

# THE COMMERCIAL

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

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Office 219 McDermott St. Telephone 291.

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Publisher.

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 POSITION OF WOOL.

In the United States the wool men are beginning to talk of agitating for a "pure wool law," in other words a law which will compel manufacturers to put pure wool into garments which are sold as all wool and to expressly state in some way what materials have been used in the manufacture of every garment which they offer for sale. It is claimed in support of this move that there is a surprisingly great amount of deception practiced now by manufacturers of woollen goods, so-called, along this line, and that the machinery for blending cotton and wool has been so perfected that as much as 50 per cent. of cotton can be introduced into the texture of a garment in such a manner as to deceive even an expert. It is claimed that herein lies the reason for the present stagnation in the wool markets and that until a "pure wool" law is enacted the difficulty will continue. Underclothing manufacturers are among the principal offenders in this matter and many of them have become so expert at the business of substituting cotton that they do it with impunity, even in the most expensive lines. While cotton can be used in this wholesale manner in substitution for wool it must be expected that the latter will suffer depression in both demand and price and producers of wool may expect to have to sell their stocks for less money than they would otherwise be able to command. The need for a "pure wool" law is not by any means confined to the United States either as we have in Canada exactly the same sort of deception being practiced by some manufacturers who in their anxiety to be able to undersell competitors are willing to be dishonest to the extent of substituting a cheaper material for the dearer one.

## THE BAKING POWDER QUESTION.

As a result of the interviews which the deputation of Canadian baking powder manufacturers have had with the department of inland revenue recently it has been demonstrated that the ban which has heretofore rested upon what are known as alum baking powders under the Dominion statutes has been based upon representations which appear to have been made to the department by the United States

baking powder trust as to the comparative merits of alum and cream of tartar powders and not upon any results of original investigation by the department's specialists. This fact was practically confessed to the members of the deputation during one of its interviews and is a serious admission for any branch of the public service to have to make. The deputation were seeking to secure some amelioration of the position in which alum powders have been placed by the measures which have been adopted by the government to suppress its manufacture and use and they naturally asked for the data upon which the decisions of the department have been based. To the surprise of all the Dominion analyst confessed that he had no first hand information showing alum powders to be injurious, but had been relying upon hearsay. As to the merits of the dispute regarding the two baking powders it will have to remain for the scientists and doctors to decide but this much may be said that it seems very strange that a great department of public service like that which has charge of this baking powder question should take action upon

ly increased requirements of the railway service of the continent. It is said that car builders are absolutely swamped with orders. With regard to the price situation it may be said to be about on a par with the position as regards supply and demand. Prices are higher than at any time during the boom of two years ago, and have reached their present point solely through natural causes. The influence of the new trust has apparently not yet been exerted to control prices. It may be supposed that it will not be so long as prices continue to advance of their own accord.

## THE MINING SITUATION.

Among the Canadian industries which have been looking forward to the spring which is now opening up so splendidly with hope and expectation that it would bring a new lease of life and activity is that of gold mining as carried on in Northwestern Ontario and Southern British Columbia. Times have not been so good with this industry, especially in Northwestern Ontario, as the people interested had reason to expect and many of them were disappointed in

their time into it, and are making it pay. Their enterprise has led to the populating of regions which would otherwise remain uninhabited and in providing employment for a great many people in the subsidiary occupations of manufacturing, transporting and distributing to them the necessities of life so that they may be enabled to economically carry on their mining operations. They have also by their enterprise provided employment for a great army of laborers and more or less skilled workmen who receive wages for work in and around the mines and who are thus enabled to easily earn the livelihood which they might otherwise have to struggle to secure in the crowded ranks of the older industries. To say that this is not legitimate enterprise is unreasonable.

This is the situation in both the gold mining regions referred to. Northwestern Ontario has suffered most for wild-catting and is now going through a period of depression in consequence. It is also true that the risk of veins playing out there is greater, consequently investment in its mines is more risky. But that there is much gold to be found in that region no one for a moment doubts and that a profit-



Manitoba Farm Homes—Residence of John Good, Stonewall.

the representations of an interested party and seek to regulate a rival interest out of existence without positive information as to the qualities of the respective commodities.

## IRON AND STEEL.

The iron and steel markets appear to be in a state of nervous activity at present. The great question which is agitating the minds of the purchasers is as to the course of the new steel trust. Buyers feel that they are now in the power of the trust and are keen to get contracts placed for future supplies of raw material. Some are even offering to contract for a year's supply commencing from July 1 next. Failing to make satisfactory contracts they drop out of the market and leave the future to take care of itself. Some important lines of material show further advances recently. Structural material has advanced \$2 to \$4 per ton. Steel billets are also slightly higher. Southern pig has gone up 25c, bar iron \$1, and old material is also rising. It is figured by those in the trade that consumption of iron and steel this year will be fully 25 per cent. greater than during the boom year of 1899 and some believe that the percentage of increase will be even greater than that. It is certain that this will be the banner year in this industry as the building demand alone is sufficient to make it such to say nothing of the very large-

consequence. British Columbia fared better, but was still far from realizing its highest expectations. Ups and downs are to be expected in every line and it would be foolish to expect that the development of the resources of these two important gold mining regions will go on in an uninterrupted manner. As a matter of fact mining for gold is about the most uncertain business imaginable and its history has always been one of rapidly succeeding successes and failures. Unfortunately for the business it is one which lends itself readily to all sorts of scheming and fraud and this seems to be a regular feature of the development of every important mining region, especially the earlier stages of development. Both Northwestern Ontario and Southern British Columbia have been pretty fully exploited by the sharks along this line and many hundreds of people have been led to invest money in mines in both regions upon which they will never receive one cent of interest or return of principal either. This wholesale swindling business has led to many pathetic cases of destitution and want and has turned those who have been losers or onlookers into bitter enemies of the mining business and even of the districts in which mining is carried on. The result cannot fail to be detrimental to the progress of legitimate mining. On the other hand many good men have adopted mining as a business, have invested their money in it, are putting

able mining business will yet be built up there is also no reason to doubt. With regard to Southern British Columbia the following summary of the situation from the Rossland Miner gives an excellent idea of the exact position of affairs there and is better than anything we can say: "More ore is being taken out than ever before, the number of dividend payers is increasing, more of the ore is being smelted at home than at any previous time, more properties are being bought than ever, the faith in this section is greater than it ever has been, and more men are now employed than hitherto." This gives an idea of the feeling on the spot. With such a state of things existing in the district itself it matters very little what the stock jobbers of London, Montreal, Toronto or any other city may think of British Columbia mines. They will be developed anyway and perhaps the more it is left to people who are on the spot to work out their own destiny the better it will be for the country at large.

You seldom hear a woman trying to talk through her hat. She's probably afraid her words will get tangled in the trimmings. Shaking hands is a social pressure. Query—Can a pretty woman be a plain cook. The blackboard is the original board of education. It's a wise plan to try on your good resolutions before passing them. An extravagant man is always preaching economy to his wife. You can't always judge a man by the cigars he gives to his friends. Honesty is undoubtedly the best policy, but it keeps many a man poor.