

The Commercial

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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, SEPTEMBER 12, 1892.

Souris Coal.

Great interest is being taken in the development of the coal areas of the Souris district. We are looking for a large portion of our future supply of coal from that region, and the hope is strong that the coal will be equal in quality and quantity to the most favorable reports previously given of it. Dr. Bryce, who is something of a scientist, has spent a week in the Souris region, and writes to the *Free Press* as follows:—

The upper Souris is very different from the Souris known to many Manitobans in the neighborhood of Brandon. The approach to the Missouri coteau in the upper Souris leads to a country likely to become more noted for mineral than agricultural features. The distance from Melita to Oxbow, two places on the Souris, is only about forty-five miles, but between these points the river takes an excursion through Dakota of some seven hundred miles. West of this great bow the country is broken, and in many places shows traces of fire. In places the soil has been denuded by ice and water action, and stretches of gravel are formed, with everywhere water-worn hills of clay.

No doubt the Missouri coteau was a great terminal moraine, which became the western shore of one of the large glacial lakes. On the lowering of the lakes the Souris valley was formed, and its size gives some indication of the immense volume of water carried down. The broad valley, sometimes two miles wide, has scattered through it hills of clay, which give it a marked appearance. The valley is chiefly woodless, but immediately along the streams, and in what are called in prairie language "sloughs," belts of trees appear, with a dense undergrowth of raspberry, gooseberry, Saskatoon and cherry shrubs.

The most important feature of the Souris country is that it contains beds of coal. These

were deposited in the Tertiary period, and are hence more recent than the coal of the Lethbridge deposits, which are Cretaceous and very much more recent of course than the coal of Pennsylvania or Nova Scotia. Exposed on the banks of the Souris there seem to have been two main seams of coal, an upper one of some four feet thickness and a lower of about eight feet. In many parts of the Souris the upper seam appears to have been burnt, and the gray clay has been changed into a red brick. This red clay has been washed away and is found covering some of the hills, giving them a marked red appearance. Here and there hills have escaped the fire, and toward the upper seam may still be seen. The ice of the glacial period, and the waters of subsequent times have done here an enormous work, and in the neighborhood of Estevan have carried away fifty feet of solid deposit more than at Coal Fields, ten or twelve miles further down. Even here the process of denudation has been enormous, for on the south side of the Souris the sandstone rocks known as Roches perrees are but outliers of a formation swept away.

THE COAL REGION.

The town of Estevan would seem to be situated almost in the centre of the coal region of the Souris. Some 15 or 20 miles this side of it on the river the first coal rocks are met. It is here the Cretaceous rocks which, so far east do not seem to have coal, are covered by the Tertiary formation which contains lignite. Turtle Mountain is but an outlet of these Tertiary rocks. To a considerable distance on both sides of the river to a point called Wood End, twelve miles south of Estevan, the coal extends. Dr. G. M. Dawson, twenty years ago said, "one mile due north of the position occupied by Wood End depot, an exposure, showing the most valuable lignite bed I have seen in the Souris Valley is situated. Here the lignite bed is 7 ft. 3 in. thick." There is thus a region thirty miles long and perhaps of equal width from north to south, where the conditions seem the same.

At different points throughout this section the same great seam of coal from 7 to 8 feet thick has been found. The seam is almost exactly horizontal, but on account of the difference in denudation already mentioned it is found at different distances from the surface. At Hazard's mine, twelve miles east of Estevan, the seam is between 80 and 90 feet below the surface of the prairie; on the plain west of Estevan where numerous borings have been made this summer it has been reached at from 30 to 40 feet. Kelly's well in Estevan which has an abundant supply of water reached the coal seam at 25 feet beneath the surface. At Wood End, spoken of by Dawson, the seam is 60 feet beneath the prairie level. As this seam must be substantially the same wherever struck the only question is as to where it may be most profitably mined.

For six or eight years the coal has been dug at the Price and Hazard mines twelve miles southeast of Estevan. The Price family went into the region twelve years ago, and their pit mouth may be seen on the side of the hill. Into the Hazard mine the writer went and made a full inspection. The coal here begins on the very edge of the bank and is mined with a floor of coal and up to the top of the seam six or seven feet. The mine is dry, no timber is used for roofing, and the specimen of coal is excellent. The chief disadvantage of this mine is that it is five miles from the nearest station, Bienfait, though the "Soo" line to the south will run within a mile of it.

ESTEVAN MINE.

The place selected by the Dominion Coal company is in the coulee lying west of the town of Estevan. It is an excellent approach, although more difficult at the beginning on account of the seam being covered by beds of fire and boulder clay. The adit through 150 feet or more of this clay was made last week, and the writer saw the coal walls on each side of it. But a larger approach is necessary, and now a drift twenty feet wide is being run, and

on this being timbered for safety, there need be no delay in mining the coal. A broad landing is being made, necessary buildings will be under way at once, and October ought to see a large output of the coal.

The value of coal depends very much on its age. We do not expect the coal of the Galt mine, being Cretaceous, to be equal to that from the carboniferous of Pennsylvania. The Souris coal being more recent than that of the Galt mine, will probably be somewhat inferior, though the fact that the Souris coal lies just above the rocks in which Galt mine coal is found, leads us to think practically there will be little difference. Indeed, blocks of the coal in the Hazard mine are almost indistinguishable from the Galt mine coal with which we are familiar.

HOUSE USE.

The writer called at the house of a very intelligent Nova Scotian lady who used Souris coal last winter. Having been brought up to use coal in Nova Scotia, her experience was valuable. She stated that for making a lively fire, for its freedom from cinder and for its small quantity of ash she preferred Souris to Nova Scotian coal. Her only objection to it is that it was dusty. So far as "slaking" is concerned, her coal was kept in a tent all winter, and large blocks of it had to be broken with an axe in spring. She had no difficulty, on putting a lump of it into the stove at night and closing the stove, in having the coal last till the morning. Her testimony was highly satisfactory. The fact that settlers have come for coal forty and fifty miles away, as far as Alameda and Dalesboro, and this for years is a proof of its quality.

The coal will surely be a great boon to Manitoba. The C.P.R. is preparing to lay it down in Winnipeg on the car at \$4 per ton. Like any new enterprise it must be given time to reach its best results. A few years ago, many remember, the coal from Medicine Hat and Galt mine was regarded with little confidence; to-day the western coal has advanced in quality and people use it freely. The earlier output of a mine is experimental, but there can be scarcely a doubt that the Souris coal will be of great value in every part of Manitoba. It will be a blessing to the poor. As a prominent gentleman said to the writer the other day, it may not be popular with the people with nickel plated stoves, but it will save the poor man's money. It will meet the case of the vast treeless prairies where it is found. Twenty years ago pessimists in this country used to say to the writer: But how is the fuel question to be solved? To-day the fuel question is solved.

Dates of Exhibitions in Manitoba and the Territories.

Below is a list of Agricultural exhibitions for which dates have been fixed:—

- Calgary, Alberta, Sept. 29, 30.
- Kinistino, Sask., Sept. 28.
- Oxbow, Assa., Sept. 30.
- Carnduff, Assa., Sept. 30.
- Meadow Lea, Man., Oct. 4.
- Selkirk, Man., Oct. 4, 5.
- Pilot Mound, Man., Oct. 4, 5.
- Saltcoats, Assa., Oct. 5.
- Portage la Prairie, Man., Oct. 5, 6.
- Killarney, Man., Oct. 5, 6.
- North Plympton, Man., Oct. 5, 6.
- Saskatoon, Sask., Oct. 5, 6.
- Carberry, Man., Oct. 6, 7.
- Morden, Man., Oct. 6, 7.
- Regina, Assa., Oct. 6, 7.
- Strathclair, Man., Oct. 7.
- Fort Qu'Appelle, Assa., Oct. 7.
- Cannington Manor, Assa., Oct. 7.
- Red Deer, Alta., Oct. 11.
- St. Francis Xavier, Man., Oct. 11.
- Stonewall, Man., Oct. 11, 12.
- Nee pawa, Man., Oct. 11, 12.
- Minnedosa, Man., Oct. 12.
- Souris, Man., Oct. 13, 14.
- Wolsley, Assa., Oct. 18.