

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JULY 23, 1894.

## PROSPECTS FOR IRRIGATION.

A change is to be made in the conditions governing the land grant of the Canadian Pacific railway, or rather a portion of the grant. The company has of course already received a large portion of its land grant. The original plan was to allow the company to take the odd numbered sections in the districts covered in the land grant, while the government retained the even numbered sections. Thus sections one, three, five, etc., would belong to the company and sections two, four, six, etc., in each township would remain with the government. The company is now to be given the privilege of selecting land in one solid block between Medicine Hat and Crow Foot, in Assiniboia and Alberta territories. It is said that the company desires to irrigate this district, hence the object in acquiring a solid block of land. If this is the intention, no reasonable objection can be made to the proposal. A great deal of this district is worthless for ordinary agricultural purposes, without irrigation, and is otherwise only suitable for grazing. If the company can successfully carry out a comprehensive system of irrigation, it will be a great thing, not only for the district affected, but also for the entire country. There is a vast area of land in southern Alberta and Assiniboia which can only be utilized for ordinary agricultural purposes by means of irrigation. It requires a large amount of capital to carry out irrigation works. Individual settlers cannot undertake the work for two reasons, first because they have not the capital; and secondly because works should be planned on a large scale for a whole section of country, and not for individuals.

Irrigation is needed for a large portion of the territory eastward of the Rocky Mountains. Large sections of land are of little value without irrigation. The government has not shown much disposition heretofore to undertake the work. Rather than have these lands remain as they are, it would be better to hand them over to companies, under reasonable conditions, who would be prepared to irrigate them. There is abundance of vacant land in the country for settlement, which does not need irrigation, but this is not a satisfactory reason for refraining from undertaking irrigation works in the sub-arid districts. Some of these districts are more convenient to markets, are readily accessible, and already have railway communication. If they can be successfully irrigated, there is no good reason for greatly delaying the beginning of the work. It is greatly to be hoped in the interest of the western country that the Canadian Pacific company will make a success of its irrigation scheme.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE Toronto city council has decided to call a conference representing the commercial and shipping interests of the United States and

Canada to be held in that city during the coming autumn to consider the question of deepening the St. Lawrence canals, so as to enable ocean going vessels to reach the upper lakes. Of late years there has been a tendency to consider the deepening of the St. Lawrence canals as an international question, but this is the first international convention called to take up the matter.

The United States Irrigation Congress assembles at Denver on September 2. The last congress formed irrigation commissions in seventeen states and territories, and reports from them will all be heard at the forthcoming congress. It is expected that they will furnish a basis for a national irrigation policy. Now that the question of irrigation is becoming an important one in the western portion of the Canadian prairie region, the proceedings of the Denver congress will be watched with interest by many here.

THE bill subsidizing the proposed fast Atlantic steamship line, has been passed by Parliament. The subsidy offered is \$750,000 per annum for ten years. This is a large sum to pay for what time may prove to be of very little practical value. A fast Atlantic service is no doubt a very nice thing to have, providing it does not cost too much, but at the price to be paid the game may not be worth the candle. As a general principle, when trade warrants such a service, a means will be found for carrying it into effect. It is quite questionable if it is advisable to expend such a large sum to prematurely establish such a service. If this amount were expended wisely and economically in the internal development of the country, we cannot but think that better results would be attained. The improvement of the canals and the opening of Hudson bay are of vaster importance at the moment than a fast Atlantic service.

NOTWITHSTANDING protestations against further railway subsidies, the government has again gone in for a big vote of monies to projected railways. The total amount provided is \$3,134,000. As heretofore these railway subsidies do not include railways in Manitoba and the territories. A number of western railways are to be aided by land grants, but no cash comes to the western roads. Thus while the people of the west have to help pay for this continual subsidizing of eastern roads, we get nothing for roads in the west, where they are needed the most. Handing over the public lands is quite a different thing to a cash bonus. The lands should belong to the West. And while the people of the west have to help pay the cash subsidies to the eastern roads, they have to meet the land subsidies to the western roads alone. Eastern and western roads should be placed on the same basis, and if subsidies are to be continued, they should all receive cash subsidies. It is high time that this handing over of the public domain should cease. The grant of \$320,000 to the Manitoba & Northwestern Railway Co. is not a subsidy, as that company hands back 320,000 acres of land to the government, in payment for the cash amount. The grant to

the Manitoba & Northwestern railway is to enable that road to complete its line to Prince Albert, on the North Saskatchewan.

THE proposed insolvency bill is not to be pushed any further this session of Parliament. Premier Thompson made the announcement the other day. This is the expected which has happened. There has been a belief abroad in business circles for some time that the government would drop the bill for this session. The excuse is that by holding the bill over, the commercial classes will become familiar with the proposed measure in the meantime. The business men who have taken any interest in the measure we think have followed the proposed bill right along, and they are just about as familiar with it as they will be a year hence. The leading commercial interests have already fully signified to Parliament what they desire in the line of insolvency legislation, and there is nothing to be gained by waiting a year. If an insolvency act is needed (and business men very generally agree that it is) we should have it as soon as possible. Because we have waited so long for it, is not a reasonable argument in favor of waiting longer. Though there may be sectional or special commercial interests opposed to an insolvency law, the general good of the country calls for a wise measure of this nature, and it is to be regretted that it has been dropped for another year. A good insolvency law is needed now, and is perhaps needed as badly as it will be a year hence. Why then wait?

## The Canadian Agricultural Co.

THE Commercial has received another long letter from Mr. J. Creagh, of Calgary, regarding the Canadian Agricultural Co. The first letter from Mr. Creagh, which contained some statements regarding this company, appeared in *The Commercial* of June 25. Mr. Richardson, manager of the company, shortly after called at this office and denied the statements made by Mr. Creagh in toto. He also made some statements regarding Mr. Creagh's former connection with the company. Mr. Richardson's denials and statements were referred to briefly in our issue of July 9. Mr. Creagh now writes a very vigorous letter, in which he denies the accuracy of Mr. Richardson's denials, and re-affirms the statements made in his first letter, and he challenges Mr. Richardson to make a statement of the case over his own signature.

Mr. Creagh complains that *The Commercial* has done him an injustice by referring to his former connection with the company. He very positively affirms that he has no personal malice against Mr. Richardson or the company, and that his only object in writing was to defend the country from the bad effect produced in England by the heavy losses of the company. Regarding the two suits which Mr. Creagh brought against the company and its manager, and which Mr. Richardson informed *The Commercial* had been subsequently dropped, Mr. Creagh says:—

“I deny emphatically that I abandoned the two suits referred to by Mr. Richardson. I

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