

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 Can-
ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also
reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manu-
facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada

WINNIPEG, APRIL 29, 1899.

BAD ROADS AGAIN.

A gentleman signing himself an unfortunate Kildonan tax payer, has written to the Winnipeg Free Press a complaint of the abominable condition of the country roads in the vicinity of Winnipeg. "Unfortunate Taxpayer" thinks that it is a mistake to spend money trying to secure settlers for the vacant lands around the city while the roads are in such a dreadful condition. The Commercial has frequently referred to this same matter of bad roads, and we still believe that it is or should be about the most important question for the consideration of the residents in the Red river municipalities. Though the oldest municipalities in Manitoba are located in the vicinity of Winnipeg, there is not yet a single mill of passably good road in the vicinity of the city in any of these municipalities. One municipality is at the present time spending money foolishly in bonusing a little flour mill, while the roads, which are of vastly more importance, are left in the same condition that they were twenty-five years ago. Good roads leading into the city through these municipalities, would do more to advance the value of farm lands tributary thereto than any other improvement which we can think of. The loss to the residents on account of bad roads must be a

very serious matter—greater even than many of the sufferings themselves would be prepared to admit of. Because some of these people have been used to this kind of thing all their life, however, does not make the loss any the less real.

WINNIPEG STREET LIGHTING.

Since the passing of a by-law authorizing the city to invest \$80,000 in the establishment of an electric lighting plant, the electric lighting company has made a very much more favorable offer for the lighting of the streets than the city has ever received before. While The Commercial is favorable to the city ownership of franchise of this nature, the present offer seems to be so favorable that its acceptance would probably be better for the city under the present circumstances than to go ahead with the new plant. It is questionable if the city would be able to do the lighting any lower than the offer of the company. Besides this, the time for the establishing of the civic plant is limited. It would of course be a mistake to give the company a long contract, but it would probably be to the advantage of the city to make a short contract with the company under the existing circumstances.

WOODEN BLOCK PAVEMENT.

The Winnipeg city council has decided to put down more block pavement this year. The worthlessness of block paving having been so thoroughly established, it seems strange that the city keeps on using this material. Winnipeg is away behind the times in this matter. Eastern cities were beginning to abandon the use of block pavement about the time we began to use it here. Besides being a very poor paving material, this wooden block pavement makes about as unsanitary a street as it is possible to secure.

COLLECTING DEBTS.

Mr. Kennedy's bill introduced in the Manitoba legislature, to provide a more efficient way for the collection of small debts, may or may not be a very great improvement on the present method, but he at least deserves credit for good intentions. Anything which will tend to simplify the law and do away with legal quibbles and technicalities, deserves support. The expense attending the enforced collection of debts, or the straightening out of disputed transactions, seems to be often enormously greater than it should be, and the result of a suit at law is often unsatisfactory, even to the person who is supposed to have won the case.

If The Commercial were to venture an opinion in this respect, we would

say that we would prefer to see reform come in the direction of arbitration, rather than to heap up more laws of which we already have too much. We may not be ready for it yet, but the day will, no doubt come, when arbitration will take the place of law in the settlement of many difficulties and disputes. The establishment of courts of arbitration for dealing with disputed as well as undisputed transactions should be a feasible matter.

DANGERS OF THE STREET.

The running down of a mere baby on a Winnipeg street crossing, in broad day light, by an electric car, should attract attention to the necessity for greater public control over the street railway. It seems difficult to find an excuse which will completely exonerate the company and its servants from blame in this matter. The occurrence happened on a back street, where the street traffic is limited. If street cars can be supplied with fenders, which largely reduce the risk in case of accidents of this nature, as it is claimed they can be, it is little short of criminal that the cars in Winnipeg have been allowed to go for years without this protection. The speed attained by the electric cars in Winnipeg is frequently excessive. This must be apparent to any observer. The rate of speed frequently attained should not be permitted. The William street line, where the accident referred to occurred, is particularly conspicuous for the speed at which the cars often run. It is greatly to be regretted that an inquest was not held in this case. In fact there seems to be something very slack about the manner in which accidents of this nature are passed over in Winnipeg. It is high time the public made a demand for a searching investigation of such occurrences.

Some people imagine that pedestrians have the right of way on the street. In Winnipeg at least this right is completely ignored. Street cars, wheeled rigs of various description and bicycles dash along the streets and over the crossings, utterly regardless of the rights of pedestrians. If any notice is paid of those who travel on foot, it is to jangle a bell as a warning to them to get out of the road. The bicycle bell has become an intolerable nuisance in this way in Winnipeg. Most bicycle riders here seem to think that they have the right of way, and in this idea they are encouraged by an absurd civic by-law. In nine cases out of ten it is easier for the bicycle rider to dodge a pedestrian, than it is for the latter to make way for the bicycle. This continual jangling of bicycle bells as a command to pedestrians to make way should be stopped.