

# 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 northwest 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, JANUARY 16, 1893.

## Ask a Fair Price.

If the failures were to be closely looked into it would be found that most of them are due to insufficient prices for the work done. There may be a few cases wherein the failure arises from defective management in other respects, but the one great "sink hole" for the printers capital, as well as that of everyone who will trust him, is the smallness of the prices at which he takes work. In most this is entirely unnecessary and inexcusable. It is true that competition is sharp and that customers run around to find the lowest bidder; but that is no reason why a printer shall take work at prices which leaves him no profit. The trouble is that he does not know how much the work costs him to produce, and thinks that he sees a profit when there is none, but probably a loss instead. The worst enemies of such men are the press builders, type founders and paper dealers, who allow them to get into debt while running a profitless business.—*American Bookmaker.*

## Fur Trade Notes.

The *Fur Trade Review* says: It is difficult to properly characterize the season now drawing to a close. A number of manufacturers have done well, some have fairly made "booth ends meet, and others are complaining. In respect the past year has been remarkable, namely, in the liberality displayed in giving credits; as a consequence of this course the number of failures was unexpectedly large, and this result proves that the safety of the seller and the future of the purchaser depend upon greater conservatism in granting credit. Though furs are fashionable and very generally worn, the anticipated "boom" has not as yet materialized; the cloak trade, which expected a good late business, was as a rule sadly disappointed, and furriers who waited in high hopes for a great holiday business, were in error respecting some important articles. It is too early to make

predictions for next season, but we believe that certain furs will continue in favor, especially seal, mink, skunk and Persians. The raw fur season opens with the usual recklessness, noticeable in some sections; where speculators are endeavoring to secure supplies of skins, with entire indifference to the conditions of the market or any other business consideration. In this market there has been considerable enquiry for mink and early good skunk; indications point to a large collection of the latter; of the former there has been no accumulation thus far.

The London correspondent of the *New York Fur Trade Review*, writing on Dec. 10 says: "The season of 1892, as far as the wholesale trade is concerned, is a thing of the past, and taking it altogether it has not been a bad year by any means for the trade. It is quite true the opening was very much delayed on account of the uncertainty of fashion, but when it did start, there was plenty of business about and the final result must be considered very satisfactory. The season prematurely closed on account of the wet and foggy weather. Skunk was looked upon as one of the best articles this year, but it has not quite come up to expectations and this accounts for the lower prices at the last public sales. Marten has done very well all through and holders of stock have had a good opportunity to clear out at very good prices. The demand is good to day, and one of the principal trimmings seen in the West End shops is of this fur, which is a very good sign after being neglected as it has been for so many years. Mink has been in pretty good favor during the year and it does look as though the trade was coming back again to the old fashioned articles, such as marten, mink, sable, kolinsky and ermine. Fur seals have done remarkably well, and considering the price paid for them in the early part of the year it is very satisfactory to find that stocks are pretty well cleared out, and that the demand is still very good as proved by the advanced prices paid at Lampson's last sale. Chinchilla—We had hoped that this article would have been fashionable this year, but it still continues neglected. Why it should be so unpopular we cannot quite understand, but presume it will have another turn some day. Musquash has sold very well as linings, but otherwise has been very disappointing. We had quite expected that the low price it stood at in January would have caused it to "go," but the popular fancy has not caught on. Gray fox have done remarkably well and the stocks here are smaller than they have been for the last ten years. Australian opossum has sold very well all through and prices are higher to-day than in January last. Nutria has been sold in larger quantities than in any previous year.

Following are the prices in shillings obtained at the London November seal sale. Alaskas: Middlings and smalls, 125; smalls, 134 to 136; large pups, 122 to 129; middling pups, 118 to 127; small pups, 119 to 121; extra small pups, 83; middlings and smalls, low, 76; large pups, low, 77; small and extra small pups, low, 63; middlings and smalls, cut, 124; smalls, cut, 126; large pups, cut, 122; middling and small pups, cut, 118. Northwest Coast:—Middlings, 70 to 79; middlings and smalls, 70 to 86; smalls, 73 to 80; large pups, 76 to 86; middling pups, 70 to 83; small pups, 60 to 71; extra small pups, 44 to 50; extra small pups, 32 to 43; middlings and smalls, cut, 68 to 74; smalls, cut, 63 to 73; large pups, cut, 64 to 73; middling pups, cut, 59 to 67; small pups, cut, 49 to 57; extra small pups, cut, 31 to 37. Copper Islands:—Middlings, 91 to 95; middlings and smalls, 101 to 105; smalls, 100 to 104; large pups, 92 to 94; middling pups, 80 to 83; small pups, 67 to 70; extra small pups, 59 to 60; middlings, low, 66; middlings and smalls, low, 61 to 63; large pups, low, 54; middling pups, low, 48, small pups, low, 48 to 49; extra small pups, low, 40; middlings, cut, 80; middlings and smalls, cut, 94, smalls, cut, 85; large pups, cut, 78; middling pups, cut, 71.

Capo Horn:—Smalls, 43, large pups, 45; middling pups, 41; small pups, 26 to 28; extra small pups, 20; small pups, low, 19 to 25; extra small pups, low, 13 to 17. South Sea:—Middlings, 80 to 90; small, 120 to 122.6; large pup, 147.6 to 150; middling pups, 130 to 132.6; small pups, 100 to 102.6; extra small pups, 67.6; middlings, low, 58; large and middling pups, 69; small and extra small pups, 42. Lobos Island:—Middlings, 35 to 41; middlings and smalls, 42 to 44; smalls, 45 to 49, large pups, 47 to 55; middling pups, 38 to 51; small pups, 22 to 32; extra small pups, 14 to 23; extra smalls, 13; small pups, low, 15 to 16; extra small pups, low, 9 to 11; middlings, cut, 7; large and middling pups, cut, 26, middling and small pups, cut, 18; extra small pups, cut, 12.

## Currants.

The small black dried fruit of commerce known as Zante currants, are not currants but grapes, of a variety peculiar to Greece and its islands; and not cultivable elsewhere. Attempts have been made to grow them in other countries but without success, for the transplanted vines produced large grapes. Originally termed "Raisins de Corauntz" (from Corinth, the port of shipment), the name became perverted to the modern "currants."

The currant is one of the chief products of Greece, and the production in the past decade has doubled. Sixty years ago the production was about 2000 tons; and for the past three or four years it has reached from 150,000 to 160,000 tons. Until within the past few years America confined her importations to the poorer grades of fruit, but Americans are being educated to use the finer qualities, and an increase in the consumption of these grades is probable, as there is no dried fruit so cheap, and none more wholesome or nutritious. In England many families mix currants in making bread, which makes it very palatable and keeps the bread moist a longer time than without them.

Great quantities are grown in the Ionian Islands; the shores of the Gulf of Corinth, from Patras to Corinth are one vast vineyard of currant vines. Here is produced the finest fruit, known as Vostizza, Corinthia and Patras. The vines are planted in close rows, and are pruned to small bushes. When the fruit has matured, it is plucked and laid upon the ground to cure. This is a time of great anxiety, for the value of the crop depends upon proper curing, and this in turn depend upon the weather. Dampness causes fermentation and other damages.

Because they are dried upon the ground, currants in their ordinary commercial condition are exceedingly dirty, being mixed with much refuse, soil and other impurities. It is important therefore, that they should be thoroughly and scientifically cleaned.

The price of steel rails, which has long stood at \$30 per ton at eastern United States mills has at last been reduced \$1, making it \$29 per ton.

A correspondent of the *Free Press* writes: It will interest school trustees and others concerned with school affairs in the Territories to hear that D. Mowat has succeeded in having inserted in the new school bill a section dealing with the single tax. The effect of the new section is that whenever three-fourths of the rate-payers in any school district so decide, all the taxable lands within the district shall be assessed at a uniform figure. The unimproved land will be assessed at exactly the same figures as the improved. No buildings or improvements whatsoever will be assessed. The maximum rate of taxation is raised from one to two per cent. Mr. Mowat also had a bill introduced and it is being printed, the object of which is to bring Henry George's single tax ideas into practical operation in the Territories wherever possible.