

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in West-Canada, including the Dominion of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the west region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also contains the leading news on the Dominion, manufacturing and financial houses of Western Canada.

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THE GRAIN BLOCKADE.

The Winnipeg board of trade has discussed the situation in connection with the grain blockade at considerable length. It required the holding of two protracted meetings of the board to dispose of the matter and at each of these meetings the discussion was of a very animated nature. It is quite proper that the board should have taken up this matter. The members of the board are in touch with the business situation all over the country, and they, in common with many other business men, have frequently come under the direct influence of the situation produced by the blockade. At the same time, it is doubtful if anything the board could say or do would bring the conditions more forcibly before the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway than it has already been brought. These officials have had to struggle with these conditions themselves, and they are about as well informed as it is possible to be as to the actual situation. This, however, is not to be taken as an argument unfavorable to the action of the board. The board was well within its field in taking up the matter, and though the action of the board may not result in bringing the situation any more forcibly before the western officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway than it had previously been brought, it may perhaps assist these officials in impressing the great needs of the West upon the eastern management of the company.

The resolution passed by the board, as given in The Commercial last week, is a lengthy one. Without dwelling on the seven paragraphs which constitute the preamble, the resolution briefly calls upon the railway company to do four things. First, the company is asked to move all the grain possible by the all-rail route to the seaboard between now and the opening of navigation, at a rate not less than the lake and rail rate. The resolution has no doubt doing that. It can, available rolling stock being considered, to move grain all rail eastward, but this all is so small as not to materially relieve the situation here.

The company is next asked to provide against a recurrence of a similar situation in the future, first, by double-tracking their line from Winnipeg to Lake Superior, during the present year; secondly, by increasing

the elevator capacity at Lake Superior; and thirdly, by providing sufficient rolling stock on their lines west of Lake Superior to move out the bulk of the crop before the close of navigation. The preamble dwells upon the rapid growth in population, and the great expansion of the crop area expected in the near future, as showing the necessity for making the desired provisions for moving the crop.

The resolution of the board is interesting as showing the development of the west. Less than twenty years ago the first railway was opened through to Lake Superior. A second railway has just been completed through to the lake, and yet the board is of the opinion that the first road should be double tracked. That this will be necessary in the immediate future is generally admitted. Twenty years ago the railways were just beginning to reach out into the great prairie country west of the Red river. Now is estimated by the thousands of miles.

But to return to the meeting of the Winnipeg board of trade, the discussion, as we have said, was of an animated nature. Rather too much so, at times, to be dignified. The first resolution introduced was not received with favor by the board. It was introduced by gentlemen who hold admitted views upon economic questions, such as government ownership of railways, for instance, and possibly upon the railway question in general. At the same time, The Commercial cannot admit that these gentlemen were actuated by anything but honorable motives in introducing this resolution. We do not believe they had any ulterior motives in it. It is a matter for regret that the charge was made that they were influenced by partisan purposes. Politicians are always viewing their opponents through the evil eye of partisan crookedness. Business is not done on this basis, but on a basis of confidence in the honesty of others. The statement dropped at the meeting of the board that the resolution had something to do with a prospective political campaign in Manitoba, has already been used by the press to belabor a political opponent. With a partisan press ever ready to seize upon every occasion to make a point against their political opponents, of business men to deliberate, careful and dignified in their discussions.

THE TERRITORIAL CROP.

A preliminary official estimate of the cereal crop of 1891 in the Territories, places the yield of wheat at 12,574,000 bushels, compared with 4,660,000 bushels last year. The oat crop is placed at 11,113,000 bushels, compared with 4,229,000 bushels last year. Barley is estimated to give 736,000 bushels, compared with 853,000 last year. A statement as to area and average yields, etc., will be found in another column. The enormous increase in production of the cereals is the most striking feature of the report. This is partly due to the comparison being between a poor crop year and a large crop. The crop of 1900 was below the average, and the crop of 1901 above the average. A large increase in the area, however, is also apparent. At present that settlement has been going on in the Territories during the past year, it is evident that the grain production in

these districts will soon approximate that of Manitoba. There will certainly be an enormous increase in the land prepared for crop this year, particularly in northern Alberta, though in all parts of the country the population is being rapidly augmented by new settlers.

For commercial purposes, the crop of Manitoba and the Territories is reckoned as one. The official estimate of the Manitoba wheat crop is 50,500,000 bushels. Adding the Territorial wheat crop, we have a total of 63,173,000 bushels, of which, say roughly, 50,000,000 bushels will be available for export. Over half of the exportable surplus is still in the country, either in store in elevators or still held by farmers.

The yield per acre is practically the same in Manitoba and the Territories, being very close to 25 bushels per acre of wheat in each case.

LAKE NAVIGATION.

The present situation throughout the prairie region should call attention to the possibility of keeping navigation on the lakes open later than has been customary in the past. This winter at any rate navigation might have been kept open much later than it was, without any trouble whatever. Steamers ceased running when insurance for the season expired, on December 6. According to reports from lake ports, the boats might have kept on running up to the present time. It would certainly have been a great relief to the congested grain districts if navigation had been kept open a while longer there, by preventing the grain blockade from taking effect so early in the season.

WESTERN BOUNDARY QUESTION.

A short time ago Premier Roblin of Manitoba, addressed, by invitation, a meeting at Indian Head, Assn., on the question of the extension of the boundaries of Manitoba westward to take in a portion of Assiniboia. It is reported that public meetings to discuss this matter will be held in other districts of the territory interested. Public discussion of the question will certainly not do any harm. The people of the territory proposed to be added to Manitoba, should discuss the matter thoroughly. This is a question in which sentiment need not play any part. The people are the same on either side of the provincial boundary, and nothing will be gained nor lost from a national point of view by a shifting of the provincial boundary line. We believe it would be better for both Manitoba and the territories, if the great prairie region were formed into say two provinces, of about equal extent. At the same time it would be unwise to seek to extend the boundaries of Manitoba westward against the wishes of the people. While Manitobans generally are favorable to the proposed extension, the universal feeling in the province is that it should be done only with the consent of the people resident in the territory proposed to be added. There is no disposition here to force the matter, but rather to let the people of eastern Assiniboia decide it for themselves.

This is a question which certainly should have been considered critically free from party feeling. It is therefore a matter for regret that the ill-advised action of the leading provincial opposition Journal in Winnipeg should have given the matter a partisan aspect here. The comments and car-

oons of the Free Press upon this question, to put it mildly, must be considered as in exceedingly bad taste. It is said that there is honor among thieves, but this cannot be said of party politics, or at least of a section of the party press.

GAME LAW AMENDMENT.

Dealers in game in Manitoba have a somewhat similar grievance to that of the furrers and handlers of raw furs. According to the provincial game act, the close season for wild ducks begins on January 1 and lasts until Sept. 1. During this close season dealers are not allowed to sell ducks. There seems to be no sense in prohibiting the sale of ducks during the winter, after January 1, so long as they were not killed during the close season. As a matter of fact, no ducks are killed during the winter in Manitoba. Dealers sometimes have frozen ducks kept in cold storage, from stocks purchased during the open season in the fall, and it seems unreasonable that they should be prevented from selling these ducks after Jan. 1. The dealers would be favorable to extending the close season in the early part of the fall, say two weeks, and have duck shooting start on September 15, instead of September 1. The birds shot at the beginning of the season are often in poor condition. They vary reasonably, however, object to the provision of the act which prevents them from selling any ducks they may have on hand on and after the 1st of January.

THE LIQUOR ACT.

The most important event of the week in Winnipeg was the convention of prohibitionists, under the auspices of the Manitoba branch of the Dominion Alliance. The convention decided strongly against the proposal to refer the Liquor Act to a vote of the people. A large delegation interviewed the government and urged that the law should be enforced when the present license term expires. Later Premier Roblin addressed a note to the secretary of the convention, declaring that the government would adhere to the decision that a vote of the people should be taken. On receiving this answer from the government the convention decided to abstain from taking any part in the referendum. The temperance people evidently regard the proposal to submit the law to a vote of the people as a shirking of responsibility on the part of the government. Their decision to abstain from voting on the referendum evidently means that they will reserve their action to secure the defeat of the government.

The Farm Implement News, of Chicago, turned its issue of January 9 into a special number on the farm implement trade. The number was replete with implement news matter and advertisements, and was very elaborately printed.

A restaurant keeper in London, Eng., had to pay £5 to a customer whose suit were injured by a button which had found its way into a beefsteak pie. The judge said it was the duty of a restaurant proprietor to see that "the food supplied contained no hidden dangers."

The past year's results have shown that the Macdonald manual training schools are to be a great success in Canada. The attendance at the schools has been so large that the pressure for extension of the work is so strong that many Canadian towns will establish schools at their own expense as soon as qualified teachers can be obtained.