

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 6, 1885.

HOME SUPPLIES.

Those who can remember the destitution which existed in Lancashire, England, during the days of blockade of the ports of the Southern States, and idle cotton mills, have no difficulty in comprehending the helpless state of a country dependent upon only one source of trade. The cry for help which came from thousands of starving operators can be well remembered by those who were acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and were a proof how thoroughly prostrate one of the most prosperous counties of England could be made by the paralyzing of one all important industry. The lesson learned at that time may be considered by some as only applicable to manufacturing affairs, and others might narrow it down to only one branch of the same. The narrowing process is a mistaken one, however, as the lesson may be taken advantage of in any field, and when acted upon will bring profit.

Strange as it may seem, Manitoba and the Northwest are at present having an experience very similar to that of Lancashire, England, during the days of the American civil war, although the experience is by no means as bitter and as prostrating. The idea that this was a country for raising wheat in only, has taken deeper root than most of us are aware of, and the effects of the foolish belief in the same are now painfully apparent, at a time when that grain all over the world is at such a low price. The folly of depending upon this product alone needs no demonstration now, and it requires but very little argument to convince the most extreme agricultural unitarian of the same.

But there is one point in which the people of the Northwest have been even more foolish than the manufacturers of Lancashire. The latter were producing for a foreign demand in one branch, while other articles entering into daily consumption with themselves were procured at lower figures from other markets than they could have produced them at home. With the Northwest, matters are quite different. People here have been aiming for the export of wheat alone, while in a dozen articles of food, which the country is admirably adapted for producing, they

have been importing at fancy prices from countries which do not possess anything like the same facilities for raising such products. In our food imports for the past three years at least, we have not been "carrying coals to Newcastle," but we have been making it profitable for people in other parts of this continent to do so. It is only within the past six months that people have become satisfied that we are in a position to produce our own beef and pork, and now that the attempt is being made to supply our own cured meats from an institution in Winnipeg, we have still numerous skeptics, even among a class whom we usually credit with considerable business acumen. But this skepticism will be cured just as thoroughly and successfully as the meats it is expressed regarding. In this line, therefore, we may rest assured, that the foundation is laid for our home supply in future. But we are regularly importing canned meats here which can be packed here with success. Beef, for instance, is now cheaper than it can be imported at, and the process of corning and canning should not be difficult to overtake. In this item of canned meats an avenue is open to evade one of the most burdensome import duties the Northwest labors under. Let us hope that someone with the necessary enterprise will place it among our Manitoba industries before the close of the present year.

But there is one field in which the handling and distribution of home supplies can tell amazingly, and that is in connection with our butter supply. Nearly a year ago THE COMMERCIAL predicted that the days of butter imports were nearly over. The prediction has been disregarded during the past fall, and now Winnipeg is overstocked if not glutted with that product. A regular butter packing institution, requiring not more than \$10,000 capital, if started under the supervision of a sharp, practical manager, would sound the last knell of butter imports from the east, and raise Manitoba to the position of an exporter of that product before the close of the current year. It does seem strange that the outlay of so small an amount should prove a barrier to so necessary a work of progress.

But there are other fields for home products that offer equally good inducements. In the item of starch manufacture, for instance, the potatoes which are lost from carelessness and freezing each year would

furnish enough raw material for a factory large enough to supply the whole Northwest. In a dozen other lines raw material is yearly allowed to go to waste which could be made into home supplies of goods which we are still compelled to import at greatly advanced figures.

It should now be a settled question about the wheat producing and exporting power of the Northwest. That has now reached a stage from which it will progress of itself, or may be left as a work for the agriculturist alone to carry out. The tact of the business man, the ingenuity of the manufacturer and the funds of the capitalist are now wanted for the production of home supplies of other products. It should be kept steadily in view that while Manitoba imports one dollar's worth of food products, capable of being produced in this latitude, there are left relics of that shiftlessness which are legacies of our late boom.

THE BIG WHEAT DEAL.

The operations of the Montreal Wheat Syndicate during the past two weeks have developed no new features that have not been previously shadowed by THE COMMERCIAL. The further the work of buying, or rather pretending to buy, progresses, the more evident it becomes that the whole arrangement is a get up of the C.P.R. managers, with two objects in view. The main one is to prevent any grain from going to the east over United States routes, and the other is to give an agricultural boom to the Northwest by showing up the imaginary prices paid to farmers here, compared with those paid on the southern side of the boundary. How far they will be successful in reaching these two aims remains to be seen. The Syndicate's manager certainly displays considerable ingenuity in his method of operations. He is careful not to place buyers on at receiving points to pay the prices so carefully and prominently placarded up there. The buying he leaves to local hands, and the value in the opinion of the Syndicate is only fixed after the grain is safe at Port Arthur, and numbers of people who have shipped their grain there to be graded by a paid servant of the C.P.R. are by no means satisfied with the results. The game may work for a time, and will, no doubt, have the effect of preventing much that would from going east over United States railways. To keep farmers in an unsettled and unde-