

THE COMMERCIAL

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Advertisements purporting to be news matter, or which profess to express the opinion of this journal, will not be inserted.

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 UNION BANK MEETING.

On another page of this issue of the Commercial will be found a report of the annual meeting of the shareholders of the Union Bank of Canada, which was held at the head office in Quebec on Saturday last. The official reports show that the year under review had been a most profitable one and the directors marked the improvement by declaring a dividend for the last six months at the rate of seven per cent. per annum. Hereafter the rate of dividend has been six per cent. In addition to payment of the two half-yearly dividends, the bank has added \$100,000 to its reserve and carried forward \$35,955. The reserve is now 32½ per cent of the capital. The statement shows also that this bank still maintains to the fullest extent its faith and interest in the west, and has added three new branches and one new building to its western equipment. Perhaps the most important feature of the meeting was the announcement that the capital stock of the bank is to be increased to the extent of \$1,000,000.

FEMALE LABOR.

The many-sided question of female labor has been brought forcibly to the attention of business men and others in Winnipeg recently. The immediate cause of the trouble is the enforcement of the Factories' Act passed by the Manitoba legislature. This act provides, among other things, that the hours of labor for females in factories shall not exceed forty-eight hours in any one week. It has been customary in Winnipeg to consider nine hours as the working day in most establishments where girls are employed, and in some cases even longer hours have been observed, at least at certain seasons of the year. In the millinery, dressmaking and such places work has often been carried on well into the evening.

Some of the city establishments accepted the new regulations without protest and without making any reduction in the wages of the girls. Some others attempted or threatened to reduce wages to correspond to the shorter hours. As a general rule no reductions were made as a result of the law. The enforcement of the act, however, led to a feeling of unrest, which in one case at least led to the formation of a union in one of the factories where a considerable number of girls

were employed. In this case the union was probably formed as a means of opposing a reduction in wages, should such be attempted. The management of the factory—the Paulin-Chambers Co.—resented the formation of a union among their employees, and a lockout or strike resulted. Minor disturbances occurred in several other establishments.

Viewing the question in a broad and liberal spirit, we must conclude that eight hours is as long as women and young people of either sex should be permitted to labor in factories, or in establishments of any kind for that matter. There are many places besides the scheduled list of "factories" where women and young girls and boys are kept at work for an unreasonable length of time each day. The Commercial has always favored "shorter hour" movements, whether it be in stores or factories. Business men as well as employees frequently over-work themselves. In the case of young people of either sex, it is what the law should protect them from excessive burdens. Overworked children means weak men and women.

of cheap female labor falls upon women themselves. This has been observed right here in Winnipeg, where there is a scarcity of female help. The difficulty arises in this way: There are many girls who are living at home. They are not expected to pay for their board and lodging, and they can dress well and have a liberal spending allowance from the wages they receive at the factory. There are other girls who are obliged to support themselves entirely. The wages which satisfy girls at home are not sufficient to support decently those who must rely entirely upon their own resources. There are many girls in Winnipeg who work for wages which would barely pay their board, if they were compelled to entirely support themselves. This cheapening of female labor is a great hardship to those women who have to support themselves, and perhaps assist in supporting others. It seems an evil that this state of things should exist.

The other side of the question is the requirements of competition. Industries have been established here which must compete with manufactures

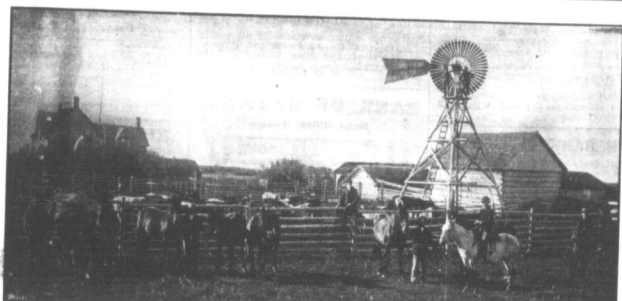
Winnipeg City Council.

The Winnipeg city council met in regular fortnightly session on Monday evening. The chief item of business considered was the arrangements for the civic coronation festivities. These are very elaborate and will cost the city over \$1,000. The provincial government is to donate another \$1,000. Part of this money will be spent in entertaining the Minnesota bankers, who will visit the city in a body on that day. Matters relating to this year's industrial exhibition also came in for a good share of attention. The Winnipeg Street Railway Company asked permission to lay a track from Main Street to the exhibition ground via Dufferin Avenue for the purpose of supplementing the present service via Selkirk Avenue. This permission was granted. The exhibition grounds this year. The usual committee reports were presented and acted upon.

Railway and Traffic Matters.

C. P. R. traffic receipts for the week ending June 14 were \$269,000 for the same week last year, \$307,000.

A Montreal dispatch says W. Stout, general manager of the Dominion Express Company, accompanied by Superintendent Vincent J. Morand, and Walsh, of Toronto, left on Monday



Residence and Buildings of John R. Rix, Wetaskiwin, Alberta.

Much of the work performed by women and girls in shops and factories is of a very tedious and trying nature, and often in cramped and unhealthy surroundings. Eight hours to stoop over a piece of sewing, for instance, is a very long time, when we consider the trying nature of the work. A healthy, vigorous citizenship is not compatible with the over working of young people.

The subject of female labor is a great moral and social question as well as an industrial problem. The matter of wages paid girls and women is a bone of much contention. Some are opposed to the employment of women at all in factories for the reason, they argue, that they work for smaller wages than are paid to men, and thus deprive men of the means of supporting their families. Women undoubtedly have the right to earn their own living, as thousands of them are compelled to do. They have the right to earn their living as best they can, the same as men. This can hardly be disputed. It is really the question of wages which is the difficulty. If women were paid in the same proportion as men for the work they perform, much of the hardship caused by female labor would cease. Men are usually considered the natural support of women and children, and yet men are driven out of some employments by cheaper female labor.

Another great hardship on account

brought in from the eastern provinces or from foreign countries. These industries have their limit. They have great difficulty as it is in competing with factories in the east, where wages are lower even than here. It is simply a matter of giving employment to the girls at a price or not giving them employment at all. The factories here, in most cases, have probably paid their women employees as high wages as competition will permit of.

At the same time that a number of factory girls in Winnipeg have been out of employment, one advertisement at least running in the daily papers for a week for a general servant failed to bring a single applicant for the position. The wage offered for the servant was worth at least double the amount many of these factory girls received. This presents another phase of the female labor question. Many girls prefer low wages in the factory or shop, sometimes at very trying work, rather than engage in the more thoughtful and often less arduous employment as domestic servants. If something could be done to make the position of the domestic servant more attractive to young women, it would be better for them in many cases than the life spent at factory work.

The rope paper manufacturers of the United States are figuring on a combine to be capitalized at \$11,000,000.

night for a tour of inspection of the offices as far as the Pacific coast. The party will make the journey in the "Canada," which formed part of the Royal train.

The returns of traffic through the Canadian and American Suez canals show a great increase this year over the previous years. The total tonnage of freight shipped through the American canal in April and May, was 6,744,805 tons, as against 2,248,745 for the same period last year. Through the Canadian canal the tonnage was 522,180 as compared with 151,675 last year.

A Baltimore dispatch says: Practically all of the steamship lines operating between ports in the British Isles and ports on the Atlantic seaboard have entered into an agreement by which a minimum rate has been established on all classes of freight destined for Europe. It is stated that the German lines have not entered into the agreement. It is said to be an extension of the compact made some months ago, by which the lines established a minimum rate of 1½ pence on grain.

Morden, June 17.—A public meeting of the citizens of Morden was held last night at the call of the mayor in the municipal hall, to consider what action they should take to secure the building of the St. Charles and Northern Railway of the Canadian Pacific branch to Morden. After considerable discussion a resolution was passed, authorizing the council to offer the company the right of way down and upon Fifth street, from its northern extremity to Stephen street, on the condition that the exhibition grounds and the turf club's property be not interfered with.