

1873. JULY. 1873

## ALL DEPARTMENTS

CONTINUE

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## THE GREAT WEST OF CANADA.

"Westward, the star of Empire takes its way." These words were very common throughout the United States at the time Illinois, Iowa and other Western States began to fill up with population, and they are not entirely inapplicable to this Dominion at the present time. We have now our "great west." We are now offering for settlement the richest prairie lands on this continent. The stream of emigration has begun to turn in that direction, and although yet but limited, the tide is sufficiently strong to indicate that our northwest will soon become the happy home of a large, industrious and enterprising population.

The signs of increasing activity and enterprise throughout what may be properly called Northwestern Canada, are very marked and gratifying this season. There are at present two lines of splendid steamers plying between Ontario and the village of Fort William, situated at the head waters of Lake Superior. A day at Collingwood or Port Sarnia—the headquarters of these lines—when one of their boats is about to set sail, will convince anyone that a profitable business is being done both in passengers and freights. Mining in the neighborhood of Fort William is looking up, and the richness of some of the claims admit of no uncertainty. Hundreds of visitors, speculators, and settlers for Manitoba, are passing up the Lake every week, and Fort William promises to become a thriving town before many years. So confident are many of the future before this place, so prettily situated

within Thunder Bay, that village lots in the more favored localities have run up to handsome prices. At Sault Ste. Marie, Bruce Mines and other points along the route, there are also more or less signs of progress.

Every week, we learn from Manitoba, brings new settlers into that province. The steamers on the Red River, connecting with American railways, are crowded with traffic, whilst the Canadian route sends in a fair share of settlers and their effects. A great many Canadians who, at various times have gone to the Western States, are entering Manitoba, and there seems every probability that the Russian Mennonites will make it their home, for the delegations which have visited it, speak in the highest terms of its agricultural capabilities. Winnipeg, the capital, is highly prosperous and growing rapidly—in fact, it has become a wide-awake, go-ahead town to an extent probably unknown in any other part of the Dominion. 'Not only farmers, but enterprising mechanics representing all the different branches are rapidly filling up the central part of the Province, and adding to its importance and prosperity.

This country is so large and so fertile that it deserves to be known as the "great west" of Canada, and its brightening prospects not only speak great things for the Dominion's future, but point out to our merchants, manufacturers and artisans, that there is a wide field for their industries opening before them.

Manitoba may be said as yet to be wholly an *importing* country. In the last report on trade and navigation, the whole of its exports are set down at \$85,541, nearly all of which were furs, and went, in about equal proportions, to the United States and this country. Its imports were \$1,020,172, an amount, we fancy, greatly exceeded during the financial year just closed. For the information of the business community, we append a statement of the principal articles imported by the Manitobans during the year above given:—

Tobaccos .....	\$33,176	Iron and Hardw re..	\$46,968
Teas .....	91,461	Gunpowder .....	11,738
Sugars .....	32,941	Guns and Fire-arms	24,728
Liquors, all kinds...	57,982	Lumber .....	24,385
Meats, " .....	47,694	Machinery .....	18,008
Clothing .....	96,926	Small Wares .....	13,162
Cottons .....	66,558	Horned Cattle .....	31,634
Linens .....	10,819	Dried Fruits .....	7,801
Woollens .....	137,867	Cigars .....	6,483
Shawls .....	11,260	Boots and Shoes .....	6,278
Hats and Caps .....	8,345	Hosiery .....	3,330
Fancy Goods .....	8,812	Carriages .....	6,557
Silks and Velvets ..	15,120	Common Soap .....	4,358

It should be borne in mind that although the latest published, these returns are for the financial year 1871-72, and that the goods which have gone, and are going into the northwest this season, are vastly in excess of the above figures. The purchases

made from several of our wholesale houses in Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton, have been very considerable, but they are justified, in our opinion, by the increased population flowing into the country. The trade of the northwest is, however, yet in its infancy. Before ten years come and go, we believe it will have attained proportions which few at present anticipate.

The export trade to northwestern Canada, naturally belongs to Ontario and Quebec, and should be jealously watched. The principal competition comes at present from the city of St. Paul, the capital of Minnesota, but as population augments and the market enlarges, no doubt other western United States' cities will seek a share of the prize. No means will be left untried to attract the trade of the northwest in a southern direction, for its importance was fully recognized in Minnesota and other Western States before it engaged much of our attention. A certain amount of business will naturally flow towards Minnesota and the States adjacent, through which the Northern Pacific Railway runs; but it is the duty of our Government as it is the interest of our people, to leave no stone unturned to attract as large a share of it towards the heart of the Dominion as possible.

To attain this end, our means of communication with the northwest should be made as efficient as possible, and while on this point we may say, that there are the strongest possible grounds for complaint at present with the route through our own territory. It is a downright disgrace to the Dominion that, at this late day, we have no decent route of our own to our magnificent western prairies, whose trade, but for American channels of transportation, would be almost a sealed book to us. This difficulty overcome, let the facilities for transacting business be rendered as easy and cheap as possible, and we have no fears but that the great bulk of the trade of the northwest will be transacted with and for the benefit of our own people.

The future of northwestern Canada certainly looks hopeful at present, and judging by authentic reports from all quarters of its extent and fertility, the great mass of our people have not yet awakened to its immense importance. A country large enough to make six or eight States like Ohio, with rivers upon which you can sail a thousand miles in one direction, whose banks are composed of soil ready for the plough and unsurpassed in the world for richness, whose climate is healthful and invigorating if cold in winter, and which contains immense coal and other mineral deposits—such a country, we submit, can-