at Russell, Man., seems to have the right idea of the question of reciprocity with the United States. "Reciprocity," it says, "is really an alliance with the protectionist wing of United States politicians." The *Chronicle* goes on to show that reciprocity would strengthen protection in each country. It is gratifying to come across an article like this in a Manitoba paper. THE COMMERCIAL for years has been almost alone and unaided in its efforts to draw attention to the economical errors of the reciprocity theory. Even a limited measure of reciprocity would strengthen the protectionist party in each country; while the former Liberal policy of unrestricted reciprocity was simply the rankest kind of political heresy for an alleged tariff reform party. Happily there is now no immediate danger of an effort being made to bring about such an arrangement, and not until there is a change of government in the United States will there be any possibility of reciprocity theories taking shape. At the same time, it is well, as opportunity presents itself, to endeavor to educate the people as to the unsoundness of reciprocity theories. What Canada wants is not binding reciprocity treaties with any country, but liberty to trade freely with all countries. The fullest control of the tariff should always remain in our own hands, to be changed at any time as circumstances may require. There can be no objection, however, to mutual concessions in the tariff, between Canada and the United States, made without the formality of a binding reciprocity treaty and which would not restrict our freedom to deal with our tariff as we may see fit.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

The municipal elections in Winnipeg on Tuesday last resulted in the return of three lawyers and one real estate dealer, while only one business man, in the five wards in which there was a contest, was elected. The full council of twelve aldermen now consists of five lawyers, three real estate and insurance agents, two wholesale merchants, one contractor and one member who cannot be described as belonging to any particular business or profession. This is certainly a peculiar position for a city like Winnipeg to be placed in. Winnipeg is almost solely a commercial city. The fact that it occupies the position of the natural distributing centre of a vast territory, is the only thing which distinguishes it from the rural towns of Manitoba. Without its distributing or jobbing trade, Winnipeg would be nothing more than an ordinary Manitoba country town. The fact that it is a natural distributing point, has led to the establishing of a large number of trading institutions here, and made Winnipeg what it is—the commercial metropolis of Western Canada. There is not another city in Canada which is so purely a commercial city as Winnipeg, and whose existence depends so completely upon its distributing trade. In manufacturing we have made but little progress, and what manufacturing we have depends upon the position the city has attained as a commercial centre. The wholesale trade is in fact the one feature which

has made the city what it is to-day. Any other enterprises established here, beyond the requirements of an ordinary country town, have been drawn here through the importance of the city as a distributing centre. In the light of these facts, it does seem strange that the municipal government of the city should be in the hands of lawyers and agents.

THE COMMERCIAL does not wish it to be understood that we fear some action will be taken by the council which will be inimical to the commercial interests of the city. At the same time the position seems unreasonable and unnatural. A commercial city should certainly have a fair representation of commercial men in the civic government. If the membership of the council were just reversed, and consisted of eight business men (wholesale and retail merchants and other strictly commercial men and manufacturers) and the balance representing other interests, it would be more in keeping with the position of the city as a commercial centre.

That the commercial interests are not more largely represented in the civic government, is the fault of the business men themselves. It has been almost impossible to induce business men to take a hand in civic affairs. As a class they are given to looking closely after their own private business affairs, and will not spare the time for civic matters. This is really the explanation for the existing situation. If the commercial interests of the city suffer, it will therefore be owing to the refusal of our representative men to take a hand in helping to govern the city.

REDUCED COST OF TRANSPORTATION.

The cheapening of transportation has done a great deal to equalize prices of staple commodities throughout the world. Cheap transportation is the great competitor of the British agriculturalist. While the great reduction in the cost of transportation has reduced prices to the great mass of consumers in the United Kingdom, it has brought the British agricultural interest to the verge of destruction. An example may serve to show the great reduction which has been made during recent years in the cost of transportation. It is reported that a cargo of No. 1 California wheat sold recently in Liverpool at 27 shillings, 7½ pence. Twelve years ago the freight from San Francisco would have equalled this sum alone. This vast reduction in freight permits the selling of grain in British ports at prices which the home agriculturist finds its unprofitable to meet. Owing largely to the same cause, American flour is sold in British markets almost as low as the ruling prices on this side of the Atlantic. In fact, flour has been sold in London as cheap as the prices of similar brands in Chicago, though this, of course, is not legitimate competition. Other staple commodities from remote parts, are also sold in British markets at prices which show little advance upon the selling prices in the markets of production. This shows what great odds the British farmer has to compete against. The great reduction in the cost of transportation affords him very little advantage, so far as his home market is concerned, in his competition with foreign produce. Lower freight rates are continually