

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 29, 1884.

## THE PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION.

At a recent meeting of the City Council a proposition was made that if a grant of \$12,000 were given, the Board of Agriculture would make the Provincial Exhibition permanent in Winnipeg for five years. This did not meet with favor in the eyes of our city Solons, who wound up by offering the paltry sum of \$2,000 towards the maintenance of the exhibition. This was certainly strangely out of keeping with the policy pursued by Winnipeg aldermen in the past. They have been only too willing to squander money right and left for purposes that were entirely uncalled for, and which often would hardly bear the test of being legitimate. But now when something is brought up for their consideration and their assistance solicited for it, which has for its object the welfare of the city and which will serve to add to its importance both materially and otherwise, they look upon it with a suspicious eye, and decline to come to its aid. Perhaps if the money had been wanted to buy a \$30,000 gravel pit, or build an expensive city hall, they would willingly have assented to the expenditure, at least if the history of the past can be taken as a guide such would have been the case. We cannot but think that in not agreeing to meet the wishes of the Board of Agriculture the Council acted very unwisely, and it would seem that the penny wise and pound foolish policy which characterized their predecessors was still to be continued. Other towns and cities in the Province are yet in their infancy and comparatively small, and the probability is that many years will elapse before they attain to the dignity of full-fledged cities. While they remain thus it is not considered wise to hold the Provincial Exhibition outside of Winnipeg, as in the smaller places it will be impossible to make it the success which all would desire it to be. This was amply exemplified by the experience of last year, when the exhibition was held at Portage la Prairie. Such being the case it then becomes almost an actual necessity that it be permanently established in Winnipeg for some years at least. But it is also a necessity that sufficient encouragement be given the Board of Agriculture by the city to enable them to successfully carry out their plans.

The Province of Manitoba is an agricultural country, and on the development of that special industry must depend its future. Unless every inducement is held out to foster its interests, and nothing left undone to encourage its onward march. the working out of the grand destiny of the Province will be trammelled in its progress. As the country becomes settled and brought under cultivation, so will the commerce of the city of Winnipeg extend. It is the only source to which we have to look for support; and since this city will reap a proportionate benefit by its encouragement, it seems to us that the Council displayed a vast amount of unwisdom in their treatment of the proposition from the Board of Agriculture. The request was not an extravagant one, and we trust that they will yet see fit to reconsider the matter, and that further consideration will lead them to act in a more liberal spirit than they have been disposed to do thus far.

There is also a prospect that within the next four years the Dominion Exhibition will be held here, which makes it all the more necessary that permanent grounds and buildings for exhibition purposes should be located in the capital of the Province. By that time the C. P. R. will have been constructed across the Dominion from ocean to ocean, and Winnipeg being the central point between British Columbia and the maritime provinces is the most desirable place at which the grand interprovincial exhibition should be held. Such an event would be a red letter day in the history of Winnipeg, and mark an important era in the country's progress. Much more might be said on this subject and many other cogent reasons urged for the permanent establishment of the annual exhibit of Provincial products in this city. But enough has been done to show the desirability of the Council acting liberally in this matter, and the necessity that exists for their doing so. We hope that the matter will receive prompt attention. The exhibition was lost to Winnipeg last year through the apathy and inactivity of the Council, and when arrangements had been completed to hold it at another point there was some vigorous kicking about it. Let the same mistake not be repeated.

## DOMINION TRADE AND COMMERCE.

The report of the Minister of Customs which was laid upon the table of the House of Commons a few days ago shows that the total value of imports into the

Dominion for the year ending June 30th, 1883, was \$132,254,022, being \$12,834,522 in excess of the previous year, and \$1,040,440 larger than that of 1874—the largest previously recorded. Exports show a decrease of \$4,051,399, the figures being \$98,085,804 for 1883, as against \$102,137,203 in 1882. Taking the aggregate trade of the year on the basis of exports and goods entered for consumption the Dominion had the largest dealings with Great Britain, amounting to \$99,197,682, the United States coming next with a total of \$97,701,056. The amount of trade with other countries was.—West Indies, \$7,494,291; South America, \$2,954,628; Newfoundland, \$2,953,273; France, \$2,934,210; Germany, \$1,942,851; China and Japan, \$1,750,642. The decrease in the value of exports is accounted for by the failure of the crops in Ontario and other Eastern provinces. Of agricultural products there were exported off the produce of Canada, \$22,818,519 in 1883, as against \$31,035,712 in 1882, a falling off of \$8,200,000 in this item alone.

The average rate of duty on the total imports was in 1883, 17.52 per cent; in 1882, 18.18 per cent. The amount of duty per head of the population paid in each Province was:—Ontario, \$3.98; Quebec, \$6.80; Nova Scotia, \$4.16; New Brunswick, \$4.71; Manitoba, \$9.02; British Columbia, \$18.38; Prince Edward Island, \$1.53. Over the whole Dominion the average amount of duty per capita was \$5.26. It will be seen that with the exception of British Columbia, Manitoba has to pay a great deal more per head than any other province.

The amount of customs duty collected during the last fiscal year was \$23,009,582. The year previous it was \$21,581,570. The percentage for the cost of collection to the total customs revenue obtained was 3.26 per cent in 1883, and 3.33 in 1882.

## SIR JOHN & THE COUNTRY'S PROSPERITY.

In the course of his speech on the address in the House of Commons a few days ago Sir John A. Macdonald ventured to assert that the Dominion was particularly prosperous, commercially, at the present time and that we were surrounded by all the indications of prosperity. Upon what data the honorable gentleman based his statement we are not enlightened. It reminds us of a certain