

# The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, specially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion 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 country between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast, than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. By a thorough system of personal solicitation, carried out annually, this journal has been placed upon the desks of the great majority of business men in the vast district designated above, and including north-west Ontario, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the territories of Assiniboia Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, APRIL 10, 1893.

## Advertising Manitoba.

A little pamphlet, the title page of which bears the words, "Manitoba, Official Information for Investors and Settlers," has reached us from the Manitoba government immigration offices in Liverpool. The pamphlet is issued by authority of the provincial government for distribution in Great Britain. It gives a brief space to Canada as a whole, area, population, etc., and the remaining chapters are devoted to Manitoba. The area, population, progress, resources, etc., of the province are spoken of, also the system of government, educational system, description of towns and cities, crops, markets, manufactures, etc. Several pages relate the experiences of visitors and settlers. The little book should prove a useful one for the purpose intended.

## Origin of Fife Wheat.

G. Leith, of the Nileston Mills, London, Ont., writes as follows concerning the controversy as to the origin of Red Fife wheat: "I came from Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1821, locating then in the township of Hellen, Prince Edward Co. The same year an emigrant came from Scotland and brought a bag of spring wheat. This was disposed of to some farmers, who sowed the wheat, and in 1842, I ground the product. When the farmer brought the grain to the mill I asked him what kind of wheat he called it. I was told it was Fife wheat. It was a hard, flinty wheat, and difficult to grind. I used to sprinkle the wheat with water and let it lie in a heap for two days. What I claim is that the Fife wheat of Manitoba is none other than this Fife wheat of Scotland, some of which was grown in Prince Edward Co. as early as 1841. The Leith family have been oatmeal millers and millwrights in Scotland some hundreds of years, so my grandfather told me sixty years ago." Another correspondent, who resided for years in Peterboro county says:—"In 1853 the

writer lived in the township of Otonabee, Co. of Peterboro. My father was running a mill then, and knew Mr. David Fife. He bought his wheat, or it was sent to him from Scotland, and for years it was known as Scotch wheat. We had great difficulty in grinding it owing to its hardness, and under the old process the bran cut up. Club wheat was thus preferred to it until the purifiers and rolls came in. By this time it had spread over the whole of the northern part of this continent under the name of Fife." All accounts of this wheat seem to agree as regards its extreme hardness.

## Mints Glutted With Silver.

The United States mint at Philadelphia now contains the extraordinary amount of 110,000,000 ounces of bar silver, or sufficient for the coinage of 150,000,000 silver dollars, and besides that it holds some \$10,000,000 in coined silver. The vaults are full to overflowing and it has been necessary to have constructed a new steel-lined vault, which was completed about a week ago. It is 35 feet long, 8 feet wide, and ten feet high, yet it will hold but about 20,000,000 ounces if piled full from floor to ceiling. As silver bullion is now being received there at the rate of 3,800,000 ounces per month this additional room will be filled within half a year and then will rise the necessity of occupying still another room should the purchase of silver by the government be continued as at present. Each six months will require the erection of an additional vault for the purpose of increasing a load of silver that already is dangerously heavy in the estimation of many well-informed students of the financial situation.

What is the use of keeping up that purchase of 4,500,000 ounces each month? The people have all the silver paper they can use, and so much of it that practically it has crowded all the gold and gold paper out of circulation. Why not take measures for getting rid of a portion of the surplus by offering to redeem with a full dollar's worth of silver each of the dollars named on the certificates issued for the purchase of the metal? It would be just as honest, and far more convenient, to redeem the Treasury notes thus than to redeem in gold all of them that are presented at the Treasury.

There is no more sense, reason, or justice, in buying up the product of the silver mines to be stored on government account at Philadelphia and other points than there would be in the Treasury taking from the cotton raisers of the South and the wheat farmers of the West their surplus produce, and holding it like a rod in terrorem over the heads of the trade, which always looks at the "visible supply" as an important element in the process of determining the price to be paid for an article. No one can successfully deny that the accumulations of silver at the mints of the United States tend to keep down the price of metals as effectually as does the big visible supply of wheat to depress the price of the cereal on all that the farmer has yet to sell. Better, far better, for all concerned, if the surplus product were put on the market and worked off into the hands of consumers, leaving the price of that produced in the future to be determined by the relation of current supply to the current demand.—Chicago Tribune.

## Carbonized Pepper.

A western company manufacturing graphite paint tells us of a recent inquiry for a price on a large amount of graphite. It is not the custom of the concern to sell its raw material, and an investigation was made of the use to which the graphite was to be put. The inquiry was found to proceed from a company having a close business connection with a jobbing house that does a large business in black pepper! The era of sanded sugar and chicorée coffee has evidently given place to the day of carbonized pepper.—Iron Trade Review,

## Extent of Irrigation.

Science quotes from a writer on irrigation engineering the statement that India has about 25,000,000 acres that are made fruitful by irrigation. Egypt 8,000,000, Europe 5,000,000, and the United States 4,000,000 acres. Thus about 40,000,000 acres of land are made to produce crops on land which would have remained desert but for the artificial introduction of water to the thirsty soil. This is about the extent of area seeded annually in wheat in the United States.

## Canned Goods Now and Then.

When the failure of Jay Cooke & Co. was announced in September, 1873, the commercial and financial classes instinctively realized that a crash was impending. The "crash" came all right, and following in its wake began the gradual shrinkage in value of nearly, if not all, commodities, to the scale of present existing values. No line of goods seemed to offer so long and stubborn resistance to this reduction in price as did the large line of articles known as canned goods. At the date above referred to three pound tomatoes were held firmly by packers at \$2.50 per dozen, there being "no money" in packing them at that "miserly" price. Other articles were priced on a similar scale of values. The shrinkage, however, began almost immediately after the occurrence of the above failure, and went on steadily for ten or twelve years, until the scale of values ruling up to January last was established, say 30 to 90c for three pound tomatoes, with only a trifling difference in price as between eastern and western markets, local packers in the west being compelled to yield to the dealer the largest share of the freight advantage he held over competitors in order to clean up his pack. But this gradual cheapening was, as it were, fought year by year in a speculative way by packer, retailer and jobber. Every break in price was assumed to be to a point less than cost of production and bound to react. Every dealer loaded up with a stock sufficient to meet his ordinary trade requirements for years ahead, in the idea that he would unload on his neighbor, who had failed to size up the situation correctly as he had, but time gradually revealed the fact that the speculative holder had in his store stacks of goods bought at higher than ruling market price, with the added disadvantage of rusty cans, swells, shop-worn, old goods, in place of new and fresh goods, loss of interest and storage. In fact, the result was failure to many of this speculative class, and loss to all. Of late years the buying of canned articles has been done by all classes on the conservative shopkeeper principle, of buying as required to meet a regular demand from the regular trade. In this style of trading goods no longer accumulate and grow into swells or "rusties." The packer-made prices are based on the pack to be marketed; it is met by packer, jobber and retailer, and it is consumed. Very few old goods are now found to enrich the warehouseman as in former years. If there ever was a time when the date of pack was needed on canned articles, that time has passed long ago and will never come again. Goods are forced to consumption by cut in prices and by agencies that reach all classes of the people—dry goods stores, drug stores and meat markets—so that the grocery man has to keep his profits within limits or he will cease to be in the business so far as canned goods are concerned, and it also insures consumption of the goods within a reasonable time (say two seasons after packing at most), probably 35 per cent. being consumed before now packing season comes around. There is absolutely no need, therefore, to date cans, as no goods are injurious to health because of their age, whereas a person ignorant of this fact and prejudiced, would perhaps be induced to reject the chance to purchase a palatable, wholesome table delicacy offered at a low price. In such a case ignorance is surely more profitable than knowledge.—Chicago Grocer.