

The Commercial

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OUR EXPORTS.

The present is certainly a "boom" year for the Northwest in the direction of exports. Shipments from the country will be greatly in excess of any former year in point of value, whilst the variety will also be greater, several new articles having now entered the list of exportable commodities. Early in the season THE COMMERCIAL intimated that potatoes would in all probability form a new article for export from Manitoba this season. This has already proved true, and within the last few weeks large quantities of potatoes have been moving eastward to points in the older province of Ontario. There has also been an enquiry for Manitoba potatoes from United States points. Potatoes are usually a heavy crop in this country, but this season the yield has fairly astonished the natives, whilst the size which the staple tubers have assumed is something marvellous. This is the first season potatoes have been exported from Manitoba, and the export has already assumed large proportions.

Another industry which has this year come to the front is that of stock-raising. It can also be claimed that this is the first year in which exports of cattle have been made from the Northwest. Certainly a few head of cattle were shipped out of the country last season, but this was done purely as an experiment, and for the purpose of testing the cost of handling and the practicability of making such exports. The shipment of cattle made last year was supposed to be under the direction of the railway company, for the purposes stated above, and therefore was not a direct business venture. Exports of cattle this year however, were of a different nature, and were brought about from the fact that the country now has a surplus of cattle, for which an outside market must be found. Exports this year have also been made in such quantities as to show something more than experimental shipments. Manitoba may now be said to be fairly teeming with cattle. Great progress has been made in mixed farming in the province within the last few years, especially since the idea that it was only necessary to grow wheat here has been abandoned. The western ranches of Alberta are also

now producing a surplus of cattle, the supply having this year fairly exceeded the local requirements. The first export shipments from the ranches have been made lately, and in a few years there will undoubtedly be a large stream of cattle pouring through Manitoba annually, from the far west, on the way to the eastern markets.

It is thought that stock raising will continue for some time to be the principal industry in the western portion of the territories, and matters relating to it are therefore of special interest to that part of the country. The chief disadvantage which the industry has to labor under is the distance from market, and the cost of getting the cattle to consuming centres. If the cattle could be slaughtered and shipped in the form of dressed meat, the cost of transportation would be greatly reduced, but this mode of handling is not always practical. The question of canning and curing meats at some western town, Winnipeg for instance, has also been considered, but the success of such an undertaking is to say the least doubtful. Besides, the quantity which could be disposed of by canning and curing would not be very great, as beef is essentially a meat for consumption in a fresh state. The greatest hope for the western ranching industry lies in the opening up of the Hudson's Bay route. This route would provide a short and direct way of reaching British markets, and it would also afford facilities provided by no other route, for handling fresh meat to the greatest advantage.

This may also be said to be the first year in which Manitoba has appeared as an exporter of dairy products. A few little dribbles of butter were sent out last year, partially as an experiment, but nothing of any consequence was done in this direction. During the present season, however, the exportation of butter has been carried on to quite a large extent, and shipments have been going both east and west—to British Columbia westward and Montreal eastward. The exportation of cheese has also commenced this year to some extent. In British Columbia Manitoba dairy products have almost succeeded in monopolizing the markets, within the short space of a few months, and the same thing is true of Manitoba flour. The present season has been favorable to the exportation of dairy products on account of the high prices ruling in

British and eastern Canadian markets, and this has no doubt accelerated shipments from this country eastward.

The result of the present season has demonstrated clearly that the Northwest must soon take a front place as a dairy country. The capturing by this province of the leading prizes for butter at the large exhibitions in eastern Canada, has been a genuine surprise to the people of the east, as well as to Manitobans themselves. Coming at so opportune a time, when the province is just entering the arena as an exporter of dairy products, the importance of the achievement cannot be well underrated. It will serve to indicate more forcibly than words that this country will in the near future become a heavy exporter of choice qualities of dairy commodities. Still, the producers and shippers of this country have a good deal to learn yet in the manufacture and marketing of butter, and it is to be hoped that the success so far achieved will stimulate to even better attainments for the future.

In grains, barley and oats will be among the articles exported from this season's crop. These grains were not exported last year, though two years ago both these cereals were exported to a limited extent. The sample of oats is choice and the crop very heavy, yields of over one hundred bushels to the acre having been reported in some instances, whilst the crop in eastern Canada is light and deficient in milling quality. Owing to these circumstances there will probably be a market in eastern Canada for the surplus product of our oatmeal mills. Amongst exports from the province will also be a limited quantity of flax seed.

Wheat of course will be the great exportable commodity, and of this cereal alone the value of the available surplus this year will undoubtedly exceed the aggregate value of all exports combined for any previous year in the history of the country. Exports of wheat will certainly be more than double what they were last year, and probably fully three times as great as they were for the crop of 1886. So much has been said in the way of estimating the wheat surplus, that it is hardly necessary to add anything further. The quantity available for export has been variously estimated at from 6,000,000 to 10,000,000 bushels. As the former amount has been based on the grain in the straw, and the larger estimate on the results of the threshing, the latter may be taken as nearer the mark. Exports of