

# 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.

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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, SEPT. 23, 1899.

## Souris and Other Coals.

Mr. Cockburn, of the Souris Coal Mining Co. is in the city from the mines this week. He reports business brisk at their mines at Coal Fields in the Souris district. The capacity of the mines has been increased and the output with the present plant could be increased to 600 tons per day, if required. Orders have been coming in earlier than usual this year, which is a good feature, as with the wheat shipments piling up, it is difficult to get cars for shipping coal. The Souris coal is being quoted at the same price as last year—namely \$1.50 per ton on cars at the mines. There should be a larger consumption of this home mined coal this year, on account of the sharp advance in imported and western anthracite coals, especially when it is selling at the same price as last year, while anthracite coals are \$2 per ton higher than last year.

D. E. Adams will handle the Souris coal in the city this year, as usual, and the price here is the same as last season, namely \$1.50 per ton delivered to consumers. Speaking of the high price of anthracite coals this season, Mr. Adams says that the cost of Pennsylvania anthracite at points of production is now about \$1.50 per ton higher than last year, while the high freight rate now prevailing further increases the cost to the amount of about 50 cents per ton, as compared with last year, making the cost laid down here, on the present basis of prices at point of production and freights, amount to \$2 per ton more than a year ago. Last winter coal was sold at practically cost—in fact less than cost—in this market, owing to a local fight among the dealers. This is a point further to be considered in comparing prices with what they were a year ago. Notwithstanding the high price of coal now, the margin of profit on Pennsylvania anthracite is a very moderate one, the difference in price compared with a year ago, being largely made up in increased cost at the mines and higher lake freight rates.

## British Columbia Fruit.

Manitoba has not heretofore been much of a market for British Columbia fruit, the trade not having yet reached proportions which would entitle it to be called a regular business. This is largely due to the lack of experience on the part of British Columbia growers as to how fruit should be prepared for shipment to this market, a drawback which will no doubt be remedied in time. Some growers of plums have maintained a desultory trade with this market through Winnipeg commission houses. Shipments have been made in small quantities again this year and the outcome so far is not all that could be desired. We have seen a letter this week from a shipper in one of the plum regions of British Columbia in which he complains of the treatment he received from a commission house in regard to a consignment of plums. The shipper states that he is under the impression that his fruit was slaughtered to make room for California stuff. The fact of the matter is his fruit was offered side by side with California and Washington fruit and Winnipeg retail merchants simply refused to buy it. Nearly the whole consignment was sold to country merchants. The Winnipeg commission houses have really no say in such matters. They offer the goods for sale without any prejudice one way or another and have not the slightest interest in slaughtering British Columbia or any other kind of fruit. They put the stocks side by side and let the buyers judge.

## Business at Vancouver.

Vancouver, Sept. 18, 1899.

The stock of creamery butter purchased before the advance in the east is pretty well diminished and new stocks are being ordered. On this account the price of creamery butter is higher. The same may be said of eggs. Fresh stocks of cheese are also being ordered from the east, which cannot possibly be sold under 15 or 16 cents. Oats have stiffened a little as the best qualities are found to be not very plentiful. Hay is coming in faster, sellers wishing to secure the high prices prevailing owing to the reported shortage.

Bank clearings in Vancouver this week again break the record, being \$1,198,821 with a balance of \$123,116. For three successive weeks the clearings have been over the million mark. The movement of the salmon pack and the heavy northern sales help much to swell the returns at this time of year.

The government has declined to change the coho salmon season and fishermen are making the most of the short term. The northern canneries as well as the Fraser salmon pack has been very large this year, but the northern canners will win out better as the fishermen did not get the enormous prices that prevailed on the Fraser. The deep sea fishing has commenced very auspiciously. This lucrative industry is in the hands of United States parties, who, season after season, are fishing our halibut banks dry. The New England Fish company's steamer New England arrived from the banks yesterday with 120,000 pounds of halibut, which represents two days' fishing. The British Columbia halibut banks have proved a veritable Le Roi gold mine to this company. It is claimed that should a Canadian firm attempt to go into the business they would simply be

boycotted in the New England markets—the only profitable market for these fish, where a taste for halibut has been cultivated by the fish importing firms.

The ship, Star of Italy, has left the ways in Victoria, having completed her cleaning. She now goes to Chemainus for a lumber cargo.

The ship, Elwell, arrived in Royal Roads on Thursday, and will proceed to Chemainus, there to take lumber for Australia.

The barques, Silo and Yosemite, have been chartered for lumber from Chemainus, the former for the United Kingdom, at 72s 6d. This is a very high figure. Owing to the extreme scarcity of tonnage fancy prices rule. The Norwegian steamer, Aker, now at Port Townsend, is also to carry lumber, her charter being for Buenos Ayres, at 73s 6d.

## Visible Wheat Supplies.

Aside from a still further enlarged excess of visible wheat stocks held now as compared with one or two years ago, there is little that is new to report in this direction. Comparing, as current figures do, with critically situated wheat supplies at this time one and two years ago, present supplies naturally show heavy increases. When, however, comparison is made with earlier periods, when what was then regarded as normal stocks were held, the situation of supplies is not nearly so bearish. Summed up briefly, in fact, the situation is one of liberal present holdings, but these holdings have frequently been exceeded in other years, and current trade estimates of future requirements would seem to point to these aforesaid liberal supplies all being ultimately needed if reserves are to be kept at a point consonant with prevailing prices. The following table shows the stocks of wheat held in the United States and Canada on September 1, for eleven years past:

September 1, 1899	...	54,369,000
September 1, 1898	...	14,564,000
September 1, 1897	...	25,013,000
September 1, 1896	...	61,000,000
September 1, 1895	...	53,531,000
September 1, 1894	...	88,338,000
September 1, 1893	...	70,447,000
September 1, 1892	...	40,464,000
September 1, 1891	...	28,451,000
September 1, 1890	...	27,710,000
September 1, 1889	...	27,893,000

From the above table it will be seen that the stocks of wheat held in this country and Canada on Sept. 1, 1899, aggregated 54,369,000 bushels, nearly four times what they were at this time a year ago, when low-water mark was reached in wheat stocks, more than twice what were held on September 1, 1897, but over 6,000,000 bushels smaller than the stock held on September 1, 1896, about the same quantity as was held at this date in 1893 and 34,000,000 bushels smaller than the quantity held on September 1, 1894.

The total European stock on September 2 was 62,800,000 bushels, an increase of 25,000,000 bushels over the quantity held one year ago, of 19,000,000 bushels over 1897 and of 16,000,000 bushels over 1896, but 15,000,000 bushels smaller than in 1895 or 1894, 30,000,000 bushels smaller than in 1893 and 13,000,000 bushels smaller than in 1892.

The aggregate stock held in America and Europe on the first of the month was 117,169,000 bushels, an increase of 64,000,000 bushels over that held at this time a year ago, of 19,000,000 bushels over 1897 and of 10,600,000 bushels over 1896, but a de-