

WINNIPEG BOARD OF TRADE.

—
ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR 1890.
—

AN INTERESTING ADDRESS FROM THE RETIRING PRESIDENT.

The annual meeting of the Winnipeg board of trade was held on Tuesday afternoon, February 3. The first proceeding was the delivery of an address by retiring President R. J. Whitla, as follows:—

GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with what has become an established custom with the retiring president of the board, I take advantage of the opportunity afforded me to address you on the acts of the board during the past year and the general business situation of this city and province.

First, let me congratulate the board on the extreme success which has followed the organization of the association to prepare for and hold an annual Industrial Exhibition in this city. The appointment of a committee at the last annual meeting of the board led to the practical steps which have followed. The active interest manifested by citizens in all departments of trade and industries is a proof that a strong public spirit is as alive as ever in this prairie capital. The management of the exhibition is in the hands of experienced business men who will make a success of the undertaking.

The local legislature recognizing the value of the province of such an exhibition voted a liberal sum for the prize list. I have no doubt the exhibition will prove to be such a success as to warrant the government in granting it annually a liberal measure of support. It is satisfactory to learn from the provincial press that, throughout the country the people are anxious and willing to join in sharing the responsibility assumed of making this exhibition worthy of the chief agricultural province of the Dominion. The holding of such an exhibition in Winnipeg will certainly prove of great benefit to the province by concentrating for the inspection of visitors from abroad (who will be drawn here by such an attraction) proofs of the great fertility of our soils and the great stores of wealth that nature has bestowed in many forms, ready for our industry to develop and make use of. The generous treatment of the city by the Dominion government in the matter of handing over the lands for exhibition purposes, at a nominal charge, will be duly appreciated and acknowledged.

Slow progress is made by the Dominion government in improving the navigation of the Red river, but present indications point to more active interest in this undertaking, which will increase largely the business of this city and points along the Red river, and on Lake Winnipeg, besides, providing cheaper fuel, lumber and building material to a large section of the province.

The city engineer estimates that \$500,000 worth of firewood per annum is consumed along the Red river, from the lake to the international line, including of course, this city, and that the saving in cost on this article alone, if uninterrupted navigation was established, would approximate \$200,000 yearly. The

saving on transshipment on lumber at Selkirk and the high local railway freights, to points along the Red river, would be almost entirely saved. The government of the United States have expended large sums of money, in improving navigation of the Red river, south of the boundary line, and have provided clear water for vessels of five feet draught, over a distance of 260 miles. Improved navigation on the Red river will ensure a larger and finer class of steam crafts on the lake than can now be utilized. The lumber industries of the lakes will be stimulated and the mineral deposits there, will be placed within the reach of the city.

It is to be regretted that for the time being the Assiniboine water power project is at a standstill. There can be but one opinion as to the extreme desirability of having the latent power in the river developed and the city council will have the support of the people of this city in concluding arrangements that are fair and just, to both the city and any company undertaking to construct the necessary works.

It is very gratifying to note the progress made in enlarging the cultivated area of the province, and while it is generally conceded that the farmers of Manitoba would be better off in the long run if they paid greater attention to mixed farming, yet the continued advance by great strides of the area under grain speaks loudly for the faith of agriculturalists in this part of Canada. Over 1,000,000 of acres was sown with grain in 1890, an advance of nearly a hundred per cent in five years.

Ten years ago Manitoba had but 2,250 actual farmers with an area under crop of less than a quarter of a million acres. This spring will witness 20,000 farms cultivating nearly a million and a quarter acres of grain land.

The Provincial government returns estimate that about 30,000,000 bushels of grain of all kinds was raised in Manitoba in 1890, of which 15,000,000 bushels was wheat.

Reliable authorities say that fully 8,000,000 bushels of wheat have already left the hands of farmers, and there is every indication that the government estimate will be fully confirmed, or in other words there will be some 13,000,000 bushels of wheat for exportation from the province.

There has been a good steady demand from Eastern Canada for Manitoba oats and barley, and heavy shipments have been and are yet being made. Potatoes by the train-load left Manitoba last autumn for the United States, where their excellence of quality is generally acknowledged.

The statement has been made, and I understand on the highest authority, that a larger number of cattle were shipped during this year to Eastern Canada and Great Britain from Manitoba than from the whole of the ranches of the Northwest Territories, which shows that the cattle raising industry of Manitoba is rapidly assuming large proportions. There has been another increase in the elevator carrying capacity west of Lake Superior during the year just passed, the storage space now providing for 8 million bushels against 7 million bushels in the previous year.

The possible daily milling output in Manitoba is now 6,740 barrels (against 5,850 last

year) and it is to be hoped that this capacity will rapidly increase in the near future, so that the province will receive all the benefits that should accrue to it as a grain raising country.

The quality of flour now manufactured in the mills at Keewatin, Winnipeg and other points in this western part of Canada is equal to anything to be found in the markets of the world.

The most improved machinery, with skilled labor, is applied to the production of the highest grades of flour, from the hard wheat grown here, and it is of great interest to the people that as much as possible of the wheat produced should leave the province in a manufactured state, and the profits of manufacture retained here.

One of the marked features of this season's business has been the opening of a steady market on the continent of Europe for Manitoba wheat. While statistics of this export trade are not yet available it is well known that a large business in this direction has been transacted, and that Holland, Belgium and other continental countries will in future turn to Manitoba for at least a portion of the wheat and flour they require for consumption.

Manitoba's exports are this year but an indication of what is open to us in the European breadstuffs markets.

It is a matter of congratulation to find that the importance of the grain trade of Manitoba has been recognized by the Dominion Government in the matter of conferring on representatives of western boards of trade, the power to select the standards of grain grown west of Port Arthur and to arbitrate on and settle differences in grading between inspectors.

The removal of the seat of the Court of Appeal in the latter case, from Toronto to Winnipeg, when disputes regarding the grading of Manitoba grain are concerned, has cleared away an awkward and unjust impediment from the path of trade.

Owing to the fact that the inspection of hides is not taken advantage of to the extent that it should be, nor what this board was led to expect when they were pressed to ask the Government to appoint an inspector for this division, the fees collected are not of an amount to adequately pay the efficient official who now holds the position.

Two years ago the Minister of Finance in his budget speech drew attention to the fact that the most valuable class of hides produced in Canada, came from Manitoba. If the custom of inspecting and branding hides for export were more generally carried out, the dealer in this product would reap a great advantage for himself and secure a reputation for his province.

Two years ago the retiring president, Mr. Galt, suggested to the board the advisability of its members in at least some lines of trade, forming themselves into trade sections, with power to hold meetings as such, and report direct to the general board on such matters as they thought proper.

I consider it would add to the usefulness of the board if sections were formed, say, of the wholesalers, bankers, loan companies' managers, agricultural implement dealers, etc.