

THE COMMERCIAL

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

Eighteenth Year of Publication
ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY

SUBSCRIPTIONS, CANADA AND UNITED STATES
\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE OR \$2.25 WHEN
NOT SO PAID; OTHER COUNTRIES, \$2.50 PER
ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

*Changes for advertisements should be in not later
than Thursday morning.*

Advertisements purporting to be news matter,
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Office: 151 McDermott Street.

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, DEC. 2, 1899.

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS.

Manitoba is at present going through the excitement of a provincial election contest. One favorable feature in connection therewith, from a business point of view, is the fact that the contest is to be a very brief one. The time allowed by the government between the announcement of the dissolution of the house and the date of the elections is so short, that those who do not take an active interest in provincial politics, will hardly realize that anything unusual is going on until the elections are over.

The present contest differs from previous ones in the sense that there is no great question at issue between the parties. In the last contest or two we had the school question. This question is happily no longer a disturbing factor. The government party evidently rely mainly on their record during their past three terms in office, as no important new legislation has been proposed or promised. The only direct promise made in the address of the premier is the statement that it is the intention of the government, at the next session, to introduce legislation prohibiting the sale of liquor to the extent of the powers of the province. This, however, is only the repetition of an old promise. Evidently prohibition of the sale of liquors is considered a popular proposal, as the opposition platform contains substantially the same promise as that made by the premier, in this regard.

The opposition on the other hand has laid down quite a lengthy platform, containing some eighteen or twenty planks, but many of these so called planks do not relate to either political or economic issues, but rather to such general features or statements as economic administration

tion of provincial finances, etc. These of course are not issues at all upon which there can be any difference of opinion among the electors. The opposition promise to reduce the salaries of ministers to three, and also to reduce the sessional indemnity to \$400, to establish an agricultural college and a technical school, to pass an act providing for compensation for injuries received by workmen, etc.

The only really important question discussed in the contest is that of government ownership of railways. The opposition platform declares for government ownership "as the circumstances of the province will admit and the adoption of the principle that no bonuses should be granted to any railway which does not give the government control of rates and option of purchase." Several candidates go farther than this and come out squarely in favor of government ownership of railways. Some candidates on the government side have also declared in favor of government roads under certain conditions, though previous to the opening of the campaign no intimation was given from the government side of any proposals in this direction.

The difficulties in the way of provincial government ownership of railways, are, first: that Manitoba is already well supplied with railways under private ownership, and secondly: that provincial roads would only be feeders to through trunk lines.

There can be no doubt as to the growing popularity in the west of the principle of government ownership, and the present campaign is bringing this question before the people quite prominently. Indeed, the railway question is really the only great issue in the campaign.

Progress Along the M. & N. W. Railway.

The Manitoba and Northwestern railway line starts at Portage la Prairie, 55 miles west of Winnipeg, and runs in a north-westerly direction for a distance of 223 miles, terminating at the town of Yorkton, Assiniboia. It has two branches, one from Minnedosa to Rapid City, a distance of 15 miles, the other from Blomquist to Russell, 11 miles. The section of country traversed by this railway differs somewhat from other parts of Manitoba, being more hilly and wooded. The farmers do not go in for the raising of grain to the same extent, but devote their energies to mixed farming, and the wisdom of this course has been proven time and again as in case of poor crops they have their herds of cattle to fall back upon. The wheat yield this season will only average about 15 bushels to the acre, but the crop of oats was very good, averaging in the neighborhood of 60 bushels to the acre. Business has been very good during the last year, although the past month or six weeks has been quiet. This, however, is probably owing to the fact that the farmers have been taking advantage of the fine weather

to get their fall work done, leaving the marketing of their grain until winter sets in.

Macdonald is the first station on the line after leaving Portage la Prairie. It is in a good grain district and should in time become a good business point.

Westbourne is in quite a pretty spot and is a favorite place for excursions. It is headquarters for D. Macdonald & Co., cattle shippers, while A. L. Smalley and Davey Bros., are the general merchants.

Gladstone is the first town of any importance west of Portage la Prairie, and is best known as a cattle shipping station. It is the junction point of the Canadian Northern and the Manitoba & Northwestern railways, although the Canadian Northern run their trains through to Portage la Prairie. A branch of the Merchants Bank was opened here a short time ago. Knox Bros., furniture dealers, are starting a sash and door factory. There are three hardware stores here, and two general stores.

Midway is one of the smaller places, but is each year showing growth quite as large proportionately as the other towns on this line.

Arden is the centre of the wheat belt which extends from this point to a few miles west of Franklin station. There are five grain elevators and a mill here, as well as a number of good stores, the largest of these being Wm. Patterson's and McCann's & Boughtons general stores, and B. Vanblaricom's and J. A. Gihuly's hardware stores. Wilson & Co. are the owners of the flour mill.

Neepawa is well known as one of the best business points in this country. A few of the changes here during the last year are: A. Ballentyne & Son have bought out the general store business of Fulton & Durnan, and in addition have opened a store in the south end. Hopper & Co. bought out S. Hartford. W. S. Burley, late of Portage la Prairie, bought out one of R. C. Ennis' lumber yards. Emmig & Co. having purchased the other; C. C. Baker & Co. purchased McDougall & Co.'s hardware business, and A. B. Rodgers has transferred his stock of furniture to E. B. Collins. There have been a number of good buildings erected, among them being the Simpson and White blocks and the Union bank building; the latter especially is a fine looking building. B. R. Hamilton has built an addition to his hardware premises. The town of Neepawa is putting in an electric light plant which they expect to have in running order in a few weeks.

A great deal of grain is marketed at Franklin, there being now six elevators here. West of this point the farmers go in more for mixed farming, but around Franklin they give most of their energies to wheat raising. It has grown during the last few years to a considerable size, there being at present two general stores, two butcher shops, two blacksmith shops, implement warehouses, etc.

Minnedosa is situated in the valley of the Little Saskatchewan river, the stream running through the centre of the town. It has a population of about 1,000 and has a number of fine buildings. There have been several business changes during the past year. J. F. Boyd has sold his hardware store to Sparling & Co., and has recently purchased the lumber business of T. A. Cuddy. John Wake started a lumber yard near the station. Taylor Bros. have sold their stock of general merchandise to W. A. B.