

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 23, 1889.

SAFELY THROUGH ANOTHER YEAR.

With this issue THE COMMERCIAL enters upon its eighth year of publication. Like a great many undertakings, THE COMMERCIAL appeared rather earlier than the situation at the time warranted, and consequently during the first few years, a good deal of uphill work had to be overcome. The struggle for existence which the new enterprise had to contend with from its inception, was rendered doubly severe owing to the great depression which followed the collapse of the "boom." THE COMMERCIAL made its first appearance about the time the era of speculative activity and real estate inflation was passing away. All through the trying period which followed the fright and flight of the wild spirit of speculation, THE COMMERCIAL was obliged to struggle, without the advantage of having previously gained any footing in the community, during the continuation of the period of too rapid expansion. Though expecting and desiring no support from speculative or "boom" influences, THE COMMERCIAL, like all other legitimate business enterprises, was compelled to suffer in the depression which followed the collapse of these influences. From the beginning, this journal depended upon the commercial and industrial interests for support, and in company with these interest it will suffer during times of depression, and flourish in periods of expansion and activity.

Following the period of depression came the agitation against monopoly. As soon as the commercial interests of the country had time to partially recover from the first shock of the collapse of the speculative period, it was recognized that something must be done to remove the artificial disadvantages under which the country then labored. If the spirit of enterprise, which for a time had languished, was to be renewed in a legitimate manner, monopoly must go. This was the universal belief. The country could not prosper and develop as it should, so long as these great restrictions were imposed upon the freedom of railway construction. The battle against monopoly and for the commercial freedom of the West was begun, and in this fight it cannot be said that THE COMMERCIAL ever lagged behind. When the fight waxed hot and assumed serious aspects, or during the temporary lulls in the agitation, THE COMMERCIAL never shirked its share of the work, nor the responsibility therefore.

The troublesome days of agitation are now over and the country has now enjoyed nearly a year of quiet and freedom from agitation. The development of the country has gone ahead free from monopoly restrictions, and already with results pleasing to contemplate, and sufficient to confirm the wisdom of those who inaugurated and led the movement against monopoly. Within the few months that have elapsed since the final settlement of the railway question, this country has certainly made more rapid and solid advancement than ever before in the history of the

country within the same length of time. There is also a feeling of rest from agitation and confidence in the future which is a pleasant experience to those who fought so long against monopoly. Manitobans have been charged by outsiders, who were unacquainted with the situation here, as being professional agitators, who could not exist without keeping the country in a state of strife. This has now been shown to be false. Since the final successful conclusion of the agitation against railway monopoly, there has probably been less public agitation in Manitoba than in any other part of Canada. Our people have shown a disposition to agitate only when they have some real grievance to contend with, and to mind their own business in all matters. This is shown by the refusal of western people generally to join in the agitation over Quebec questions, which has been carried to such extremes in Ontario. All efforts to raise an agitation here over the Jesuit question, for instance, have proved utter failures. There is certainly very much less bigotry and intolerance in the West than in the East. The anti-monopoly agitation in the West was against a real grievance and not one of sentiment or bigotry, and though it was continued for a long time, owing largely to political tricks and party feeling, both here and in the East, yet it furnishes no ground for the accusation that western people are professional agitators.

The West may now be said to have fairly entered upon a period of more marked progress and development, evidences of which have everywhere been made apparent during the past year. Western people have now more reason than ever before to feel satisfied with their lot, and they can look forward to the future with a feeling of cheerfulness and confidence. Progress may not have been as rapid as the more sanguine could have wished for, but still there has been steady advancement, even during the times of monopoly and agitation. But now that the great burden which clogged the wheels of progress is gone, there can be little doubt but that the next seven years will show such advancement as to make it a cause of wonder and admiration to those who may be familiar with the present condition of the country. Some who have perhaps decried the country, or who at least have not done what they could or should have done to assist its people in time of trouble, may yet have reason to regret their action, and to feel surprise at the progress made. THE COMMERCIAL claims some share in bringing about what has been already attained, and in the future it will not be found lagging behind when the commercial interests of Western Canada are at stake.

In entering upon the eighth year of its existence, THE COMMERCIAL desires to express thanks for the very generous support which it has received from the mercantile, manufacturing and financial interests of Western Canada. THE COMMERCIAL now reaches weekly nearly all the leading business men of the vast region stretching from Lake Superior to the Pacific coast, and from its readers throughout this great stretch of territory it is constantly receiving words of encouragement and appreciation, which in the future it shall endeavor to merit.

OUR NEWEST RAILWAY.

The people of Manitoba and the territories have every reason to feel satisfied with the development of their country which has been going on so rapidly this year. This prairie region is essentially an agricultural country, and the one great thing needful for the development of an agricultural country is railways. Happily the "lay of the land" in this country is such that railway construction is a comparatively easy matter. There are no dense forests, rock cuttings, or tunnelling through which the railways have to be carried, but instead, an open and comparatively level prairie country, with an occasional river, valley, or a patch of light timber to cross or pass through. With these favorable conditions it may be considered certain that in time this country will be covered with a regular network of railways, and the farmer who has to drive over ten miles to market will at some future date be considered an unreasonably long distance from market.

For years past monopoly restrictions prevented the more rapid construction of railways in Manitoba, but the days of the monopoly are now over, and this year the country has entered upon an era of railway building such as it never before enjoyed. One of the first fruits of the new order of things, since the removal of the restrictions upon the freedom of railway building in Manitoba, is the construction of a second railway between Winnipeg and the town of Portage la Prairie. This road, it is well known, was completed and opened for regular traffic about three weeks ago, and it is therefore the latest addition to the completed railways of Manitoba, though it will not hold this distinction long, with the number of other branch roads under construction.

The road between Winnipeg and the Portage is owned and operated by the Northern Pacific and Manitoba railway company, and it is designed in time to become a very important portion of this railway system. At Winnipeg it connects with the main line of the company for St. Paul, Duluth and Pacific coast points, while the western terminus is at the door of the great wheat region known as the Portage plains. Already this new road has had the honor of moving the first full train of new wheat shipped out of Manitoba this fall, consisting of a consignment shipped from Portage to Duluth. The wheat was loaded on the cars direct from the wagons, by Portage farmers, and forwarded to Duluth in store.

The managers of the Northern Pacific and Manitoba system have already declared that this new branch will not stop at the Portage. It will certainly be extended into the rich country to the north and west of this important point, developing the region through which it will pass, and drawing traffic to the company's system of railways. A short line from Portage in a northerly direction of probably less than fifteen miles in length, would reach some point on Lake Manitoba. With a slight expenditure, a great system of navigation can be opened up on Lake Manitoba and its connection, Lake Winnipegosis. These two lakes are about 250 miles in length, and are surrounded by a country of diversified resources, including agricultural, stock raising, timber and