

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JULY 20, 1886.

A SHORT CROP.

It is now pretty well beyond question, that in the Canadian Northwest this year the crop all over will fall considerably short of an average yield, although in parts there will be no cause for complaint on that head. Rain has been sadly wanted all over the territories west of Manitoba, and unless in the districts close to the provincial boundary, there will be a big shortage in grain yield. From the western limits of the province eastward to within forty miles of the Red River there is little if any reason to complain, all the thickly settled area within these limits having had sufficient rain to insure a grain crop, although at some points root crops have suffered from drought, and the yield will be very light.

There is no great reason for astonishment at the drought which has existed away west of Manitoba, where settlement and cultivation is as yet too limited to insure a climate with a regulated moisture. Such eccentricities may be looked for in any new and undeveloped prairie country, and their disappearance may also be looked for as the country gets settled and broken up.

But the drought which has taken place in the Red River valley this summer is rather a surprise to many, and can only be accounted for on the ground that this valley is the northern tail of the great drought area which extended over the northern portion of the continent this summer. That it has done heavy damage to crops is beyond doubt, and yet the yield of grain here promises to be much heavier than could be expected under the circumstances, especially the yield of wheat sown early. The fine growing and showery weather late in April and early in May insured a magnificent stand of grain sown before that, no drought being heard of, until such grain had made considerable headway. But the barley, oats and wheat sown since the 10th of May has had a hard time of it, and nowhere in the valley will the crop of these go much over half an average yield. Ten days ago the outlook was much worse than now, as local showers have in the interval made wonderful improvements in many places. All over the valley the stand of grain

seems to have been good and in many places, unusually thick. It will no doubt come to the thrasher short in the head as well as the straw, but the quantity of heads will be sufficient to insure a larger yield than a casual glance would warrant us in expecting.

Root crops in the Red River valley will undoubtedly prove a failure this season, and the hay crop is already a failure. These will be greater drawbacks than the short grain crop, for half a crop of the quality of wheat we are likely to have this year, and at the improved prices we may look forward to, will after all be an improvement upon a heavy but damaged crop and low prices. This winter a large share of the local freight traffic on the C. P. R. will be the carrying of potatoes, and other vegetables as well as pressed hay from more favored parts in the province to the Red River towns and the city of Winnipeg. The crop of root feed for animals will undoubtedly be very short, and the quality of grain now in prospect does not indicate any damaged stuff to feed. There is therefore no fear of stock dying next spring from over feeding during the winter now before us.

As to the wheat, we have no reason to change our estimate of the probable yield given in a former issue, and if we did change it would be to raise figures a little. We look for at least half a crop in the Red River valley, a full average crop or very near it from forty miles west of the river to the western limits of the province, and beyond that a crop not any better on the average than this valley. All over the country we look for a two-third crop as the average, and we look forward to having a better sample of wheat, than we have had for four years past.

TRADE WITH BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Now that the C. P. Railway has been opened for traffic through to the Pacific coast, and direct trade communication can be had with the people of British Columbia, it is of importance to the merchants of Manitoba to do what they can to establish a trade with that province. Before the opening of the railway, and while dependent upon the round about way via the Northern Pacific, the trade between the Prairie and Pacific provinces was of course of limited proportion. Now however, there is every opportunity for the development of trade intercourse to the fullest extent, and it is not unlikely

that the people of the two provinces so lately united by the iron band, may find it to their mutual interest to hold considerable trade intercourse with each other. Though the population of British Columbia, like Manitoba and the territories, is as yet limited, especially in proportion to the vast extent of territory, yet it is a growing population, and now that communication has been opened between the province and the rest of the Dominion, its advancement is likely to be much more rapid. It is therefore not so much for the present as to the future that our merchants should look, in using their best efforts to immediately establish trade relations with the people of British Columbia. That our merchants are fully alive to the importance of this trade has already been demonstrated. Several of our merchants and exporters had visited that province before the C. P. R. was opened for traffic, and since that time a number of others have sent representatives or are preparing to do so. The Province of British Columbia differs widely in some respects in natural conditions and resources, from Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, and this should be an important feature in making inter-trade profitable. The great wealth of the forests of British Columbia should be turned into account in supplying the Northwest with wooden wares and products of the forest. Her vast mineral resources should also be turned to account in the production of various lines of goods, which would find ready sale among the large population which must soon inhabit the prairies. The fish for which that province is so famous would also find a profitable market in the Northwest, both fresh and canned; whilst for fruit there is already a large demand here. Many varieties of fruit now imported from California and Oregon could be grown to equally as great advantage in British Columbia. In return the Northwest could supply the British Columbians with an unlimited quantity of produce and provisions. Flour manufactured by the most improved process, from our No. 1 hard, the finest grade of wheat in the world; butter and cheese manufactured in Northwestern dairies and creameries, rich from the luscious prairie grasses upon which the cattle feed, and having a peculiar nutty flavor, unequaled by the product of any other country; cured meats and hog products, grown in a healthy climate and nourished with rich