

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 27, 1884.

## AN AGRICULTURAL FAIR.

There is considerable discontent being expressed throughout Manitoba at the prospect of there being no Provincial Agricultural Exposition this year, and parties who complain are not too scrupulous as to whom they blame for the want. There can be no doubt but the last one held at Portage la Prairie, was to a great extent a failure, and until the province is more thickly settled, and towns outside of the capital much larger and more important than they are at present, an agricultural exposition in any other place than Winnipeg is not likely to prove a grand success. That an exposition for 1884 will not be held in this city the blame lies between the Provincial Board of Agriculture and the City Council. The demand of the former for a bonus of \$12,000 from the city was certainly somewhat of an extortionate request in these times of straitened finances, while the pittance offered by the City Council for the purpose was altogether too small, and less than the city ought to give for such an object.

It is to be feared that people in Winnipeg do not fully comprehend the value of having an annual exhibition of agricultural and industrial products here. People who belong to the purely trading class, are too apt to assume that this is a matter for the farming community alone to attend to, and that it is no part of their duty to assist in such a work. Such people forget that in a purely agricultural country like Manitoba the trade and agricultural interests must work hand in hand if both are to progress, and the welfare of one class must depend greatly upon that of the other. Following out this principle it is only right, that an effort should be made to centre the exhibits of the agricultural classes in the trade centre of the province.

The system of conducting the annual exhibitions of the province under the wing and patronage of the Government may be a very good plan, but it is by no means a necessity that such exhibitions should be so managed and patronized. On the contrary such undertakings have invariably been greater successes when organized and carried through by private

enterprise. The Minneapolis Annual Fair and the Toronto Society's Shows are standing proofs of this fact, and there is no reason why Winnipeg should not be able to organize and carry out an annual agricultural fair or show as successfully as either of the two cities named. Under ordinary circumstances the chances are good, and this year when it is practically decided that the Department of Agriculture will not hold any, the effort to get one up on the part of the people of Winnipeg would be well seconded all over the province. The work would require to be under the management of an efficient committee, and there is no fear but the citizens, if appealed to, would aid liberally with their subscriptions in the good work, and show quite a different disposition to what the City Council displayed on the subject.

There is the additional argument in favor of an agricultural fair worked up in this way, that the people here are already convinced that they have, by far, too much government in Manitoba, and that the province might prosper better with a little less. A fair, organized by a committee of citizens, would be a move in the direction of shaking-off this overload of government, and freeing the province from one of its unnecessary burdens. There is no necessity, however, for the Department of Agriculture offering any obstruction to such a movement. The Department has tried with the aid of a grant from the Government to organize an annual fair, and have only narrowly escaped failure. It might be wisdom for them to give any encouragement and assistance they could to the organizing of one under private management, and thus aid in furthering the agricultural interests of the province without controlling this one matter of detail. It might be well for a committee of our citizens to be formed, and see what could be accomplished in the way of having a Winnipeg Agricultural Fair in this city next September or October.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL STRUGGLE.

Until after the presidential nominations in the United States, which will be made in July next, it would be difficult to draw the line exactly between the policies of the two great parties in that country, that is if either will have a clearly defined policy, and judge of the points on which the contest will be fought out. Since the

first election of General Grant to the Presidency the lines between Republican and Democrat have been growing gradually less distinct, and this year it would be almost impossible to recognize the difference between the two, unless some new points are introduced into the platform of one or both of them. As sectional bitterness and other relics of a civil war have been dying out, differences between the two great political parties have been disappearing, and the masses of the people, always practical in their leanings, when allowed to judge of their own interests without being swayed by war prejudices, begin to pay much more attention to matters which directly affect their commercial and financial interests. It is when matters are drifting into this much to be desired state, that each of the two great parties of the United States begin to find itself without a definite policy, or at least without one sufficiently definite to be clearly distinguished from its opponent. That it will take some trouble to get over this difficulty the leaders of both parties no doubt fully recognize, and before the national conventions meet, the difficulty will be bridged over in some way or other by them.

There can be no doubt but the question of protective or revenue tariff will be one of primary importance in the struggle, and on this point it is almost amusing to note how both parties are divided in opinion. The Republican party which, with its first term in power, introduced and subsequently followed up the principle of high tariffs, is now badly split upon the question, and while the state platforms of Minnesota and other western states speak imperatively in favor of a tariff, for revenue only, those of New England and other manufacturing states call for a continuation of high tariffs. On the other hand the Democratic party, which was known in the days of our fathers by its cry of "Free trade and direct taxation," is at sixes and sevens on the tariff question now. Pennsylvania, with Samuel Randall as its representative, boldly declares for protective tariffs, in open defiance of the former creed of the party, while the bulk of Democracy, and especially that portion in the Southern States, hold firmly to the old faith. Such irreconcilable elements as these will have to be harmonized at each of the national conventions, and it is just possible that the wire pullers and political machine