

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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D. W. BUCHANAN,  
Publisher.

The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 1.

## MANITOBA CHEESE.

At the recent meeting in Winnipeg of the Butter and Cheese Makers' Union, some hard things were said about Manitoba cheese, which, by the way, were quite true. It is a matter for regret that Manitoba cheese makers are compelled to admit that the average quality of our cheese is inferior. The encouraging feature of this is, that when the difficulty is recognized and acknowledged, there is more reason to hope for improvement than if the situation were ignored. As good cheese can be produced in Manitoba as anywhere else in Canada. This has been proved by the fact that Manitoba cheese has carried off the highest awards at great fairs in Eastern Canada and the United States. Good cheese is made in Manitoba, but there is also a considerable quantity of very poor goods turned out. The poor cheese has the effect of injuring the sale of the good cheese, and therefore, it is in the interest of those who make good cheese as well as those who make the poor stuff, that a decided improvement should be brought about in the average quality of the product of our cheese factories. A dealer, say, at Montreal or Vancouver, who receives a poor lot of Manitoba cheese, is liable to become prejudiced against Manitoba goods in general. This prejudice has already been established to such an extent that it is made more difficult for makers of good Manitoba cheese to dispose of their product, and in order to make sales they are obliged to shade prices.

This is very much to be regretted, and it is hoped the efforts being put forth to improve the quality of our dairy products will result in much good. One point which was brought up at the meeting referred to was the question of discriminating in buying cheese. The Commercial has more than once in times past called attention to the undesirable custom which has prevailed here of buying dairy products at one price, regardless of quality. This practice affords no encouragement to the producers of the best goods. On the contrary, it deliberately invites carelessness on the part of the manufacturers. The custom is undoubtedly the cause, to a great extent, of the inferior quality of much of our dairy goods. It is earnestly to be desired that with the commencement of another season, some system of discrimination in buying dairy goods will be established whereby inferior quantities will be rated at their true value. This, we believe,

would tend to bring about the desired end and at once lead to a decided improvement in the quality of our dairy goods.

## TRADING STAMP TO GO.

The retail business men of Winnipeg have decided to give up the use of trading stamps on January first next. In agreeing to this move they have come to a very wise and businesslike conclusion. As matters have been going for some time in Winnipeg, the use of trading stamps has been of no value to any of the merchants. So long as only a limited number of dealers used the stamps, there was no doubt a certain gain in business to those using them. Later when the stamps came into general use, nearly all the merchants in the city using them, this benefit was lost. Buyers did not have to hunt up dealers who used stamps, as practically all gave stamps, so that the stamp lost its value as a trade-drawer. The only value in the stamp is by confining its use to a limited number of firms in each line, so that consumers who wish to collect them, are compelled to go to the stores where they are used. This was the situation in Winnipeg when the Dominion trading stamp first came into use. Only certain dealers in each line were given an opportunity of using the stamps. Those who did not use them, certainly lost a number of good customers, as the custom of collecting stamps came into vogue. Later a local trading stamp company was organized, and practically all those not using the Dominion trading stamp, began to use the local stamp. Thus the advantage accruing to the few who were using the Dominion stamps was lost, and the result has been that the merchants have signed an agreement to dispense with the stamps entirely at the close of the year.

The disappearance of the trading stamp will not cause any regrets in business circles. The giving of stamps has proved a serious matter for many business men, particularly in lines where the margin of profit is small. On many lines of goods the profit is so small that the reduction in profits by giving stamps was severely felt by merchants. Aside from the reduction of profits, the custom was unbusinesslike in principle and practice. If the merchant can afford to give any discount upon his goods, a businesslike way would be to give the discount direct to the purchaser. In the case of the trading stamps, a third party stepped in between the merchant and his customer and shared the profit arising from the transaction. This could hardly appeal to the good judgment of a business man as a legitimate way of doing business. By all means let the trading stamp go.

## THE LIQUOR ACT.

When the Liquor Act was before the legislative assembly the premier indicated, that although he would ask for its enactment, he would submit some questions to the courts to permit of argument and judicial opinion, upon the constitutionality of the measure. Attorney General Campbell lost no time after his appointment to office, in preparing these questions, and they were given in detail in The Commercial last week. As they are already before the court, it would be improper to comment upon them, but it is evident that they are going to make a celebrated case, and it is understood, that whatever the decisions of their lordships of the Manitoba Queen's Bench, the case will go to the Privy Council of Great Britain. This means that the

final decision will not be rendered for months. Indeed, it is not expected that the Queen's Bench decision will be forthcoming until February.

The first hearing came off on Wednesday last, to settle the parties to the case. Attorney General Campbell and J. A. M. Atkins, Q. C., appeared for the government to defend the Act. F. A. Phippen, Q. C., was admitted to represent the Liquor Trade. W. R. Mulock, Q. C., and E. L. Taylor appeared on behalf of the Alliance to represent the temperance people, but after a long argument the judges decided that the reference did not warrant their appearance in the case. It was announced that the Dominion government, although interested in the excise and revenue, would not be represented. A remarkable feature is the position of the Hudson's Bay company. One of the questions involves the rights of the company, but the company through its counsel, W. E. Perdue, protested against the company being brought in, and stated that it declined to plead and would not be bound by any decision given. Even if the company had rights which the Act could not interfere with, he would not say that it would take any advantage of them. Nevertheless, their lordships decided, that as the government had submitted the question they were bound to deal with it. And if the company would not appoint counsel, it would be the duty of the court to do so.

The case will be argued again on Wednesday next. It is understood that the Alliance counsel will be admitted by the government, and will thus get a hearing. The Act is already on the statute book, to come into full operation at the expiry of the present licenses in May next.

## RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT.

The opening of the Southeastern section of the Canadian Northern railway through to Rainy River, marks another important accomplishment in the development of Western Canada. An important link in the proposed new line through to Lake Superior has thus been completed and opened for regular traffic. Two important points (Winnipeg and Rainy River) have been connected by a direct route by the completion of the Southeastern. While the railway was building across the prairies of southeastern Manitoba and through the wood country which lies beyond the prairie region, very little attention was attracted to the matter. But now that the road has reached an important point like Rainy River, a considerable traffic may be expected to flow over this route at once.

The country between Winnipeg and Rainy River is sparsely settled, though there is a large area of good land tributary to the road, between Winnipeg and the beginning of the wood country. As the wooded district is approached, there is considerable swampy land. The wood country will furnish a large traffic in cordwood for the Winnipeg market. It is expected that a large quantity of saw logs will also be brought over the new railway, from points tributary to the road, or tributary to the Rainy River. As a result of the construction of this road, a large saw mill will be established in Winnipeg by the Rat Portage Lumber Co., which will be ready for operating next summer, and thus the lumbering industry at Winnipeg will be given a great impetus. Tributary to the Rainy river there is a considerable section of good agricultural country, which will be brought into direct connection with Winnipeg, and which will be greatly benefited

by the building of the road. The mining interests about Rainy Lake and vicinity will also reap advantage from the operation of the new line.

During the winter a bridge will be constructed over the Rainy river, for the purpose of uniting the Southeastern and Ontario sections of the Canadian Northern system, thus forming another through line to Lake Superior, on the completion of the Ontario section between Port Arthur and Rainy river.

## HOW ABOUT INSURANCE.

The season for fires is again at hand. Severe weather always results in an increase of the number of fires. Defective pipes and flues get in their deadly work at a time when stoves and furnaces are crowded to their utmost capacity. Heavy fires left burning over night without any one on guard to keep an eye on them, are an additional source of danger at this time of year. Stocks of merchandise are also heavier than usual during the early portion of the winter, thus making it necessary that fire insurance should be looked after. The wise trader will keep well insured all the time. The only thing which can be said of neglect to do so is, that it shows carelessness or lack of business capacity. When the stock of goods is largely increased, as it is during the fall and early winter, the matter of fire insurance should be looked into and the protection increased in proportion to the increase in the stock. Aside from this, the increased danger of fires during the winter season, should put even the careless merchant on guard and cause him to see that he is properly protected from loss by fire. The more a dealer owes on his stock, the more anxious he should be about the matter of fire insurance. When his liabilities are heavy, his obligation to protect himself are in like proportion increased, for in neglecting to properly insure his stock, he is neglecting the rights of his creditors, who would lose heavily in case of destruction of his stock by fire. It is certainly a duty we owe one to another, to protect the interests of others in matters of this kind. In the case of fire insurance the merchant is protecting himself at the same time that he is safeguarding the interests of his creditors, by keeping his property fully insured. The trader who meets with a heavy loss through neglecting his insurance is sure to be looked upon as a careless business man by those who take an interest in the matter.

## A DOMINION BOARD OF TRADE.

At the banquet recently given Lord Strathcona at Toronto, the guest of the evening endorsed the formation of a Dominion board of trade. Lord Strathcona said:—

"By this means you would be able to bring to the notice of the Government many things with which they themselves would have very little knowledge, because, being business, commercial and professional men, you must necessarily have more intimate and practical knowledge of what is required than any body of men sitting at Ottawa, or, for that matter, at Westminster."

No doubt Lord Strathcona speaks from a knowledge of what has been accomplished in the United Kingdom by the national body there, known as the Association of Chambers of Commerce of the United Kingdom. A national board of trade would undoubtedly carry great weight with the government. There are certainly many matters which would come properly before such a body, and upon which business men in all parts of the country could unite unanimously in advising a stated policy of action.