

# THE BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMERCIAL JOURNAL

ISSUED EVERY TUESDAY AT VICTORIA, B. C.

**SUBSCRIPTION - - \$2.00 PER YEAR.**

Advertising Rates on Application.

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VICTORIA, TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1891.

## OUR INDUSTRIAL INTERESTS.

The farmers of Manitoba evidently have little faith in the reported prophecy of President Van Horne—which he has, it will have been noticed, seen fit to materially modify and to have surrounded with a number of hypothetical conditions. They have unquestionably realized that present prospects do not look that way, and in fact that prices of wheat are unprecedentedly low. They are many of them looking to the more general establishment of creameries and cheese factories which will involve the grazing of some portion of the land that has been devoted to grain, thus giving it in the course of a few years new heart, and resting to it those chemical elements which have been taken away from it in the raising of cereals. It is possibly well that necessity should have compelled the Manitobans to adopt this course, otherwise their lands might very soon be run out and exhausted, as is the case with much of the aforetime fertile wheat land of the United States. This will involve more work on the part of the farmers and their families. Milch cattle will require attention, and unless cheese and butter factories be the order of the day, the women folk will find that they have more to do than to keep house, while machinery ploughed the land, sowed the seed, reaped the harvest, thrashed the product and made it ready for the market.

Farming conditions in the Northwest as well as elsewhere must be materially modified ere long, and in this Province the comparatively lazy existence termed living on a ranch will have to give way to farming that is farming, in which the highest exercise of both brain and muscle will make the lands of British Columbia something more nearly *proving* what they might and what they ought to be. With most people here, farming has not been that serious, studied avocation which it should have been, and which it must be before its best results can be obtained. As we have many times said, there is no reason why we should purchase the greater part of the butter we consume in Montreal, Toronto,

Winnipeg or in the United States, or why we should be dependent on the same sources for our cheese. As for eggs and poultry, with the open winters we enjoy, it is ridiculous that we should procure the bulk of them from sections of the Dominion which have from five to seven months of cold, often bitter, weather. As for the vegetables we consume, what we do not get from California are in a large measure the product of the Chinese ranches, and we may almost without an exception make similar remarks regarding each individual article of farm and garden production generally. Then, let the farmers answer, if they think they are doing their duty by their orchards, either in the shape of proper cultivation or in the destruction of the fruit pests which appear to be annually increasing in numbers, if not in varieties.

In connection with manufactures, what might there not be said? Some people, when spoken to, pretend that these are not the times in which to undertake such enterprises. They say that the times are too hard and that the prospects are not sufficiently promising. But granting, for the sake of argument, that the conditions of which they speak actually exist, what are they doing to remedy them? Some of these parties have no hesitation in putting up margins for "deals" in produce, silver, or stocks in Seattle, San Francisco, Montreal and even as far away as New York, leaving their interests in the hands of people who are comparative strangers to them and who may at any moment seriously jeopardize the resources with which they are entrusted. Invested here, those margins would amount to a considerable sum, and would all the time be under their own control. But in these "deals" of which we speak are the parties concerned creating anything or doing anything by which any material advantage would be gained? Decidedly not. They occupy pretty much the position of the Chinaman who plays his game of fan tan or the professional gambler who preys upon the innocent and confiding customer whom he can induce to try his hand at Black Jack or some other equally honest and reputable diversion. They are financial anarchists; their profits are made out of the losses of others and not out of their legitimate demands.

On the other hand, the man who honestly embarks his capital in manufactures or in legitimate farming knows that he is trying to create something, to increase the value of an article which has actual existence. He knows, too, that he is at least endeavoring to augment the prosperity of the community, to give employment to honest, hard-working people, to increase the value of property—his own, possibly, and that adjoining to it; to produce an article by which the seller will

profit and the consumer will be advantaged. In fact, while seeking to turn his capital to account, he is benefitting some one else and without robbing any one, which cannot be said of much of the speculative business that in many quarters is so popular. There is such a thing as overdoing manufactures, but we have a long way to go before we shall reach that stage. Witness the manufacturers on the Island and Mainland who have been getting rich, although a tremendous quantity of manufactured articles have been and are still being brought in from the outside. The subjects of British Columbia manufactures as well as of agriculture only require thinking over a little for one to be convinced as to their perfect feasibility.

## THE DEPRESSION.

There can be no disguising the fact that so far as general business is concerned the recent depression has not been an unmixed evil. In the parable of the sower about which the good book tells us, we read of that seed which not having deepness of earth sprang up quickly and rankly, but soon died out. But, as every one is aware, such products take the place which would be occupied by others of a more permanent character, and in fact prevent the other growing or attaining a state of fruition. This worthless stuff has to be got rid of before the rest of the crop can prosper. So is it in business. There are numbers of people who start out, but have no bottom financial, moral or as the result of experience. These are in the way of other people, whose business they run, besides most effectually bringing about their own downfall. Times of depression tell on such people, and have the effect of weeding them out. Thus, as has been said, they are not an unmixed evil, since they the sooner bring matters to that climax when the issue is that of the survival of the fittest.

The *Monetary Times* has the following: "A few years ago the trade of British Columbia was an inconsiderable factor to the Dominion. But with the advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway this ceased to be the case, and the commercial and industrial progress of this Province is carefully watched by the business community of eastern Canada. British Columbia has not escaped the depression so prevalent in old and new countries alike, and the depression has been even the more intense since many districts throughout the Province have been struggling with the reaction that sooner or later follows every real estate boom. But the future of the Province is of great promise, and Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster are probably as good cities for investment as any in the whole Dominion."