

The Commercial

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INCREASING OUR EXPORTS.

The free movement which has recently taken place in shipping cattle eastward from Manitoba, is an encouraging feature to those interested in the welfare of the country. It shows that of late years our farmers have not been confining their attention so closely to growing grain. Though Manitoba as a wheat country cannot be excelled, yet it has long been evident that our settlers were giving their attention too closely to wheat-growing, to the neglect of other profitable branches, for which the country was well adapted. Even under the most favorable circumstances, it would seem unwise for an agricultural country to engage almost exclusively in one branch of farming. Failures of crops are likely to come to the most favored countries, and periods of low prices in almost every mercantile commodity are one of the drawbacks which must be contended with. Diversified farming is therefore the only safe course for the majority to follow.

Manitoba has other great natural advantages besides growing wheat and other grain crops. As a stock and dairy country our resources are exceptionally fine. In dairying a little has been accomplished, but it is a very little in comparison with what can and should be done. The drawback to the successful manufacture of butter and cheese on the factory principle, is the sparse settlement which renders it necessary to travel long distances to gather in the milk and cream to the factories. Still a start has been made sufficient to practically demonstrate what had been previously held in theory, that Manitoba offers great advantages as a dairy country. We are convinced that our farmers could yet greatly increase their herds of cattle, and especially cows, to great advantage to themselves and the country. Good returns have been already obtained by the patrons of cheese and butter factories, even under the disadvantage previously noted. If the number of cows in the districts immediately tributary to the factories were considerably augmented, production would be cheapened, and the industry would be rendered much more profitable. The dairy trade of the country has made great progress in the quality and mode of packing and handling butter during the past few years, but it will never be satisfactory until factory-made butter takes the place of the bulk of the article now made in private dairies.

The shipments of cattle from the province this year will certainly have a good effect upon the country. From this class of exports quite an amount of cash will be realized, which will materially supplement the returns from the crops. Nearly all over the country stock-raising has made considerable progress of late years, and in some districts has received such attention that a crop failure would not cause universal hardship. This is as it should be. While returns from wheat-growing come in more quickly, and more abundantly in case of a good crop and good prices, yet a crop failure,

which is always a possibility, will entail great hardship. A failure with stock is hardly possible, and the return, though slower, is always certain. Those who diversify their operations will therefore have something to fall back upon in case of a failure in one crop. From the increased attention which has been given to stock-raising, as shown by shipments this year, it is evident that a failure of crops would not have the same effect upon the country that such an occurrence would have had a few years ago. At points along the railways all the way from Winnipeg to Calgary, car lots of cattle have been gathered up for shipment to Montreal. Some of the western cattle have been sent on from Montreal to Liverpool, where, notwithstanding the long journey, they have arrived in fairly good condition. These stock shipments will go a long ways to make up for the light crops this year, and if our farmers just continue on in the same direction, they will soon be independent of wheat, at least so far as an occasional crop failure is concerned.

PLENTY OF LAND.

The absurdity of the report which went the rounds of eastern papers last spring, and which probably originated through a misunderstanding on the part of a reporter in interviewing a Canadian Pacific Railway official, to the effect that nearly all the public lands of Manitoba were taken up, is being demonstrated by the movement of settlers into the Lake Dauphin country. Here is a large district of probably as fine country as can be found anywhere in the west, which as yet, with the exception of a few townships, has not even been surveyed. It certainly seemed ridiculous, at the time the report was sent abroad, that the public lands of Manitoba should be about exhausted, when we consider that the population of the entire province is less than 200,000 persons, and a large number of these are living in the towns and are not land owners. This province, with a hundred thousand square miles of territory, should support millions of people. Instead of the public lands being exhausted, there should be abundance of land, and choice land at that, for many thousands of new settlers. Of course a good deal of land has passed into the hands of railways, and other corporations, but there is yet plenty left for free settlement, and a large portion of the province is yet unsurveyed. That the idea should have gained currency that the public lands of the province were nearly exhausted, is in itself a pretest against the system which has prevailed of handing over the public domain to railway or other corporations. The lands should be kept for the people, and it would be far better that any assistance given railways should be in the form of cash. The lands would thus be open for settlement on the most advantageous terms, settlement would be consolidated and there would be greater inducements to immigration. It certainly seems a great mistake that a portion of the public domain should have been handed over to corporations, to be held until the settlement of the adjoining lands should give it value. Railways in eastern Canada have been freely assisted with cash grants, and the people of the West have to

bear their share of the debt contracted in assisting these roads. But when it comes to assisting a western road, the only thing the Dominion will do is to give away the lands which should belong to the people of the West, and be held for free settlement for those who are coming to our country.

However, Manitoba has yet room for many thousands of settlers upon public lands, before it will be necessary to purchase lands held by private parties or corporations, though sometimes superior advantages as to markets, etc., can be obtained by purchasing land in the older settled districts. Still, many prefer to go farther away from the railways to take up free land. The movement referred to into the Lake Dauphin district of Manitoba has been very considerable this season, and it still continues. It is said that there are now fully two hundred settlers located upon unsurveyed lands in the district. This would indicate that no time should be lost in having the region properly surveyed and opened for settlement, as a good deal of confusion is likely to result from extensive settlement upon unsurveyed lands.

The Lake Dauphin country is situated north of the Manitoba Northwestern railway, and west of the northern portion of Lake Manitoba. It is described as a remarkably fine region, and those who have visited the district are wild with enthusiasm over the country and the prospect of the settlers. Some of the best timber lands in Manitoba are known to be in this district, and there is also, it is said, abundance of hay and water. Crops this year are reported to have been good both in grain and roots. The stream of settlement into this district, and the marvelous reports as to the great advantages of the country, would indicate that the public lands of Manitoba are not likely to be exhausted for many years yet. There are no doubt millions of acres of choice lands in the northern portion of the province which have not yet been surveyed. One party who has examined the Lake Dauphin district claims that there are fully 1,000,000 acres of land in that region, admirably adapted to settlement. The northern portion of Manitoba has advantages over the south in the abundant supply of wood and water, and there is plenty of timber suitable for manufacturing into lumber. In time these lands will be occupied, and now that settlement is moving in that direction, the Government should have the country surveyed and thus save the confusion and hardships which are certain to result from squatting upon unsurveyed lands.

LUMBERING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The activity in the direction of developing the great lumber resources of British Columbia is one of the features attracting attention in the Pacific province. During the last year the timber resources of British Columbia have attracted a great deal of attention from outside as well as local capitalists. There has been an active demand for timber lands in eligible locations, both in the interior and along the coast of the mainland and Vancouver Island. The many inlets along the coast render the coast timber districts readily available for moving the logs. In the interior, the mountainous nature of the country is a drawback to handling the logs.