

**MR. F. H. MATHEWSON ON WINNIPEG THE NORTH WEST AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.**

**BUSINESS THROUGHOUT NORTHWEST IN A HEALTHY STATE, WINNIPEG GROWING VERY FAST, DANGER OF REACTION IN THAT CITY; IMMIGRANTS CHIEFLY FARMERS FROM UNITED STATES; CROP PROSPECTS MOST FAVOURABLE; CATTLE PRICES GOOD; BRITISH COLUMBIA'S BUSINESS IMPROVING; NORTHWEST OF CANADA PREFERABLE TO UNITED STATES.**

Mr. F. H. Mathewson, Manager of the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, who recently returned from an extensive trip through Manitoba, the Northwest, British Columbia and the Pacific Slope has favoured us with his impressions on the conditions of those Provinces and sections of Canada.

In response to our enquiry Mr. Mathewson, stated that he found business conditions in the Northwest in a healthy state, although wholesale merchants at Winnipeg were complaining about the slowness of collections. The great influx of people into the country west of Winnipeg is stimulating the wholesale trade of that City to a large degree, and a very active and steadily increasing jobbing business is being done, and business men generally seemed to be prospering. He was very much impressed with the number and character of the new warehouses and other buildings, which had been erected in Winnipeg since he left there nearly five years ago. The City is growing very fast, and it is claimed that the population is now over 70,000. Permits for new buildings have been issued since 1st January last amounting to over \$3,000,000, but, said Mr. Mathewson, "Real Estate values both for city property and farm lands are getting near the danger point, and there is sure to be another reaction."

In his judgment one of the most encouraging features about the class of immigrants now pouring into the Northwest, was that the bulk of them were farmers from the United States who had both money and experience, as these people became producers almost from the time of their arrival in the country.

There was an increase of about 10 per cent., in the crop acreage, and up to the present time, conditions were most favourable for a good crop this fall. With the exception of one or two districts the cattle on the western plains had come through the winter in excellent condition, but prices were not very satisfactory.

He had much satisfaction in finding that general business in British Columbia was gradually getting on a sounder basis, and the prospects in that Province were quite encouraging, although the Province was still suffering from the effects of the labour troubles. The City of Vancouver is growing very fast, and, in his opinion, should ultimately become a very important business centre.

Mr. Mathewson lived nearly twenty years in the Canadian Northwest and has an extensive knowledge

of the country and its possibilities. He is enthusiastic over the prospects in that great country, and strongly advises young men to go out there and settle rather than seek their fortunes in the United States.

**THE ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY.**

The conditions of fire insurance business last year were generally so favourable, it is a matter for no surprise to find the Royal standing out with its customary prominence amongst the companies whose record in 1903 was exceptionally gratifying.

The Royal is in the position of enjoying a reputation for extent of business and results, which must be surpassed every year to maintain the record. The Royal's most active competitor is its own history, upon beating which the strain of the active staff is bent.

The eminent success attained in this effort is shown by the increase in premium since 1892, having been \$4,076,500, an enlargement of about 40 per cent. The record is as follows:—

Year.	Net Fire Premiums.	Net Losses.	Total Assets.
	\$	\$	\$
1903.....	14,241,700	6,934,415	66,721,675
1902.....	13,817,605	7,231,380	62,474,335
1901.....	12,548,600	7,424,400	59,940,000
1900.....	10,391,000	6,200,000	51,817,000
1899.....	10,132,700	6,315,000	50,760,000
1898.....	10,017,800	5,838,200	49,927,000
1897.....	10,035,000	5,511,000	48,432,000
1896.....	10,257,000	5,562,000	46,698,600
1895.....	10,248,000	5,685,000	45,139,000
1894.....	10,162,000	5,926,700	43,750,000
1893.....	10,390,000	7,222,000	42,489,000
1892.....	10,165,200	7,047,000	42,267,500
Inc. since 1892...	\$4,076,500	Dec. \$112,585	Inc. \$24,454,175

The comparison with 1892 affords a striking illustration of the vicissitude of the fire insurance business, for in that year when the premiums were less by \$4,076,500 than in 1903, the net losses were more by \$112,585, the business in 1892 having contrasted very unfavourably with that of last year. Just when the accounts were being prepared for publication the Baltimore and Toronto conflagration occurred, which were enough to check the gratification felt at last year's results, but not sufficient to create the slightest anxiety, as the Royal is conflagration proof.

As a result of the operations last year the Fire Fund was raised from \$5,640,000 to \$6,000,000, an increase of \$360,000 in 1903 over 1902, and of \$1,360,000 over 1901. The net amount of cash received for premiums in Canada last year was \$973,773, and net amount paid for losses \$497,345.

The Canadian business has been under the control of Mr. Wm. Mackay since Mr. Simpson's demise a few months ago, assisted by Mr. J. H. Labelle. Mr. Mackay has been connected with the Royal in Canada for the past twenty-two years, filling the position