

THE COMMERCIAL

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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 Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, APRIL 8, 1899.

A BAD PRECEDENT.

As an inducement offered to the Dominion government to construct the St. Andrew's rapids' improvements, to open navigation on the Red river between this city and Lake Winnipeg, the city of Winnipeg proposes to practically guarantee the interest on the cost of the work. This is something after the style of building railways in Canada. In order to secure the construction of railways, the custom has been to grant the companies bonuses or guarantees about equal to the cost of constructing the roads. The question has naturally arisen; why should not the government own the roads, after having practically done the financing for their construction? So we might say if the city of Winnipeg is to guarantee the cost of this Dominion public work, why should it not own the work? Anyway, why should the city guarantee the cost on a purely Dominion government work of this nature? The Dominion government has done absolutely nothing toward developing the important, navigable streams in the west, while vast sums have been expended in the east in improving far less important navigable routes. In the case of the St. Andrew's rapids, a very small expenditure only is required to open up deep water navigation for several hundred miles. There are other important

waterways in the West which should be developed. It will certainly be setting a very bad precedent to guarantee the cost of constructing the work, if we expect the government to undertake any of these other needed improvements.

The offer of the city is to take water-power from the government, to the amount of 2,000 horse power, at \$20 per horse power per year. The city needs the water power, but we have a far better source of supply than the St. Andrew's rapids right within the city limits, on the Assiniboine river. The city obtained the authority some years ago to develop this water power, though of late years the matter seems to have been lost sight of. J. F. Fauning, an experienced hydraulic engineer, made an examination and reported upon the Assiniboine water power some years ago, for the city council. He estimated that 2,500 horse power, rented at \$10 per horse power per annum, would pay 5 per cent on the cost of the work, after making full allowance for maintenance expenses. This power, he estimated, could be developed up to 10,000 horse power, and would pay an interest of about 20 per cent at the low rental of \$10 per horse power per annum.

As we have said, the city should own the work when it undertakes to guarantee the interest on the cost of construction. It is very desirable that navigation should be opened to Lake Winnipeg, but the work is one which belongs to the Dominion government alone. As a water power, the Assiniboine river power is probably by far the more valuable of the two to the city. If it is a water power which is wanted, the city should develop and own the Assiniboine river power. According to the reports of City Engineer Rutan and Mr. Fauning, the city would derive a handsome revenue from the development of the Assiniboine river power. In concluding his report Mr. Fauning said:

"I can conceive of no way in which the city can with more certainty and profit enhance its own growth and general prosperity, and secure permanent revenues, than by promoting this water power project, until its ten thousand horse power shall be fully loaded with busy machinery.

If we can develop the Assiniboine river power and derive a handsome revenue from it at a rental of \$10 per horse power per annum, why pay the Dominion government a bonus of \$20 per horse power for a work outside the city, which in its nature is a purely federal government work?

INDUSTRIAL WINNIPEG.

A few years ago the opinion largely prevailed here that Winnipeg could never become a manufacturing centre of any importance. While our manu-

facturing interests are still comparatively limited, yet enough has been accomplished in this direction to lead to the belief that the city is destined to become an important industrial as well as a purely commercial centre. In fact, it is evident now that all that is required to admit of the successful carrying on of many industries here is population. This population is coming. The city itself is going ahead quite fast, and our vast country is steadily filling up.

During the past year considerable progress was made in an industrial way. Several industries previously established here, were enlarged. What is really of more importance than the establishment of new industries, is the success of those already established. The erection of new and larger factories for the old industries may be taken as a safe indication of the success of these establishments. To mention some of these we have first the large factory and warehouse erected by E. F. Hutchings for his saddlery and harness industry. This is an industry which has assumed large proportions, and is an indication of what may be accomplished where efforts are directed by business energy, supported by capital. Mr. Hutchings has one of, if not the very finest establishment of the kind in Canada. There are other industries not yet established here, which would certainly find the conditions not less favorable than in the saddlery trade.

Another local industry which shows a healthy growth is the manufacture of leather and the conversion of the leather into boots and shoes. These two industries are carried on in one establishment by the Union Shoe and Leather company, and the business has assumed such proportions that it was found necessary to make a large addition to the factory during the past year.

Again we have the fine new oatmeal mill erected by the Oglvie Milling Co., which is another enlargement of an old industry. We might also mention the erection of a new building of considerable size in connection with the Vulcan Iron Works, the removal of E. Guilbault's tin box factory to a larger building, the enlargement of J. Y. Griffin & Co.'s packing house, and the establishment of such new industries as the Winnipeg Bag Works, the abattoir, spice mills, etc. These with such important industries as our flour mills, linseed oil mill, the Redwood factories, soap works, breweries, saw and planing mills, cigar factories, and other concerns, make up quite a list of industries.

Other industries will no doubt be added from time to time, as population increases. At the present time the establishment of a binder twine factory, for the manufacture of grass