

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part 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 vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the trading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 8.

## PREFERENTIAL CLAIMS.

It is a regrettable fact that notwithstanding all that has been said in the past about the practice followed by some classes of retail traders of giving preferences to certain creditors when they find themselves getting into financial deep water, there are still some who think it good business to do that sort of thing, and in consequence there have been several very unpleasant experiences lately in trading circles arising out of this practice. Certain retail merchants in the country who find themselves in straightened circumstances have under pressure from one or more creditors been giving preferred claims which would have the effect, if allowed to stand of working injustice to all others who may have claims against their estate. These preferences are usually obtained from the merchant under representation that in the event of any trouble with the other creditors the persons holding the preference will stand good for the amounts and often in this way a merchant is led into the business innocently enough and under the impression that he is thereby really adding to the security of these other creditors. As a matter of fact he is doing nothing of the kind but is making himself a party to fraud instead as no honest creditor will ever ask him to give such preference. Where it is done the purpose is always to gain advantage over others, and further the promises verbally made of support in case of trouble with others are not worth a cent. The best thing for any merchant to do in case of trouble with a creditor if he is not in a position to pay the claim is to rigidly refuse to give preference of any kind without consulting his other creditors, and if they desire it, put the estate in the hands of a trustee. This principle has come to be so generally recognized in Manitoba that it is embodied in the provincial laws regarding debt and it is now an easy matter for preferential claims to be broken in Manitoba, but in the Northwest Territories and British Columbia this is not the case, the laws there being looser.

## TAXING COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

The town of Neepawa has under consideration a by-law providing for a tax of \$25 on all commercial travellers calling at that town for busi-

ness. We venture to say that the mercantile community of Neepawa will be sorry for it if this law is passed and put into effect. The immediate effect will be to shut out a lot of travellers from making calls there, thus depriving the hotels and liveries of much profitable business and preventing the merchants from seeing many a line of goods which it would be to their interest to handle. The only advantage of such legislation is that it adds a little to the revenue of the town and this is not by any means an adequate compensation for the disadvantages which naturally follow. In proposing such by-laws the fact seems to be usually lost sight of that the practice of sending out travellers from jobbing houses to sell goods to country merchants is almost entirely in the interest of the country merchant and is only an additional source of expense to the wholesale house doing it. The traveller calls only upon retail merchants for business and no reputable house ever solicits a cent's worth of business from the consumer so that no local interest is in any way jeopardized by the presence of any number of commercial men in a town. Their presence is rather an advantage. They add so much more to the consumptive requirements of the place. In theory if a sufficient number of commercial men could be induced to visit any given town and each stay a day in it the inhabitants could make a livelihood providing for their wants only.

The Neepawa law in its provision for taxation of peddlars is a perfectly just and legitimate proposition. These compete with local industry and should be compelled to pay for the privilege.

## Fall Fairs.

Dates for the Annual Exhibitions Throughout the West.

Macleod	Sept. 18 and 19
Lethbridge	Sept. 19 and 20
Little Cut Arm and Qu'Appelle	Sept. 20
Gainsboro	Sept. 21
Carnduff (S. E. Assa.)	Sept. 21
Medicine Hat	Sept. 21 and 22
Hamlota	Sept. 22
Klinton	Sept. 22
Pineher Creek	Sept. 22
Mantou	Sept. 22 and 23
Alameda	Sept. 23
Stonewall	Sept. 23
Whitewood and Broadview	Sept. 23
Belmont	Sept. 26 and 27
Dauphin	Sept. 26 and 27
Birtle	Sept. 27
Innisfail	Sept. 27
Grenfell	Sept. 27 and 28
Maple Creek	Sept. 27 and 28
Morden	Sept. 27 and 28
Port Arthur, Ont.	Sept. 27 and 28
Saskatoon	Sept. 27 and 28
Carleton	Sept. 28
Crete	Sept. 28
Cannington Manor	Oct. 1
McGregor	Oct. 1
Wapella	Oct. 2
Pilot Mound	Oct. 2 and 3
New Westminster, B. C.	Oct. 25
Dugald	Oct. 3
Swan Lake	Oct. 3
Lacombe	Oct. 3
Woodlands (Meadow Lea)	Oct. 3
Oak Lake	Oct. 4
Yorkton	Oct. 4
Grenfell	Oct. 3 and 4
Kildonan	Oct. 3 and 4
Selkirk	Oct. 3 and 4
Battleford	Oct. 4 and 5
Argyle, Woodlands and Woomona	Oct. 5
Wetaskiwin	Oct. 5
Melita	Oct. 10
Edmonton	Oct. 23, 24 and 25

Fire broke out about 4 o'clock on Wednesday morning in the large warehouse of the Morden Woollen mills at Morden. The building had been added only a short time ago to the plant and was used as a warehouse for storing wool and the products of the mill. Although the fire apparatus was quickly on the scene very little could be done to save the building and it was quickly consumed. The office adjoining the building was also lost, but the mill itself was saved. The owner, B. Fraser, estimates his loss at about \$2,500, partly covered by insurance. Dr. McConnel lost his cutter, sleighs and other valuables stored in the building; value about \$200, with no insurance.

## Nickel Plating.

Nickel plating is a most useful application of electrolysis. It was invented by Isaac Adams, of Boston. Adams wondered why all attempts to plate nickel upon other metals had proved unsuccessful, and he began a careful investigation to ascertain the cause of the difficulties experienced. He soon found that the real difficulty was due to the presence of nitrates in the solutions employed; nickel always appearing in commerce in the metallic form, it was natural when anyone desired a solution to dissolve it in nitric acid, to precipitate the nitrate with carbonate of soda, and dissolve the carbonate of nickel in the proper acid for the solution desired. No one ever washed the carbonate of nickel with sufficient care to remove the last portions of the nitrate of soda. Consequently all the nickel solutions previously experimented upon had contained nitrates, the presence of which Adams found to be fatal to successful nickel plating. This fact having been ascertained successful nickel plating was the immediate result. Adams obtained a patent for this process which was afterwards the subject of prolonged litigation. The novel proposition was presented to the court, of a patent for not doing something, namely, for not permitting nitrates to find their way into the nickel solutions employed in nickel plating and the court held that the exclusion of nitrates was an essential condition of successful nickel plating, and that a process involving this condition was just as patentable as a process involving any other special condition necessary for successful execution, and the patent was sustained.

## Trade Sale of Clothing, Etc.

Donald Fraser & Co., wholesale clothiers, Winnipeg, will offer for sale by auction on the 19th and 20th instant their large stock of fall and winter clothing, overalls, shirts and men's furnishings. This sale will be conducted by Suckling S Co., of Toronto, and will be a strictly trade sale. Merchants in all parts of the west have been invited to attend.

## Pulp Wood in Quebec.

An inspector of surveys in Quebec speaks of the timber resources of the northern part of that province as follows: In the virgin forest spruce, fir, tamarac and cypress or Banksian pine are the chief conifers, while the deciduous trees are limited to poplar of different varieties, white birch, willow, alder, hazel, pambina and similar undergrowth, with occasional black ash along the river and lake shores. There is an abundance of spruce and tamarac wherever the country has not been burned. Here and there areas more or less extensive have been swept by fire from twenty-five to fifty years ago, and are now well grown up with poplar, white birch, spruce, tamarac and cypress of fair size according to age, insuring an abundance of pulp wood for ages to come and bringing down pulp as the industry of the coming age. Black spruce is the king of woods for pulp making, and this country is the home of the black spruce.

## Grain and Milling Notes.

W. J. Connors, head of the United States syndicate which secured the Montreal elevator privileges, was up before the harbor-board this week to explain why he had not yet done anything towards carrying out his agreement. He attributes the delay to wars and hostility of certain powerful interests in New York, which have so far prevented him from getting the money.

During the past week weather conditions have been favorable for the rapid maturing of the corn crop, which is in as promising condition as a week ago. Slight improvement is noted in parts of Kansas and Missouri, but generally the crop has shown no material change. The early planted corn is practically all made in good condition, before any signs of frost, and cutting is progressing rapidly. It is safe to count on a crop of but little over 2,000,000,000 bushels. If frost holds off for about two weeks a fine quality of grain may be expected for a large proportion or practically all of the crop. Consumption of new crop corn is beginning

early. In regard to the wheat crop no new features of interest have appeared during the week. Occasional reports are received of yields larger than expected earlier, but this good news is offset by numerous complaints of damage to wheat in the fields by wet weather. And this complaint is made about oats even more than it is about wheat.—Cincinnati Price Current.

## Railway and Traffic Notes.

Track-laying on the South Eastern has been delayed the past week by the heavy rains. Work, however, has not been stopped whenever it was possible to work, it being the desire of the Canadian Northern officials to have the line completed to Rainy river by Oct. 1.

The Dominion Express company have closed their agency at Antler, and opened an office at Manor, which is now the terminus of the Pinestone branch of the C. P. R. The office was opened this week, a regular train service now being in operation. The branch has been taken off the contractor's hands by the company. Track-laying has been completed to Manor. The road will be completed into Moose Mountain district in time to be available for transporting this season's crop.

## Orris Root.

The British vice-consul at Leghorn refers in his last report to a crisis which has arisen in the orris root industry in Italy. He says that the orris root, which is used as the basis of all perfumes by the manufacturers of England, France and Germany, is obtainable only around Florence and in the neighborhood of Verona. Manufacturers, therefore, have to look to two small districts in one particular country for the whole of their supplies of an indispensable article. A syndicate, supported by a powerful bank, has recently secured the whole of the Veronese crop, and nine-tenths of that of Florence. The small quantity of Florence root still in growers' hands is being offered at enormous prices. The syndicate itself is still holding its stocks, and apparently declines for the present to sell. Representatives of a large perfume manufactory of Grasse recently endeavored to obtain a small quantity, but without success. There are now perhaps not 50 tons in the whole of Leghorn. French manufacturers, however, appear, to be fairly well stocked and are suffering no present inconvenience, but the day will come when they cannot get on without orris-root and they will have to pay heavily for it. Some dealers in the root, however, think that the advance in price is, on the whole, for the interest of all concerned, as, had prices remained at the level of last year, many large growers would have given up planting. Orris-root is a commodity that is subject to the most singular fluctuations in price. A fair average price is £50 per ton. In 1891 as much as £120 per ton was paid, and in 1898 as little as £26.

The annual report of the Dominion government superintendent of insurance just issued shows the following losses in the Ottawa-Hull fire by Canadian, British and American companies, less the re-insurance in license companies: Canadian companies, \$124,31; British companies, \$2,523,872; American companies, \$711,605. Total, \$3,662,098. Canadian companies—Argyle American, \$23,907; British-American, \$98,261; Canada Fire, \$13,230; London Mutual, \$13,609; Mercantile Fire, \$19,501; Ottawa Fire, \$20,851; Quebec Fire, \$34,258; Victoria-Montreal, \$27,199; Western, \$164,633. Total, \$424,531.

Fire broke out in the Manitoba hotel at Oak Lake, on Friday night last, and the whole building was soon a mass of fire. When the walls fell the flames spread north and east and destroyed Hellwell's implement warehouse, H. Thompson's store, Grassie's harness shop, Orr's jewelry store, Andrew's bank, Stevens' confectionery and the post office and adjoining out-buildings. The flames were checked by a stone wall, and finally burnt out. The hotel was newly constructed last spring. Wright, the tenant, lost all the furnishings and personal property. The total loss in this fire is placed at \$30,000, partially insured.