

THE COMMERCIAL

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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, MAR. 17, 1900.

FACILITIES CREATE TRAFFIC.

The good roads question has again been brought to the front by the action of the Ontario government in proposing to spend \$100,000 annually for ten years in improving the country roads of that province. This shows that the subject of good roads is beginning to attract the attention of those who are best qualified to deal with it in a comprehensive manner, that is legislators who control the public affairs of the provinces as a whole. The difficulty in regard to the improvement of country roads has been that the work is in the hands of small local governing bodies which have no power to act beyond the boundaries of their own municipalities and whose best work in this line is too apt to be made of no real value because a less enterprising neighboring municipality neglects to put its roads in equally good order. The necessity for having good roads is not disputed by anyone nowadays, in fact, never has been, but the lack of concerted action on the part of all the bodies charged with the business of making them has deprived this general opinion as to their value of its proper effect. The Ontario government evidently appreciates the difficulty of the situation and has determined to take up the work in that province.

It is pleasing to know that the matter of good roads has been receiving a good deal of attention in Manitoba of late. Country papers, farmers' institutes and municipal councils have all lent their attention to the matter, with the result that serious thought is being given to improvements in many parts of the province in season. It is recognized that good

roads for one thing would have a steadying effect upon trade as the stagnation which now follows every heavy rainstorm in the spring, summer and fall would be to a large extent avoided. An uninterrupted flow of traffic from farm to town and from town to farm is one of the advantages that would accrue. In a country where everything depends so much upon farm trade as it does in Manitoba, whatever tends to make that trade unsteady or spasmodic is injurious to the province as a whole. A great deal of money has been spent in the past and much more will be spent in the near future in perfecting the railway system of the province, but unless the first link in the chain of traffic communication, that is, the country road, is equally perfected the highest degree of development possible will not be attained. The importance of this link is made evident by the frequency with which we are obliged to record in these columns the fact that trade in the country has been seriously interfered with by bad roads.

Good roads have sometimes had the effect in other countries of helping to control railway freight rates. It is said that it is not an uncommon occurrence in Great Britain and Europe where roads have been made a subject of study for many years to find teamsters successfully competing with the railways in hauling freight sometimes as much as a distance of 300 miles, and this has been even more successfully done by means of traction engines hauling several heavily laden wagons at once. Of course, such things are only possible where the roads have been brought by years of careful treatment to a high degree of perfection, but it shows what possibilities lie in a well maintained road. We have recently had an example of this sort of thing in Canada too, to come nearer home, in the case of the merchants of Hamilton and Toronto, Ontario, who last year inaugurated a wagon freight service between those two cities by, which they were able to save 7 to 8c per 100 lbs on the railway freight rate for the same haul.

These are a few facts to show what can be done by a little intelligent and systematic attention to this matter. The antiquated statute labor system which has been responsible for much of the failure of the past, should be abolished and a well directed, comprehensive campaign of road improvement under the direction of the provincial government substituted therefor.

Municipal ownership of waterworks in Winnipeg is proving a success. Rates have been lowered 25 per cent since the city took over the works, but notwithstanding this, a good profit has been realized from the operation of the works.

Cereal Crop in 1899.

The United States department of agriculture's final report of the harvests for the year 1899 shows the wheat acreage was 44,592,516 acres. The production of spring and winter wheat combined was 547,303,846 bushels, the average yield per acre being 13.3 and the average farm price per bushel on December 1 being 58.4 cents. The following table shows the wheat production, acreage and value:

Years	Production, Bushels.	Values.
1899	547,303,846	\$319,545,239
1898	675,118,705	392,770,320
1897	530,149,168	428,547,121
1896	427,084,346	410,002,539
1895	467,402,947	237,938,098
1894	460,267,416	256,902,023
1893	396,131,725	213,471,881
1892	515,940,000	322,111,881
1891	611,780,000	513,472,711
1890	599,262,000	334,773,678

Pennsylvania was the only eastern state that showed an acreage of over 1,505,362 acres, with a product of 20,472,923 bushels and a value of \$13,512,129. Minnesota leads the list of wheat-growing states with a production of 65,223,551 bushels. North Dakota comes next, with 51,758,630 bushels; Ohio third, with 39,998,006 bushels; South Dakota fourth, with 37,798,336 bushels. In California nearly 34,000,000 bushels of wheat were harvested; in Kansas over 33,000,000 bushels; in Indiana over 25,000,000 bushels; in Washington and Oregon nearly 22,000,000 bushels, and in Nebraska nearly 21,000,000 bushels. The corn harvest was 2,078,143,933 bushels and the average yield per acre was 25.8 bushels. The following table shows the corn production, acreage and value:

Years.	Production, Bushels.	Values.
1899	2,078,143,900	\$629,210,110
1898	1,924,181,660	552,923,423
1897	1,902,967,933	601,072,952
1896	2,281,875,165	491,006,967
1895	1,171,138,560	544,985,331
1894	1,212,770,052	554,719,162
1893	1,619,496,151	591,025,627
1892	1,628,461,000	642,146,630
1891	2,060,154,000	836,439,228
1890	1,489,970,000	754,433,451

Illinois led in corn production, with a yield of 247,150,332 bushels, closely followed by Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. The acreage in oats was 26,341,350 and the production 796,177,713 bushels, the average yield per acre being 30.2 bushels. The barley crop is estimated at 3,351,563 bushels; the rye crop at 23,961,741 bushels; the buckwheat crop at 11,094,473 bushels; the potato crop at 228,783,252 bushels, and the hay crop at 56,653,756 tons. The potato crop was the largest the country has produced since 1896, when it was 252,000,000 bushels, although in 1895 there was 297,237,370 bushels. The hay crop shows a falling off over 9,000,000 tons; the production of rye fell off over 1,500,000 bushels, while barley increased over 18,000,000 bushels.—Bradstreet's.

Business throughout Ontario and Quebec was set back badly by the heavy snowfalls of two weeks ago.

The sales of farm lands by the Canada Northwest Land Company during 1899 amounted to 84,065 acres for \$159,534, as against 71,640 acres for \$383,051 in 1898. The lands of the company may be paid for in the company's preferred shares, which are now quoted at about 54. The average price of the land sold by the company during 1899 was in shares \$5.42 or in cash something less than \$3 per acre.