

the power to grant charters for the construction of roads running through or connecting with roads in more than one Province, and because such an Act should provide material assistance for the construction of the road it authorizes." The Act is also to provide for the organization of railway companies, the means by which, under reasonable conditions, Government aid at the rate of so much a mile would be granted, and such restrictions as would protect the farmers from exorbitant freight rates.

THE COMMERCIAL has no desire to throw any obstacle in the way of the construction of railways throughout the country, as we are thoroughly satisfied that there can never be too many. Upon the development of the means of transportation in all directions, and placing the people of the country within easy access of markets for their products depends, in a very large degree, the progress and prosperity of Manitoba and the Northwest Territory. But we contend that the power to charter such railways should be vested in the Legislatures of Manitoba and the other Provinces which will be formed west of us. A Bill of the character of that proposed by Capt. Scott would knock the feet from under provincial charters, from the fact that it would provide aid for railways chartered and encouraged by the Dominion, and would refuse aid to those chartered by the Provincial Legislature. This would be a direct blow to Manitoba's claim to charter railways in her own province, a right for which we have long been asking. It must be considered as but another effort to centralize power in Ottawa, where, less than in any other part of the Dominion, the wants of this new and growing country seem to be understood; it is another tightening down to the idea that only the Dominion Government have the right to charter railways, and that all power in that direction should be vested in them.

While we have admitted the supremacy of the Federal Government in regard to the construction of the great trans-continental railway, and have even supported the Government in some of its most objectionable conditions, we, at the same time, maintain that the Dominion Government's railway management should cease with the completion of that line. The people of each province know best their own railway wants, and are in the best position to judge as to what lines

should be subsidized. It is impossible, in a country of such vast extent as the Dominion, that everything connected with railway management can be satisfactorily administered from Ottawa. In order that the best results may be obtained and perfect justice done to all sections of any one province, it is essential that the people of that province should have control of all such public works.

While we admire the assiduity with which the member for Winnipeg is applying himself in this matter, we cannot hide from ourselves the fact that in this proposed general Railway Act, he (unwittingly, we believe) is striking at the very root of the rights of the constituency he has the honor to represent.

GROWING CONFIDENCE.

It must be a source of gratification to everyone interested in the development and prosperity of Manitoba and the Northwest, to notice the gradually growing confidence which pervades commercial and financial circles in the country. We have passed through a heavy period of depression, and it is a credit to the business capability of the mercantile community of the Province that they have so successfully weathered the trying ordeal. The death of real excitement or any feeling of a panicky character may be dated as far back as the beginning of October last. But all through the winter there has existed a closeness in money matters, owing no doubt, in a large measure, to the belief that had taken deep root in the public mind that parsimony and safety were inseparably combined. It was probably wise that such a course was deemed the best to pursue, and it seems now as if the rewards of prudence and economy were to be reaped. During the latter months of the past year the policy of retrenchment was somewhat increased, owing, probably more than anything else, to outside pressure consequent upon the depression which prevailed in Eastern Canada and in the United States. Now, although hard times still continue to exist, and trade is generally at a standstill in the East, even this sympathetic feeling is beginning to lose its hold on the body commercial, and trade circles of the Northwest are beginning to breathe the air of inspiring hope. How long the depression in the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion and the United States may last, we will not attempt to predict, but we

feel perfectly satisfied that recovery in the Northwest will be much sooner and more rapid than in either. During the wild days when "boom" held sway, all were more or less inclined to boastfulness, while during the period of depression all were inclined to grumble, and often when there existed but little reason for their doing so. This, perhaps, was only what might be expected of human nature. Now we have had the sunshine and the storm, and a period of tranquility and consequent prosperity must follow in the natural course of events. The gloomy prognostications and current complaints of dissatisfied and chronic grumblers have not been realized, and there can be no doubt that the opening of spring will usher in a period of steady prosperity. The year upon which we have entered promises most auspiciously for all classes of the community in the Northwest. With the extension of the Manitoba South-western and Canada Pacific Southwestern railway lines, which will open up some of the richest parts of this province, and with the almost certainty of some move towards the construction of the Hudson's Bay Railway being inaugurated, we feel safe in predicting that 1884 will be one of the most progressive years that has yet dawned upon the Northwest. Pessimists there may be and always will be, whose only pleasure seems to be in picturing to themselves some dark picture even when the sun of prosperity sheds its most brilliant rays; but for ourselves, and we think we voice the opinion of the active business life of the Northwest, when we say that the future of this great country never looked brighter than it does to-day. And there is not one who has viewed the situation from an unbiassed standpoint but will unite with us in saying that notwithstanding the somewhat dull times of last year, we have faith, unbroken and undiminished, in the maintenance and the rapid extension of our position commercially, agriculturally and in every other wise that tends to prosperity hitherto unequalled in the history of any country. Our resources are boundless and but await the hand of industry to convert them into blessings for millions of the world's population. Indications point to a larger immigration to this country during the coming summer than has yet been seen, and the class of people who will seek our shores will as a rule be possessed of considerable means, and be able at once to put themselves in a good position. The more that the possibilities of the Northwest become known to the people of the old countries of the world, the greater will be the number of immigrants who will make their homes amongst us, and the more quickly the country settles up the more rapid will be the complete recovery from the depression which has existed.