

## Winnipeg Board of Trade, Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the board of trade was held on Tuesday afternoon in the new board room.

The president, Mr. A. M. Nanton, read an address dealing with the history of the financial affairs and trade relations of the past year, as follows:

Gentlemen,—You have now before you the report of the council for the year, and in presenting it to you and in retiring from office, I desire, following the example of my predecessors, to make a few remarks regarding our trade interests of 1898. It is I think, a generally accepted fact that the commercial and financial interests of Canada are to-day on a sounder and better footing than ever before. During the year just past, we have had a bountiful harvest and almost all trade industries show a large increase in the volume of business, and collections good. Winnipeg and Canada as a whole, prospered in 1898, but during the next few years I believe our city and country will prosper even to a greater extent. To this board, of course, the position and progress of Winnipeg are of chief interest in discussing the conditions of trade. The increase of the city population, which is now close upon 50,000, the large increase in the wholesale and retail trade of our merchants, the improvement in our streets and the erection of numerous large and substantial buildings, show conclusively that Winnipeg is growing, and point to an era of prosperity greater than we have ever before enjoyed. To enable the trade of Winnipeg to expand, it is necessary that the population of the country to the west, and to a certain extent to the east of us, should increase, and it is therefore pleasing to note that almost three times the number of new settlers arrived in Manitoba and the west during 1898 than in the previous twelve months. To insure the trade of Winnipeg increasing to the proportions to which, by its position, it is entitled, we should not only endeavor to increase our wholesale trade, but should increase and encourage manufacturing in the city, and with that end in view, we should do everything in our power to encourage manufacturers to settle here. There is no way of ascertaining the increase of manufactured goods in Winnipeg, but I am of the opinion that it has not been as great as the importance and position of this city warrants. The expansion of this country's trade depends largely upon the success of our farmers, and it is with satisfaction that we note their increasing prosperity. They depend upon the sale of wheat, live stock and dairy products for their revenue, and when it can be said that from the wheat crop of 1898 alone, after reserving what is required for bread and seed, the farmers of the Canadian west will realize a sum which will average more than \$1 per day for every farmer for every working day during the whole year, it seems to me we have very little to complain of.

During the past year a large amount of important work has been transacted by the council, which has been dealt with in detail in the report now presented to you, and I should like to refer very briefly to some of the points touched on:

### MANITOBA EXPORT STATISTICS.

With our large and ever increasing exports, it appears to be of the greatest importance that the Dominion authorities should give in their reports

accurate figures regarding the trade of the province, and it is trusted that the action which this board has taken will have the desired result.

### CATTLE.

During 1898 our farmers and ranchers realized more from sales of cattle than perhaps in any year of our history, but it is to be regretted that many thousands of young, unmatured Manitoba cattle were sold to United States buyers. This practice, if continued, will have a most detrimental effect on our cattle industry. It is satisfactory to note that the heaviest live cattle exporters of Canada belong to Winnipeg. Most of the cattle exported from Canada passes through Montreal, and Winnipeg business men are now by far the largest individual exporters in Canada, having shipped from Montreal considerably more than one-third of the whole of the cattle shipped from that port in 1898, and I find that with one exception, they are also the largest exporters of sheep.

### HOGS.

The hog industry is, in my opinion, being neglected to an alarming extent, and should receive the consideration of this board. I think both in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, the authorities should do what is necessary to increase the raising of hogs. I am a strong advocate of the government assisting our farmers in keeping up the standard of the products of the farm, and believe that they should assist in improving the grades of our live stock. It seems to me it would be in the interests of the country if a larger portion of the immigration fund was expended in Canada than is done at present.

### DAIRY PRODUCTS.

Cheese and butter making is engaging the attention of our farmers more and more each year, and I trust will ere long show a marked increase. For instead of importing we should export large quantities of both articles.

### TRANSPORTATION.

The transportation problem is of special interest to Winnipeg and the Canadian west and it is a question which is now being largely discussed in eastern Canada. It is a fact that at the present time, nearly all the wheat exported from Manitoba and the Northwest is sent through United States channels, and until the means of transportation through Canada are improved and the rates east of Fort William reduced, it appears impossible to preserve the business to Canada. I therefore think that our eastern outlets should receive the serious consideration of this board.

I would particularly draw your attention to the fact of the liability of the river at Fort William being closed to navigation before the closing of the Soo canal and eastern ports, on account of proper arrangements not being made, which undoubtedly can be done to keep the channel free of ice for a short time each fall. The C. P. R. have stated distinctly that they have no control of the river, and will not in future attempt to keep it open. In my opinion, this is a matter which should be in the hands of the Dominion government, as it is of the greatest importance that navigation at Fort William should be kept open as long as it is practicable.

### RAILWAY EXTENSIONS.

Winnipeg has become one of the most important railway centres in

Canada, and the extension of every line, no matter in what part of the Canadian west, tends to increase our trade. During 1898 extensions have been made to the Dauphin line and the Northern Pacific and Manitoba railway, a portion of the South Eastern railway has been completed, and work is now going on on the Ontario and Rainy River railway. The Crow's Nest railway into southern British Columbia has also been completed. The building of the Crow's Nest railway was a matter of vital importance, not only to Winnipeg and Manitoba, but also to our numerous customers living just east of the Rocky Mountains. Trade with the mining districts of southern British Columbia is only in its infancy, and if preserved to Canada, will prove of tremendous importance to the trade of Winnipeg. Should, however, our competitors be allowed to tap what rightly belongs to us, Canada will be a heavy loser. "Trade," as has well been stated, "does not follow the flag, but follows the price list."

In my opinion, the establishment of a fast Atlantic service is of vast importance to Canada, and I believe that the country can afford to pay a reasonable sum for the establishment of such a service.

In considering transportation, the improvement of St. Andrew's rapids should not be lost sight of. This board has, in the past, urged upon the Dominion government the importance of the work, so far without success, and I can only recommend that the board's efforts should be continued till the matter does receive proper attention.

### FREIGHT RATES.

Equitable freight rates are necessary for the prosperity of trade. During 1898, numerous adjustments and reductions in rates have been made which will be beneficial to Winnipeg and the west. The rates on our wheat, flour and live stock, have been reduced, resulting in a saving to our country on last year's crop and cattle shipments alone of close upon \$300,000. Our flour is now being taken to coast points and merchandise being carried to Kootenay points at lower rates. These reductions evidence that the transportation companies recognize the fact that they cannot prosper unless the communities they serve prosper also. What is required by transportation companies to enable them to give us lower rates, is increased traffic.

### VACANT LANDS.

For many years past the board has been endeavoring to interest the Dominion authorities in connection with the settlement of vacant lands in the vicinity of Winnipeg, and it is pleasing to report that the hon. the minister of the interior and the commissioner of immigration have, during the past year, approved of a scheme largely submitted by the council, which has been in operation for some months with most satisfactory results.

All reports show that the sales of farm lands during the past year, have been exceptionally large. I estimate that quite 750,000 acres were purchased almost entirely by farmers, during the last twelve months.

### MINING INTERESTS.

With the opening of the Kootenay country the securing of coking coal and the building of smelters, we can, I think, safely assume that the mining interests of British Columbia are assured and we have now to see that