

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 18, 1893.

THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

We are now in the full heat of the federal elections, and we may add, the most unsatisfactory election campaign ever waged in Canada since the days of confederation. Instead of great questions of material importance to the country at large, we have this wretched Manitoba school question as the principal issue in the campaign. It is certainly a matter for deep regret on the part of all well wishers of their country, that this matter should ever have been forced before the electors of Canada as the principal issue in an electoral campaign.

Some alleged authorities will try to argue that the school question is not the principal issue in this contest. In fact, we have people and organs right here in Winnipeg who have put forth such an absurd contention. In the face of the facts, it is difficult to see how any rational person can make such a declaration. A special session of parliament was called to consider this school question, or rather, we may say, to pass a remedial bill, to which the government was pledged. The government failed to secure the passage of the promised legislation, and the natural consequence is that the contest has been transferred from parliament to the people. How any one, in the face of these simple facts, can argue that the policy of the Dominion in the matter of the Manitoba school question is not the main issue in the present contest, is something almost beyond comprehension. Neither will it do to say that the policy of both the two great political parties is the same on this school question. The one party stands pledged in parliament to pass coercive legislation, while the other party is pledged equally as strongly to oppose coercive legislation, and no amount of specious argument will get around these facts.

At the same time it is the opinion of The Commercial that coercive legislation on this school question is dead, and practically buried, no matter which party carries the country. Should the government be returned, it will probably be found that so many of its supporters are pledged to oppose remedial legislation, that it will be impossible to introduce a measure of remedial legislation. In the meantime, however, the government stands completely committed to the objectionable policy of coercion of Manitoba, and the electors of the country must either weigh the government by its declared professions, or shirk the real issue.

From this point of view all other questions in this campaign are merely side issues. There is no question at stake of material importance to the trade, industrial or agricultural interests of the country, in the present campaign. The last general election was fought out on a purely trade question, and that being the case, this journal took an active part in the campaign, in vigorously opposing what we believed to be bad business principles as well as bad commercial

policy for this country. In the present campaign there is no such question before the electors, and consequently The Commercial does not feel it a duty to take any hand in the contest. Of course there is the old fiscal policy of the governing party, which will be the cause of more or less discussion, but even in regard to this policy, the difference between the two parties is not so great as would be supposed at first thought. The revenue necessities of the country are such, that at the present time, and indeed for some years in the future, we cannot hope for any very material reduction in tariff taxation. Should the liberal party succeed at the polls, we cannot expect that such a result will lead to any important reduction in the duties, for a few years at least.

In Manitoba we have had such side issues as a railway to Hudson Bay introduced into the campaign. This, however, is a regulative feature of election contests in Manitoba. In fact, no election could evidently be carried through here without a Hudson Bay railway appendage. The federal contest in Winnipeg eight or ten years ago was fought out almost solely on this issue, and we have no railway yet. Of course we may expect that assurances the most convincing to the party heelsers at least, will be made regarding the Hudson Bay railway and other local matters, but those who are wise will not allow themselves to be influenced by campaign promises, coming from either party, regarding the carrying out of local public works.

While general regret must be felt that the principal issue in the present contest is over a matter which should never have come before the people of Canada, there is one source of satisfaction which can be drawn from the unpleasant situation. We refer to the fact that party lines in the present campaign are being obliterated as they never before have been in Canada. To persons of independent thought this will to a considerable extent make up for the unsatisfactory and discouraging features of the contest. These party ties, which are being renounced by the wholesale in the present contest, will never be so firmly established again. The habit of independence of thought and action will become established in those who have been forced to sever these old party ties, and besides this, will have a sympathetic influence upon others. Thus out of evil good will come, and out of this troublesome and annoying school question will come an independence of thought and action which will bode no evil for the future of our common country, which we all, Conservatives and Liberals, will do our best, according to our light, to keep in the van of civilization.

WINNIPEG STREETS.

The deplorable condition of the streets of Winnipeg should be a cause of uneasiness to property owners, as well as a matter of general regret to the citizens. For weeks this spring long distances through the city have been practically impassable for light rigs, while it would be out of the question to undertake to move a load of any weight over some of the streets. The seriousness of the situation in case of fire can readily be ima-

gined. It would simply be foolhardy to attempt to move a fire engine over these streets. The other night we had a practical demonstration of the danger of the situation. A fire broke out in a western portion of the city, and though it seemed foolish to make the attempt to reach the scene of the conflagration with a fire engine, nevertheless an effort was made to do so from the central hall, with the result that the engine soon became firmly embedded in the mud, only a few rods from the fire hall, while the fire burned itself out. Fortunately the fire was not a very serious one, though residences properly valued at about \$5000 were destroyed.

This shows how very serious the situation is. There is not a street in all Winnipeg, from Portage Avenue north to the city limits, by which any western district could be conveniently reached when the roads are bad. There is not a single street in all this district which is paved for more than a moderate distance from Main street. This means that when our sticky mud roads are in bad condition, there is no means of reaching the western portion of the city with a heavy load such as a fire engine. This matter should certainly receive the serious attention of the citizens at once. There is a double menace in this impassable condition of the streets. It is not only practically impossible to reach the western portions of the city with a fire engine, but there is also the danger of a serious fire occurring in some thickly built up portion of the city, while the fire engines would be stuck fast in the mud in attempting to get to a fire in some more remote section. Indeed, in the case of the fire referred to, another fire broke out about the same time in another part of the city. Fortunately the second fire was an isolated residence; but if it had been a dangerous conflagration, the engine from the central hall would not have been available, as it was stuck in the mud so it could be moved neither one way nor the other.

An effort should certainly be made to secure the paving of a number of the principal streets leading westward from Princess. William Avenue, the very street on which the central fire hall is situated, is one of the very worst streets in the city when the roads are bad, owing to the way it has been cut up by the street car roadbed. Notwithstanding this fact, the two principal public school buildings in the city are situated on this street and as the roads have been bad for so long lately, it would be almost impossible to reach these buildings in case of fire.

The present frontage tax system does not seem to be a satisfactory way of securing this very urgent improvement of the streets. Taxes are high, and people who are not in the habit of driving much, cannot be expected to vote in favor of having their taxes largely increased, by the addition of a heavy frontage tax for street improvements, for the benefit of the city at large.

Watson & Carpenter, hotel, Rossland, B.C., have dissolved; J. Watson continues the business.

Sutton Lumber and Trading Co., Ueluelet, B.C., have sold their general business to J. E. Sutton.