

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 28, 1880

## ANOTHER YEAR.

With this issue THE COMMERCIAL enters upon its fifth year of publication, the first number having appeared on the third day of October, 1882. Since then the interests which the journal has looked after and defended, have had a varied experience. Starting out on the verge of a speculative collapse, journal and interests have gone linked together through the depths of depression, and the slow process of return to prosperity. Rebellion has clouded around, commercial disaster has been passed through, and panic only has been avoided, so that all of the past four years have not been sunshine with the commercial interests of the Northwest no pleasant and profitable to the publisher. The dark days are over for the present at least, and it is to be hoped that journal and interests will now pass through years of prosperity linked together as closely and inseparably as they were in the days of depression.

When the first number of THE COMMERCIAL made its appearance, railway communication westward had scarcely crossed the western boundary of Manitoba, and to the east it still failed to reach the shores of Lake Superior. The city of Winnipeg was a railway centre, with radiating lines ending at nowhere, while now prosperous towns and cities in other portions of Manitoba were mere villages. Now the city and province are linked with both the Atlantic and Pacific coast, while within the Canadian Northwest, the term applied to the country from the eastern boundary of Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains, nearly seventeen hundred miles of railway are in operation, and several promising cities, besides scores of growing and prosperous towns and villages are now scattered over, what five years ago was unbroken prairie.

The Northwest when THE COMMERCIAL first appeared was a new country, importing nearly all its supplies and exporting practically nothing, whereas the exports of the city of Winnipeg alone during 1885 reached an aggregate value of \$2,180,820, and those of the province of Manitoba for 1886 promise to aggregate if they do not exceed a value of \$5,000,000.

We have now safely gathered in a harvest, which will add greatly to the exports

and wealth of Manitoba, and we have arrived at a state of safety in trade affairs, such as should satisfy the most conservative students of commerce, so that while we have no boom tendencies or inflated ideas of our present state, we may safely calculate upon having entered upon a steady and progressive prosperity, with which there is no reason to fear unpleasant reactions.

While we have reached prosperity, and made great progress during the past four years, there is still no room for lingering in our onward movement. During the coming four years we have before us the great work of building a railway to the shores of Hudson's Bay, and opening the great northern outlet for our products. We have the duty of freeing ourselves from the chain of railway monopoly with which we are bound down, and which so impedes and encumbers us in our progress. We have the additional duty of securing settlers for our fertile lands, so that we may take our proper place as a populous land of plenty. These and other duties are before us, and in grappling with them the progressive element of our country will find one unflinching supporter in THE COMMERCIAL, and one guided by the motto "ever aggressive." In the struggling years that have passed, we have had the steady support and confidence of the commercial community around us, and in the more prosperous era which has now dawned, it shall be our aim to retain the same.

## THE BONUS SYSTEM AGAIN.

We have received a communication from Mr. J. B. Rutherford, of Stonewall, called forth by the perusal of an article published in THE COMMERCIAL of the 14th instant, dealing with municipal indebtedness. Our correspondent refers to that portion of the article in which allusion was made to the indiscriminate manner in which bonuses have been voted for the establishment of roller flour mills. Mr. Rutherford says: "Whilst I agree with your remarks in the main, there are exceptional instances where it is a good investment for municipalities to bonus enterprises that afford accommodation the ratepayers cannot well afford to do without." Our correspondent then instances the case of the farmers about Stonewall, who are compelled to purchase their flour at the retail price for the same, whereas they could save a considerable outlay by having their wheat ground, were there a

mill in their district. Mr. Rutherford is the joint owner of a stone mill located at Stonewall. This mill of course is now useless for merchant work, and it does not pay to run it for custom work alone. He has therefore asked for a small bonus from the municipality to enable him to change the mill to the roller process; and in return for such assistance he offers to grind fifty bushels of wheat yearly for each ratepayer, at the rate of ten cents per bushel, or a reduction of five cents from the usual rate. He also agrees to chop thirty hundred weight of grain at eight cents per hundred weight, to use our correspondents words, "a reduction in itself sufficient to pay each farmer the amount he would have to contribute in taxes."

Under these circumstances it would seem that the farmers (ratepayers) are getting altogether the best of the bargain. Would not Mr. Rutherford be money in pocket in the long run by raising the funds necessary for his undertaking in some other way and charging the regular rates for his work? However, if Mr. Rutherford is willing to make such an arrangement, it would certainly appear to the advantage of the ratepayers to accept it, providing the sum asked for is not exorbitant. Such an arrangement could not be termed a bonus within the strict meaning of the word, and would simply be an agreement between the parties thereto, where value for value would be supposed to be given.

The article in THE COMMERCIAL which our correspondent refers to, was not intended for a dissertation on the bonus system. The primary object of the same was to show the evils of encumbering town corporations with heavy debts, for whatever cause contracted. Reference was merely made incidentally to the indiscriminate manner in which bonuses had been voted for the establishment of flour mills, and even then it was stated that "this is probably the least form of the evil." In THE COMMERCIAL of July 13th there appeared an article dealing with the bonus system, in which the following paragraph occurred:

"Perhaps this system of bonusing flour mills is the least objectionable feature in connection with the whole bonus system, and there are many arguments which may be used in its favor. The principal among these is the argument that a better market is provided for the farmers' leading crop, and that the enhanced price which he will receive for his wheat will more than compensate him for his share in the bonus expenditure. Then there is the convenience to be derived from having a mill for custom gristing purposes, instead of having to purchase flour.