

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JAN. 9, 1883.

WINNIPEG TRADE STATISTICS.

It is usual for leading newspapers at the close of the year to publish some kind of a summary of the business done during the year in the city in which they are located, especially when the Board of Trade of such city does not publish in an annual report the same class of figures. As yet the Winnipeg Board of Trade has not grappled with this undertaking, although no work would tend more to create confidence in the city's commercial prosperity, among capitalists at a distance whose funds are so much wanted for the development thereof.

In our last issue we stated our opinion that the value of the business done in the city during the year 1882 would amount to \$30,000,000, exclusive of real estate or purely monetary transactions, or in plainer terms, taking only the transactions where goods or labor were supplied for money. Other journals have made different estimates on this subject, and a view of all by a stranger would create the impression, that trade statistics in Winnipeg were gotten up much in the style as modern pedestrian contests, namely on the "go as you please" principle.

Our evening contemporary, the *Sun*, in a review of the past year, which reflects the greatest credit on the enterprise and energy of its publishers, has placed the trade figures of Winnipeg in 1882 at \$20,000,000, which seems to us a long way short of the actual volume. We do not question the good faith of our contemporary in making this statement, but we feel certain that in its estimate a very large proportion of the city's trade transactions must have been over-looked, and we only make this assertion on account of our inability to reconcile its statement of \$20,000,000, and our own of \$30,000,000.

As absolute figures cannot be reached regarding Winnipeg's trade for 1882, some figures regarding the trade of other western cities south of the international boundary line may secure a partial index to those of this city; and figures we use are from Board of Trade reports, or equally reliable publications.

It is now almost an axiom that a western city whose trade volume for the year has a value of less than \$1000 per annum

per capita of its population, is not in a commercially healthy and progressive state. The best and most parallel instance with which to compare Winnipeg in this light are St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the figures of trade in these cities certainly make a much brighter showing than the *Sun* would supply of Winnipeg. The trade volume of Minneapolis for 1880 showed a total value of some \$87,000,000 according to the board of trade report of that year, while the census report for the same year showed a population of less than 48,000. The extraordinary increase which the population of that city made during the last half of 1880 would probably raise the average population of that year to over 50,000. But allowing this increase, the trade figures show about \$1,760 per annum per capita of the population. Minneapolis no doubt rates exceptionally high in this respect, as a very heavy share of its trade is comprised in the flour milling industry, and in this branch of trade the value of products is higher in proportion to the amount of hands employed (and consequently population centred around it) than any staple industry on this continent. In St. Paul the opposite is the case. A great amount of the business of that city is purely monetary, and does not figure in a board of trade report. The value of the trade transactions of that city for 1881 was nearly \$51,500,000, while the average population of the year was not more than 45,000. This would place the rate per annum per capita of the city at about \$1,110.

On our way to the sea-board by the Albert Lea route we might stop at the smaller city of Cedar Rapids and inspect its trade figures. For the year ending June, 30th 1881 the value of trade done there was nearly \$14,000,000, while the average population for the same year did not reach 12,000, showing thus a trade of about \$1,170 per annum per capita. Even the sleepy capital of the same state, Des Moines, in 1880 showed a trade value for over \$23,000,000 against an average population of about 21,000, or over \$1,800 per annum per capita.

We might follow this inquiry through numerous other cities, and if we took our figures from a year of general prosperity we would fail to find an instance where the figures would be under \$1,000 per annum per capita.

There is scarcely any person, even

among the enemies of Winnipeg, but will admit that the year 1882 has been one of great trade prosperity with her business men. But if we make a comparison of population and the figures of her business as given in the *Sun*, the record of the year is not a very prosperous one. Our contemporary places the population of the city at 25,000 at present, which we believe to be several thousand under the mark. But to take these figures as a basis it is about fair to place the average population of the past year at 22,500. Taken in connection with the \$20,000,000 of a trade value, this would show only \$875 per annum per capita, or twelve and a half per cent. below the standard that is considered progressive and commercially healthy. It is needless to state that the estimate that places Winnipeg in such a position is incorrect, and that the city should rank among the most prosperous on the American Continent.

We believe we are much nearer to a correct estimate at \$30,000,000, than our contemporary; and taking the average population at 24,000, which we believe to be a very close approximation, this would place the trade of 1882 at \$1,250 per annum per capita. Besides having had a prosperous state of trade during the past year, Winnipeg has had a state of inflated values in every class of goods, and we believe our estimate will prove under actual facts were a proper board of trade report compiled; and we hope the city board will take prompt action in getting one up, that will settle the question definitely.

THE COMING PROVINCIAL ELECTION.

It is seldom that an election takes place in Canada, when political party lines are so much lost as they seem to be in the present contest in Manitoba. This is to some extent a pleasing circumstance, and saves the disinterested, or at least calm on-looker, from being bored to death with a rehearsal of all the political misdeeds each party has been guilty of during the past half century, and listening to political logic so called that has not the slightest bearings upon the questions at issue. If there is any unusually bitter feeling in the present contest, it can be argued as an offset, that the issues that are taken are on purely local questions. The great question for all candidates is how do they stand on the disallowance question.

As we have already discussed this