

# 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 Can-  
ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also  
reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manu-  
facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 12, 1898.

## DAMP WHEAT FOR SEED.

A good many farmers throughout the country contemplate selling their sound wheat and holding damp grain for seed. The Commercial has learned of a number of instances where this plan is contemplated. Before the sound wheat is disposed of, however, it would be wisdom to enquire as to the value of damp grain for seed purposes. The Commercial is not an authority on agricultural questions. We would like to hear from some one who could speak with authority on this matter.

## BAD ROADS.

The question of roads is really one of the most serious problems which Manitoba has to face to-day. In some districts, where the soil is light or gravelly and naturally well drained, the question is not such a serious one. There are other large areas, however, where the roads are practically impassable in bad weather. Bad roads are a great drawback to any country. They wear out horses and vehicles before their time, lead to breakdowns and accidents, sometimes of a serious nature, render it necessary to make two trips where one would sometimes answer, by reason of the small loads which can only be taken, consume double time often in

travelling a given distance, compel farmers to remain at home idle when they should be marketing their produce, etc., etc. The loss of time and money, directly or indirectly, as a result of bad roads, is a most serious matter. Great attention has been given of late years to the improvement of routes of travel by rail and water, as well as to the cheapening of transportation. The ordinary country road represents the beginning of our system of transportation. Good roads are as essential from an economic point of view as is the improvement of the great commercial highways. The total production of the country must first pass over the country road before it reaches the primary market. If the roads are bad, the loss in this transportation is serious. It would be a difficult matter to convince individual farmers that they were losing \$50 to \$100 annually by reason of the bad condition of the roads over which they were obliged to travel in transporting their produce to market. Yet we feel convinced that if many farmers would make a careful record of the time they have lost in enforced idleness through bad roads, or in unnecessary delays in traveling, at times perhaps with half the load which could otherwise have been taken, and estimate the unnecessary wear and tear of horse flesh and vehicle, they would find that our estimate is not a high one.

We do not require to go far from Winnipeg to find bad roads, perhaps equal to the worst in the province. During the recent spell of bad weather the roads leading out of the city were practically impassable. In fact we make the broad assertion that there is not a mile of good road in the Winnipeg district, outside of the city limits. The main road leading out of the city, through the rural municipality of Kildonan, the oldest settled district of Manitoba, is a sample of a practically impassable road in wet weather. Here is a settlement nearly 100 years old, where the people have been content all this time to wallow through mud hub deep, or shut themselves up within the precincts of their rural abodes, sometimes for weeks at a time, during seasons of frequent precipitation.

In another direction, perhaps the most important highway leading out of the city, through the rural municipality of Assiniboia is the same shameful condition. This highway, known as the Portage road, also leads through an old settled district, and is about the oldest road in the country, but not one mile of this road has been put in passable condition for bad weather, during all these years. This same municipality is offering a bonus for the erection of a small flour mill within its boundaries. It would

be of vastly more benefit to have a good road leading into the city, the natural market for the municipality, which would enable the farmers to transport their produce to market at a reasonable cost for labor and wear and tear of plant.

These two main roads which we have mentioned, lead through fine districts, one along the Red and the other along the Assiniboine river, where there are many beautiful locations for rural residences. If these roads were improved it would be an inducement for city people to establish summer residences along the rivers, instead of going away to some of the lakes for a summer outing. Winnipeg is getting to be quite a city, and as the business men become established they will seek for comfortable summer residences where they can enjoy a little ease and relaxation from business. The forbidding character of the country roads leading out of the city, however, puts a damper on the selection of any of the many pretty spots along the rivers as places for summer residences.

This question of roads is a matter which should be grappled with at once. If these municipalities had built only one mile of road each year for the past ten or fifteen years, they would now have main highways of a passable nature. The question, however should not be left with the rural municipalities alone. The provincial government should take hold of the matter, and be prepared to give the necessary instructions to enable the municipalities to build decent roads. The sister province of Ontario has taken up this matter, and provincial instructors in road making have been appointed to assist and advise the municipal authorities. The useless and antiquated statute labor system, which is being dropped by all progressive municipalities in the east, should be abolished as one of the first steps in the direction of reform in road making. Unless some active and important influence is brought to bear upon this matter, we are liable to go on indefinitely wallowing through mud and mire, as the early colonists of the Red river have done for nearly a century past.

ACTIVE SOLICITORS WANTED EVERYWHERE for "The Story of the Philippines," by Murat Halstead, commissioned by the Government as Official Historian to the War Department. The book was written in army camps at San Francisco, on the Pacific with General Merritt, in the hospitals at Honolulu, in Hong Kong, in the American trenches at Manila, in the insurgent camps with Aguinaldo, on the deck of the Olympia with Dewey, and in the roar of battle at the fall of Manila. Bonanza for agents. Brimful of original pictures taken by government photographers on the spot. Large book. Low prices. Big profits. Freight paid. Credit given. Drop all trashy unofficial war books. Outfit free. Address F. T. Barber, Sec., Star Insurance Bldg., Chicago.