

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 4, 1896.

## REPRESENTATION ABROAD.

The Winnipeg board of trade, as will be seen by the report in another column of this number of The Commercial, has taken up a very important matter in the interest of immigration and commerce. We refer to the resolution in favor of the appointment of commercial agents to represent Canada in foreign countries. The resolution speaks for itself so clearly that very little can be added to show the value of the proposals made therein. It is one of the disadvantages, perhaps, of our colonial position, that this country is not represented in foreign lands by any persons acting in an official capacity. Of course, Canadians, as British subjects have the protection of the officials appointed by the imperial government. These officials, however, do not make any special effort to further Canadian interests. Not one among a score of them would be able to answer any questions about Canada, much less be in a position to further our immigration and general commercial interests. Canada not being an independent nation cannot appoint consuls to represent her in a foreign country. Any appointment we could make, without the authority and recognition of the imperial government, would be merely an agent in an official capacity. There might be some difficulty in defining the local standing which such agents would have in foreign countries, but no doubt the imperial government would sanction the appointment of such agents, in such a manner as to secure their recognition by foreign governments, if this were found necessary.

## THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

A very important gathering will be held in the imperial capital in June next. We refer to the congress of the chambers of commerce of the empire, soon to be held in London. Boards of trade and other commercial bodies throughout the United Kingdom and the colonies will be represented at this great gathering. Winnipeg will be represented by a delegate from the board of trade and also a delegate from the local grain exchange. The last conference of this nature took place some three years ago, and though its deliberations were of a most important nature, the fact that the general elections in the United Kingdom were unexpectedly brought on just at that time, detracted greatly from the influence of the conference. The present time seems very opportune for holding another conference, especially owing to the fact that the tendency of the times is towards a closer union between the various self-governing portions of the empire.

At this conference all questions of an imperial nature will be discussed, and the programme includes a long list of most important subjects, such as the commercial relations between the different countries of the empire, bills of lading, imperial postage system, weights, measures and currency, arbitration, and numerous other subjects more or less

vital to the welfare of the empire at large. Undoubtedly the leading topic for discussion will be the question relating to the commercial relations between the various divisions of the empire. This is a subject of such importance as to alone justify the calling of the conference. Almost if not all the various divisions of the empire are in favor of some sort of a commercial union to include the whole empire, though opinion differs very materially as to the direction such union should take. In Great Britain the preponderance of opinion is no doubt in favor of bringing about such a union on a basis of free trade within the empire, while in the colonies the weight of influence is probably in the direction of an arrangement on a protective basis. Great Britain and her colonies are the only countries which throw their markets open to foreign countries on the same conditions as are accorded British subjects. Wherever the British flag floats to the breeze there foreigners have every commercial privilege which is accorded British subjects. This is the ideal policy for the world; but in the present hostile attitude of foreign countries from a commercial point of view, it is worth while considering whether this state of things should continue. We, therefore, certainly look for a very thorough discussion of this great question. The Winnipeg delegates have been instructed to favor the "freest trade relations possible within the empire, consistent with revenue necessities." This is very satisfactory and shows that Winnipeg is in accord with the view which largely predominates in Great Britain.

In addition to the list of questions proposed in the draft programme for discussion at the conference, any commercial body is at liberty to propose other subjects for discussion at the conference. The Winnipeg board has proposed an additional subject, and it is one of such vital importance to this country as to take rank almost before the trade question. The question proposed by the Winnipeg board was published in The Commercial of April 20, but it is a subject so far reaching that we reproduce it below as follows:

"Resolved, that this congress views with regret the disposition on the part of many people of influence in Great Britain to direct the tide of surplus population leaving that country to foreign lands, thus drawing from the strength of the empire to build up alien powers. That this congress looks upon such a tendency as not only wasteful of the vitality of the empire, but altogether unnecessary, seeing that the British colonies and dependencies offer fields for immigration as attractive, if not more attractive than can be found in any other foreign country. That within the bounds of the British Empire the emigrant can find any variety of climate, and reach success in any pursuit, and yet retain all the privileges of a British subject. Therefore this congress deems it the duty of the imperial and colonial governments, as well as all patriotic citizens of the empire, to use every means available to encourage emigration to the colonies from the mother land, and to discourage in every possible way the directing of such emigration to foreign countries."

This great imperial congress presents certainly a grand opportunity for discussing the question of immigration. It is certainly an opportunity which should be taken advantage of by Canada to make her resources and re-

quirements as to population and capital known. The proceedings of the conference will be published throughout the English speaking world. The conference itself will be attended by the leading thinkers of the empire, and its proceedings will be closely studied in all parts of the empire. The opportunity is therefore one which happens only at intervals of years. It is therefore very urgent that Manitoba in particular and Western Canada in general should be represented at the great gathering by a few of the very best public speakers which we have in the country. It has been proposed by the Winnipeg board of trade that an effort should be made to secure the help of some prominent gentlemen in Great Britain to assist our delegates in advocating the resolution proposed by the Winnipeg board. This is all very well as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. If it is felt that the delegate of the Winnipeg board needs assistance, it is not safe to rely entirely upon others to help on the resolution. Many people know from experience that it does not do to depend too much upon others. Get the help of prominent men of the United Kingdom if we can, but let us help ourselves also in this matter. A very strong delegation should be on hand to favor this resolution, and as we have already said one or more of the very best public speakers in Manitoba should be induced to attend the conference, with the object of supporting the resolution. This is a matter which might well be represented to the provincial government, with a view of having further representation for Manitoba at the great gathering.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE committee of the Winnipeg city council has reported that it cannot approve of the motion to limit the working day to eight hours on city works, at the same rate of pay as established for the day of nine hours.

The appointment of Sir Donald A. Smith to represent Canada, as High Commissioner in the United Kingdom, will be particularly satisfactory to the West. We may justly claim Sir Donald as a western man, and his interests are still largely in the West. He may certainly be trusted to make use of every possible opportunity to further western interests.

COMPLAINT has been made by a dealer in dairy produce, to the Winnipeg board of trade, against the appointment of a subsidized agent of the Manitoba Dairy Association, to act as a salesman for the association in Winnipeg. The Dairy Association are of course at liberty to do what they like in this matter, but it is felt that the local government should not assist by granting the Dairy Association a sum to pay the expenses of such an agent. If the agent is merely to look after the consignments of the members of the association, see that they are weighed, placed in cold storage and properly handled, no reasonable complaint could be made, but there would certainly be good ground for complaint, if it is found, as has been alleged, that the local government is assisting to pay the expenses of an agent who will act in the