

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part of Canada west of Lake Superior and the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial especially enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the west region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, and only or very rarely does any other paper also reach the leading wholesale, commission and mercantile and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

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## New Quarters.

The business office and editorial rooms of The Commercial have been moved to the new Merchants' Bank building, Main street.

## THE GRAND TRUNK.

Work on the Grand Trunk Pacific railway will be commenced simultaneously at North Bay, Prince Albert, Edmonton and at the Pacific coast end, as soon as the necessary legislation can be obtained. So say the promoters, in a recent interview at Montreal. In the same interview the statement is made, in reply to the question as to what aid is expected from the government, that "we think we should be treated as liberally as any other road." Evidently there is nothing small about the expectations of the Grand Trunk Pacific promoters. If the Grand Trunk Pacific is to be subsidized as liberally as the Canadian Pacific Railway, for instance, which is probably the any other road referred to, we think the people of Canada will strongly object.

The promoters of this enterprise probably also have their mind on a land grant. When asked "what about a land grant, they reply: "Well, in British Columbia, for instance, what is the use of their mineral lands if there is no railway communication to them." Evidently British Columbia is to be worked for a land grant, after the federal government has been exploited for a subsidy, equal to that granted to "any other road."

The announcement that construction will commence simultaneously at North Bay, Prince Albert, etc., might possibly be taken as indicating that the ultimate absorption of the Canadian Northern Railway is a part of the plan. It will be noticed that construction is not to commence at any point where it will parallel the Canadian Northern Railway. Of course it would be good policy to conceal as long as possible any probability of the absorption of the C. N. R. Both roads are working for all the aid they can get in the meantime.

## HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN THE WEST.

The members of the Northwest Commercial Travellers Association discuss the question of hotel accommoda-

tion at their recent annual meeting. While hotel accommodation, speaking generally, is much better now throughout the west than it was years ago, there are still some points where there is great room for improvement. One difficulty seems to be that some hotel proprietors seem to consider that their principal business is to sell whiskey. The accommodation of the travelling public is merely a side issue with them. They make a pretense of keeping an hotel merely to comply with the law, which says that they must have so many rooms, etc., etc., before they are allowed a license to sell liquors. These men would probably prefer to keep a saloon, in preference to an hotel. If the law would allow them to do so. As it is, in order to sell whiskey they must carry on an hotel of some kind, and the business of catering to the wants of the travelling public receives just as little attention as possible. Some of these badly kept hotels are located at points where the amount of business done would lead

graded according to rooms occupied, etc. In many cases, however, there is no such difference, and the traveller pays as much as double the local rate for no better accommodation than the local man receives. It is understood the travellers will take the matter up with the local governments of Manitoba and the Territories, with the object of securing provision for increased accommodation for licensed houses.

## AID TO RAILWAYS.

The meeting of the Winnipeg board of trade to be held on Monday next, Dec. 23, to consider the question of aid to railways will likely lead to discussion of more than usual interest. The resolution which is now before the board boldly affirms the principle of government ownership of railways, and urges that no further grants should be made in aid of corporation roads. There is room for almost unlimited discussion upon the points presented in the resolution. It is to be hoped that there will be a full attendance at the meet-



Scene in Canadian National Park, Rocky Mountains.

one to look for a fairly good house, while at some smaller places, good hotels have been established. Hotel accommodation is not always in keeping with the size or importance of the place. It is therefore not for lack of business that some of these places are so badly kept. The travellers have another grievance. They claim that in many cases they are charged double rates at the hotels. That is, that the hotel has two rates, one for residents of the town or district and a higher rate for travellers. Of course, where a traveller has the use of a sample room fee, it would be fair to charge a higher rate, though a more business-like way would be to make a separate charge for the sample room. Many travellers, however, do not use sample rooms, and others obtain a room outside of the hotel, so that the landlord cannot always justify the higher charge on the ground that the traveller has the use of sample rooms. The hotel proprietor would be justified in making a reasonable charge for sample rooms but the custom of charging all travellers a higher price for ordinary accommodation than is charged local people, seems hardly right. No objection, of course, can be made to charges

ing, and that there will be a decided expression of the opinion of the board upon the question at issue. The resolution which will be discussed in this connection, was published in The Commercial of last week, and also in the city daily papers of Saturday last. The subject is one of great importance and well worthy of careful study and consideration.

It is of course difficult to surmise what the board may decide to do with this resolution. While the railway question has perhaps received more attention here than in many other parts of the country, it is doubtful if the majority of the members of the board have sufficiently advanced ideas to declare squarely in favor of government ownership. One point the people of the west are fairly unanimous upon, is their opposition to any further land grants to railways or other corporations. Any further grants of land would create a feeling of intense hostility here.

It does seem that the time has fully come when the entire policy of granting aid to railways should be thoroughly reconsidered and revised, or abolished entirely. That an enormous loss to the people has been sustained by the policy of the past, cannot be

denied. There is every reason to fear that a large portion of the aid voted to corporations in the past, both by the various provincial and the Federal government, has found its way into the pockets of promoters. There has been a lack of provision in the past for safeguarding the public Treasury, in connection with these grants.

The present is an opportune time for a full consideration of this important question. At the coming session of parliament it is likely that very extensive applications for aid will be made. The new Grand Trunk Pacific promoters will no doubt ask for aid on a large scale, and there are several other corporations which will likely be on hand to demand assistance. If a large sum is to be granted in aid of this latest transcontinental scheme, it should be done on an entirely different basis from past grants to railways. The people should get full value for any aid granted: provision should be made for keeping down the bonds and debt of the government. The portion of the grant should be allowed to filter into private pockets. If the people believe that this road is needed, and that it will prove a profitable undertaking, then let the government take stock in the road and have an active share in its management. That would be a form of government ownership. If it is necessary that assistance be given, why should not the assistance take the form of a purchase of the bonds of the road by the government with ample provision for government representation in the management, construction and otherwise, of the road. This would be just as good, if not better for the company than a government guarantee of the bonds. A straight gift of cash, much less of lands, should not be entertained. This policy has been fully discredited and it is high time that it should cease.

## The Cattle Market.

With reference to ocean freight rates, and the exports of live stock, the New York Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin says: Ocean freight rates on live stock from this port have increased about 30 shillings a head since the embargo was imposed on shipments of New England cattle, owing to the prevalence of foot and mouth disease in that section. One of the chief reasons given for this increase by officials of transatlantic lines engaged in that trade is this: there is now but little space available for cattle, practically all of the space having been taken up by long time contracts entered into at the beginning of the year, and which will not, as a rule, be cancelled until the end of the year. This increase in rates would seem to indicate an active demand, and enquiry for cattle from the United States. The increase, however, have not as yet shown the increase that some of the lines expected would follow the lifting of the embargo. An official of one of the largest transatlantic lines yesterday surmised the situation as follows: "Ocean live stock rates have jumped from 30 to 40 shillings per head, largely because of the increase of space outside of that reserved under contract. The actual shipments of cattle have not exceeded the lower limit of the embargo went into effect, because the foreign market is not favorable. But after the lifting of the embargo, the situation abroad will no doubt be much improved, and we expect then to experience a marked increase in the cattle movement from New York; and it will probably be heavier from other ports, too, except those of New England." An official of another transatlantic line said that a large part of Boston's cattle business was now to be handled at Halifax.

Port Arthur harbor was reported still open last week and no ice in sight. It is frequently the case that Lake Superior harbors are open after the close of navigation. This indicates that it may yet be found possible to extend the usual navigation season considerably.