

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces 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 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.

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## THE LATEST BUSINESS ORGANIZATION.

### Implement Dealers Drop Into Line and Form an Association.

A very enthusiastic meeting of the retail implement dealers of Manitoba and the Territories was held in Winnipeg on Monday evening last, for the object of considering the advisability of forming an association. The meeting was the outcome of a belief prevalent for some time among implement men that it would be a good thing to form an association. In addition to the retailers from all parts of Manitoba and Eastern Assiniboia, a number of jobbers and wholesale agents were present. The initiative in calling the meeting was taken by Henry White, of St. Charles. We may say here that Mr. White is both a farmer and an implement man. He was formerly engaged in the retail trade at Carberry, Man., but some time ago gave that up and he now has a large farm at St. Charles, near Winnipeg, where he is one of the progressive farmers of the district. Mr. White also spends a portion of his time on the road, as traveller for a Winnipeg implement house.

The action taken by Mr. White in calling the meeting was evidently timely and in full accord with the views of the retail dealers, judging from the hearty response to his invitation to meet and form an association. The dealers met to the number of about 75, and everyone present seemed not only favorable, but enthusiastically so, for the formation of an association. A number of letters were also received by Mr. White, from persons who could not be present, all expressing the belief that an association would be a good thing for the trade. Throughout the discussion the sentiment was made evident that the dealers had no sinister objects in view in forming an association. Nothing in the nature of a combination to squeeze any one was thought of. Only such objects as are in the interest of legitimate trade

were discussed, one of the most important themes being the desire to discourage the abuse of credit, so prevalent in this country in all branches of trade where the farmer is the consumer.

Mr. White took the chair and called the meeting to order. Not wasting any time in lengthy preliminary remarks, he at once called for the nomination of a chairman. This was done by retaining Mr. White in the chair by vote. The choice proved a very happy one. The chairman handled the meeting admirably, and without any appearance of dictation, successfully led the meeting on from one order of business to another, thus saving a great deal of useless discussion which often occurs at a meeting of this nature from lack of knowledge as to mode of procedure. F. Chapin of Hartney, was appointed secretary, and also proved a good man in the right place. The chairman stated that he had received copies of by-laws, etc., from some associations in the United States, one from the Kansas City association, which had a membership of \$50. He also had letters from officials of these associations commending the move here and wishing the proposed Canadian association success.

#### TAKING SHAPE.

It was moved by R. Shore, of Hartney, seconded by Arthur Mack, of Carberry, that it is in the interest of the dealers of Manitoba and the Territories that an association be formed.

W. J. Kennedy, of Virden, was the first speaker to the motion. He said the volume of trade during the past year had been large, and from the standpoint of sales the season had been very successful, but one thing was lacking. This, from the speaker's remarks was evidently the cash. Collections, he said, had evidently been small. They expected collections would be better than in 1898, in view of the larger crop, but they had been worse. Regarding the exemption laws in Manitoba, he said the board of trade of Virden was preparing a resolution against the law. Mr. Kennedy also went on to speak of the custom of taking old implements in part payment for new goods. He said it would be as reasonable for the purchaser to take a pair of old boots, or an old coat to the merchant, to dicker off as part payment for a new article. These he thought were matters which might be dealt with to the advantage of the dealers if an association were formed.

One speaker referred to the tendency of farmers to speculate on land and grain, to which he attributed the present trouble. The farmers had gone heavily into buying land last year before their crops were harvested. Crops did not turn out as big as they expected and prices were lower than they figured on, and they were holding their grain, thus speculating in grain at the expense of the dealer, and the law protected the farmer—protected him away beyond reason. This speaker condemned the exemption law roundly.

J. W. Macdonald expressed himself as favorable to the association idea. He spoke of the tendency of farmers to speculate in wheat, by holding their grain, at the expense of the dealer, who was thereby unable to secure his pay within reasonable time.

Geo. Lawrence, M. P. P., of Killarney, made a forcible address at some length, as favorable to the association. It was quite true, he said, that they had enjoyed a large volume of trade last year—even larger than they had looked for, but collections had been bad. Money they should have received

went to others. He spoke of the disadvantages some of the retail dealers were at in competing with manufacturers who sold direct to the consumer, and who took second-hand machines in exchange. Retail dealers would be obliged to do this so long as the manufacturers who sold direct to farmers followed the custom of taking old truck in exchange. They could, however, co-operate in the matter of securing better treatment from the railways in the matter of freights. He referred to the fact that they could not now ship mixed cars, which was formerly allowed to some extent.

Mr. Currie, of Currie & Burland, Souris, said that the long credits were partly their own fault. They allowed good customers to stand them off, while the customer used the money for other purposes. They were not firm enough with those who could pay. Some dealers were worse than the manufacturers in taking old implements in exchange. The formation of an association ought to do good and it could not do any harm.

The Massey-Harris Co. having been referred to as the principal manufacturing institution which sold direct to farmers, J. P. Porter, of Portage la Prairie, said he found this company good, clean opposition. He was in sympathy with the object of the meeting.

Several speakers referred to the Massey-Harris Co. in a complimentary way. While the company was competing directly with the retail dealers, they conducted their business in a businesslike way, and were generally spoken of as clean straightforward competitors, who did not resort to unscrupulous practices or price cutting.

A. E. May, of Carberry, was heartily in favor of the proposal to form an association. Regarding old machinery, he blamed himself as much as any one else for the custom of taking old truck in exchange. He believed the Massey-Harris Co. would co-operate with them in everything that was reasonable. He believed the association would be a good thing and grow to one of the largest on the continent. They had been a great benefit to the trade south of the line, in placing business on a better basis.

Mr. Gray, of Gray & Smith, Qu'Appelle, Assa., said all the dealers in his district were in favor of the proposed association. He would like to hear from the jobbers. He thought all should work together.

The secretary, F. Chapin, of Hartney, thought the wholesalers should come in with the association. The Massey-Harris people are good competitors. If they were organized they could use their influence as a united body in such matters as exemptions, freight rates, etc.

D. Cameron, of Melita, spoke of price cutting, which often resulted from a purchaser going to a dealer and saying he could buy an article from another dealer at so much less. Forthwith the dealer, therefore, proceeded to cut prices, without enquiring as to the truth of the statement of the purchaser about being able to buy lower. Very often the statement was false or given under a misapprehension. He also spoke of the encroachment of one dealer on the territory of another. They could not, he said, get along without the co-operation of the jobbers. The improvement of trade conditions, such as credits, for instance, would be a benefit to the farmer as well as the dealers.

Mr. McLeod, of McLeod & Hanley,