

WINNIPEG BOARD OF TRADE

Annual Report and President's Address.

The twenty-first annual meeting of the Winnipeg Board of Trade was held Tuesday afternoon, the members present being as follows: E. L. Drewry, president; C. N. Bell, secretary; F. W. Drowry, G. R. Crowe, J. H. Brock, J. H. Ashdown, D. K. Elliott, A. Strang, J. S. Aikins, J. J. Byrnes, R. Muir, D. W. Bole, D. H. McMillan, A. C. Archibald, W. L. Parrish, G. F. Carruthers, G. F. Stephens, J. C. Waugh, N. Bayley, John Ard, W. Hespeler, D. E. Sprague, F. L. Patton, F. W. Stobart, S. Fairn, H. Miller, G. H. Shaw, A. L. Johnson, D. W. Buchanan, J. W. Harris, H. S. Clotty, O. M. Hatcher, H. W. Hutchinson, E. A. Mott, P. Gallagher, S. A. McGraw, Jos. Carman, E. Nicholson, C. A. Baskerville, D. D. Wood, J. B. Monk, A. F. D. MacGachan, K. MacKenzie, S. P. Clark, Wm. Martin, Thos. Gilroy.

President's Address.

After the minutes of the last meeting had been presented by the secretary and adopted, Mr. E. L. Drewry delivered his annual address as president, which was as follows:

Following the precedent established in 1887 by Mr. Ashdown, at that time president of this board, I will, with your permission, address a few words to you on my retirement from the office to which you did me the unquestioned honor of electing me a year ago.

The report of the council for the past year is now before you and will be found replete with most valuable and interesting information. As it contains a correct and complete record, concisely and chronologically arranged, of all the proceedings of the board, its council and committees, there exists no reason for my enlarging upon all the matters submitted therein and although all the subjects dealt with are important, a few appear to suggest special reference, one of which, and I take it up first, as an old acquaintance, is that of the improvements to St. Andrew's Rapids. This question has, I believe, found a place in every president's address and annual report almost from the inception of the board, and its importance has been earnestly impressed upon every government in power at Ottawa. Time after time our hopes have been raised only to meet with gloomy disappointment. I esteem it indeed a privilege to be able to point out that the clouds of disappointment are slowly but I hope and believe surely, drifting away and a goodly share of that "silver lining" which the people of this country have anxiously looked for and patiently awaited so long, is now visible.

The present government at Ottawa after carefully considering the practicability and value of these improvements decided to proceed with the work and obtained from parliament a vote of \$150,000 for the commencement of operations, the completion of this work will involve an expenditure of probably four or five times this sum.

No difficulty whatever should be encountered in obtaining the full sum required as the Hon. Sir Charles Tupper—now leader of the opposition in the House of Commons—in 1896 pledged the government of Canada of which he was then the leader to at once commence this much desired and necessary improvement. We are therefore singularly fortunate in the knowledge that both leaders are favorable to an early prosecution of this most important public work which it is now understood will be pushed forward without further delay. I feel that I am not overstating the matter in saying that there is general regret that the low stage of water and the long fall weather, so suitable for carrying on work of this character, was not taken advantage of earlier. However, it is gratifying to know that even a small commencement has been made and work actually underway.

FILL UP THE LANDS.

The question of settling the vacant lands in the vicinity of the city continues to be a most important one, and while exceedingly good work has been done in the past, renewed and earnest effort should be made during the coming season. The judicious dissemination of literature setting forth the advantages of Winnipeg as a progressive city, and as a rapidly increasing market in which to dispose of the products of the farm, must in time be attended with gratifying results.

The lands, in what might be considered the immediate vicinity, must certainly be capable of sustaining a population of not less than 10,000 people. This would practically be an addition to the city's population, and our business men, particularly the retailers, would receive the direct benefit of this increased trade. It is well known that all farm produce commands a higher price in Winnipeg than at any other point in the province, while on the other hand, supplies required by the settler, are, owing to the close competition, correspondingly cheaper. Good roads and drainage are in my opinion two of the prime necessities for the successful settling of these lands. The latter work, that of drainage, is being carried on to some extent by the provincial government while the question of better roads has already received some attention, a committee of the city council and councils of adjoining municipalities having held a joint meeting during the year, with the result that the representatives of the municipalities were to furnish a memorandum and plans of the roads they considered should first be dealt with. Since then I understand nothing further has been done. It is satisfactory, however, to know that the city council are again moving in the matter.

That Winnipeg's present rural surroundings are anything but inviting must be patent to all. Visitors to our city, approaching it from almost any direction cannot be otherwise than unfavorably impressed and disappointed when instead of the well built farm houses, granaries, etc., so commonly found within a certain radius of important business centres, they see nothing but a wide ex-

panse of rich but uncultivated prairie. The thanks of this board are due to the committee of the city council for their kindly and energetic co-operation with our committee specially charged with this work. It would appear with all the following forces interested and available, board of trade, city council, adjoining municipalities, the office machinery of the Dominion and provincial governments, seconded and supported by the public, who would, I have not the slightest doubt, unanimously endorse any reasonable outlay in connection with this important work, that some tangible and satisfactory result should be realized—unless, of course, the lands are held at such speculative values as would place them beyond a possibility of yielding a fair return to prospective investors. I have dwelt at considerable length on this subject, feeling that it is one of more than ordinary concern to Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities if not to the province generally.

DOUGLAS GRAIN BILL AND GRAIN INSPECTION ACT.

It is but natural that any matter affecting the grain interest of this country should receive immediate and careful attention at the hands of this board. The introduction in parliament at Ottawa of the Douglas Grain bill and the act amending the Grain Inspection act, being measures fraught with the greatest possible importance to the farmers and business men, of not only, the agricultural west, but of Canada almost as a whole, at once received such attention.

The first of these measures, namely, the Douglas grain bill was strongly opposed by this board, and as outlined in the council's report, the bill was defeated in committee specially appointed by parliament to consider it. Its introduction may, however, be productive of good results as the government, in view of the claims advanced by the promoter of the bill that such an act was essentially in the interests of the farmers and producers of this country appointed a royal commission to take evidence from all parties interested, and in the event of the grievances, alleged to exist, being substantiated, the government should, and no doubt will, take the earliest opportunity of removing or remedying such grievances.

The second measure referred to as an act to amend the grain inspection act, is in my opinion one of the most important to this country and particularly this city, that has received the attention of the government for some time. Winnipeg as the doorway through which passes practically the entire product of the vast grain growing district of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories should, under the new system of inspection occupy an increased importance in the commercial world. It is well known that the city of Duluth, similarly situated, in respect to its being the place of inspection of all grain exported from a great wheat producing section, owes its prominence largely to the fact that it is such a place of inspection. Duluth wheat, "Duluth inspection," etc. now such common terms have resulted in making the name of the Zenith city of Minnesota, familiar not only to the people of this country, but also in the far distant foreign markets of the world. Henceforth the wheat of this country, superior to that produced in perhaps any other portion of the globe, will, by inspection at this point, be stamped, as it were, with the "Hall