

The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, specially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the country between Lake Superior and the Pacific Coast, than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. By a thorough system of personal solicitation, carried out annually, this journal has been placed upon the desks of the great majority of business men in the vast district designated above, and including northwest Ontario, the provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the territories of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 21, 1892.

British Investments in American Industries.

British investors have had occasion to express much dissatisfaction with their investments in American breweries three or four years ago. The London *Stavist* has this to say on the subject: "The English directors of some American breweries are now disposed to regard the disastrous state of their affairs as the result chiefly of their bad management in America. It is to be noted, however, that in most cases this is the same management which, before the breweries were sold to English companies, had, according to the prospectuses, made them highly prosperous, and that, in some instances, the English directors, after visits to America, have expressed full approval of the management which is now strongly condemned. There may have been mismanagement, but the great mistake, as we have constantly pointed out, was that twice or three times their value was paid for most of the breweries, and the difficulties which were almost certain to arise in carrying them on by British companies were resolutely ignored."

Fertile Alaska.

The nature of the whole land can be roughly divided into three conditions, writes E. J. Glave in the October *Century*: Snow and ice-fields bury the coast-range and choke up every hollow; to the immediate north the valleys are rocky and barren, but the vast interior beyond is richly clothed in luxuriant vegetation. Scientific authorities theoretically mapped out giant ice-fields as spreading over the entire land from the Fairweather and Mount St. Elias ranges north almost to the valley of the Yukon.

Colossal heights mantled in never-melting snows tower thousands of feet in the air, but

within the shadow of these mighty uplands, in the sheltered hollows beneath, lie immense valleys carpeted in richest grasses, and gracefully tinted with wild flowers. Here in the summer a genial climate is found, where strawberries and other wild fruits ripen to luxuriance, where there are four and a half months of summer and seven and a half of winter. In June and July the sun is lost below the horizon only for a few hours, and the temperature, though chilly at night, has an average of sixty-five degrees in the daytime.

Protecting Fish.

One more fishery commission is to be added to the many that have gone before, most of them having previously originated in Europe. This time the commission is to be international, Canada and the United States being the two countries directly concerned. The commission is, it seems, an outcome of the conference which took place last winter between members of the Canadian Government and the authorities at Washington. One expert will represent each country on the commission, and through him will be presented whatever information on the subject each government has collected within a given time, say the last two years. Close seasons and modes of destruction will be among the subjects of enquiry. Opinions change as to the sort of engines with which fish can be captured without wastefully or seriously reducing their number. Some twenty years ago, a British commission came to the conclusion that no amount of fishing, by any known engine of destruction, could materially lessen the quantity of fish in the sea. Even at that time there were reasons for doubting the accuracy of this view of the case, and now we believe no one is permitted to doubt, after he has examined the subject, that it is not borne out by the facts which experience has collected in recent times. We may expect that some restraint will, as a result of the commission, be put upon fishermen, for the purpose of preserving from serious deterioration the fisheries near the coasts of the two countries.—*Monetary Times*.

Lessening Cost of Production of Precious Metals.

The report of Dr. David T. Day, special agent of the census office covering the mineral industries of the United States, speaks of the tendency of cost of production of the precious metals as follows:

"Nearly every improvement which tends to reduce the cost of production, whether it is an improvement in metallurgical processes, which enables the extraction of a larger proportion of the metals from its ores, or to extract it at less cost; whether it be the building of railroads, which reduces the cost of transportation of the machinery and supplies used at the mines, and with these reduces the cost of labor, nearly everything in fact that tends to make gold more abundant increases in a still greater degree the production of silver. Hence it is evident that the relative value of gold as compared with silver will continue to increase unless free coinage is given both metals and some international agreement is established fixing the relative value of the metals independent of their abundance."

Lumber Cuttings.

Microscopical investigation, says the *Lumberman* has proved that the pores of wood invite the passage of moisture in the direction of the timber's growth, but repel it in the opposite direction. This fact accounts for a phenomenon which is often noticed, and which puzzles a good many people, namely, why two pieces of timber sawn from the same section of a tree sometimes appear to possess very variable degrees of durability. If the wood, say, of a gatepost is placed right end up, the moisture in the soil will affect it; but the rain falling on the top will do it little harm; if, on the other

hand, the butt end of the tree is put uppermost, the top of the post will decay, because the moisture of the atmosphere will penetrate the pores of the wood more rapidly in this position. Many people have noticed that the staves in a wooden tub appear to absorb moisture irregularly, some getting quite sodden, while others remain comparatively dry, and apparently almost impervious to moisture. In this case the dry staves are in the position in which the trees grow, while the saturated ones are reversed.

W. Margach, Ontario Crown timber agent at Rat Portage, says the town is rapidly progressing in population and manufacturing. The lumbering industry this year has been very successful, and a greater quantity has been manufactured than in any previous year. This quantity will be over 60,000,000 feet, board measure. There will also be taken out 100,000 cedar posts and 5,000 telegraph poles. There are three mills on the Rainy river which cut a 3,000,000 feet board measure. Two of these supply the local demand. Settlement is progressing quite favorably. A large number of the settlers are from the older parts of the province, and are well satisfied. The demand for labor, Mr. Margach says, is brisk, as large numbers of men are required in the lumber camps. People who do not wish to go into the camps can find employment in taking out railway ties, cedar posts and other timber. Almost all the lumber manufactured at Rat Portage is shipped out west, and as the west develops so does the lumber trade.

The saw mill at Birtle closed down for the season on Nov. 5th. The amount cut, says the *Birtle Eye-Witness*, was much less than intended, as the water was too low during the early part of the summer for running logs. The cut for the season will foot up nearly a million feet. In addition to lumber, shingles were made, and flooring siding, ceiling, and shiplap were dressed. The high water in September brought all the logs down and Messrs. McArthur expect to get an early start next spring.

Cameron & Kennedy, of Rat Portage have sent out a big gang of men to the woods. They have a contract for supplying ties to the C. P. R.

The Canadian Pacific is so flooded with traffic, says the *Minneapolis Lumberman*, that it has refused to take shipments of lumber and shingles from the Pacific coast,—to be turned over to lines in the United States. This is resulting in a good many shingles which would have gone to the Canadian Pacific being turned over to the Northern Pacific, which while better off for cars than its neighbor is unable to furnish cars as rapidly as desired. The shingle manufacturers of Washington are clamorous for cars, but they are probably being quite as well served as are the shippers of lumber in other localities.

Between the Kootenay river and the Rocky mountains, in British Columbia, says the *Lumberman*, maples are found quite abundantly, but compared with the pines and other coniferous timber they are so small as to appear more like shrubs than trees. But on the flat lands of the coast the maple attains great size, being often two and a half to three feet in diameter, though the trunk is often forty to fifty feet in height. The settlers call it the vine maple. The wood is very cross-grained, and when dressed resembles bird's-eye maple quite closely, the grain being really very fine and handsome, and polishes beautifully, but requiring considerable labor. It must, in time, be recognized as of value for a furniture or cabinet wood. Back from the coast, in the valleys, may be found vast quantities of common poplar, cottonwood, white birch, alder, willow and yew. Compared with the other timber these species are so small as to not be considered of any value by the explorers, but the time must surely come when they will all be wanted for lumber. That time will come with the building of railroads and the settlement of the country to the eastward, which is nearly all a comparatively treeless prairie.