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1868. SPRING. 1868.

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THE TRADE REVIEW

AND

Intercolonial Journal of Commerce.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1868.

The Business-Office of the "Trade Review" is
removed from No. 4 Merchants' Exchange to
No. 58 St. Francois Xavier Street, Room No.
5, Up Stairs.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMISSION.

SOME time ago, in terms of an Act passed during the last Session of the Dominion Parliament, a Commission was appointed to examine into and suggest reforms in the working of the public departments. This Commission has had several meetings, but little has transpired as to what they have accomplished, or even recommended to be done. Great good might be done by the gentlemen called to the performance of this duty, and we hope when their labours are concluded, important reforms will be proposed and carried out. We are not of those who hold that the departments are crammed with lazy and useless officials at Ottawa. Nor do we believe they are all overpaid for their services. There are many valuable public servants in the employ of the Government, men whose labours are fully worth every cent they are paid; but, at the same time, we are equally well convinced that the public service could be quite as efficiently performed with a smaller staff, provided the departments were all managed in the way they ought to be. Great looseness confessedly exists in their management. A few industrious, conscientious men, do the great bulk of the work. From the Bureau of Agriculture up to the Department of Justice, there are to be found drones—individuals appointed on account of political services, family relationship, and similar causes, who do little or nothing, shirking all they can. Irregular attendance is also among the abuses in the public offices, subordinates taking advantage of the absence or irregularity of their chiefs, to put in as few hours each day as possible. The result of this state of things is simply this: the Dominion has to pay much more than it should to sustain these departments, whilst the work is done after the circumlocutionary fashion. It is a disgrace to our Government that such long delays take place in the transaction of business with the public departments. If a man applies for a patent, it is often three months before he obtains his papers, whilst it should occupy but a few days. So is it with almost any business which individuals have to transact with the Gov-

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ernment, and this, too, whilst the country annually pays more than sufficient to ensure the almost promptness. It is time this state of things should terminate, and the people have a right to expect that the Departmental Commission will prove faithful to its duty, and introduce such reforms as will place matters on a proper footing. We are aware that it is somewhat difficult to effect reforms in this direction. But let the Commissioners, at least, do their duty. Let them fearlessly declare what changes are necessary for the efficient and economical performance of the public business, and then the people will be able to see where the responsibility rests if their recommendations are not carried out. If the Commission fails to fulfil its mission, its members will deserve to be held to a strict account. They are paid for their services, and should do something in return.

THE HARVEST.

—"And sickles gleaming in the sun,
Tell jocund harvest is begun."

THE harvest may now be said to be general. Two weeks ago, the fall wheat was ripe in many sections, and harvesting begun. This was unusually early, even for the most advanced districts, and arose from the almost unparalleled drought and heat which we have experienced. The advantages arising from agricultural machinery have been greatly felt this season. So rapidly did the fall wheat ripen under the scorching rays of the sun, that the old mode of cradling would have been altogether too slow to enable the farmer to cut his grain before it became too ripe. The difficulty would have been aggravated by the scarcity of labourers. Although the improvements in mowers and reapers render fewer hands necessary, many farmers had been unable this season to procure sufficient harvesters, even at greatly advanced wages. It is to be hoped the scarcity of men will not be felt in the back Townships, where they are just commencing upon their spring wheat and barley. The farmers are having a busy time of it just now, which is greatly increased by the intense heat; but in four weeks more their hard work will be past, their barns will be crammed with produce, and peace and plenty smile on all around.

Much interest is felt in regard to the extent of the harvest now being reaped. Four weeks ago the prospect was unusually good; we regret to say that the intense heat, and the absence of rain since that time, have considerably dimmed the prospect. There can be no doubt whatever about this so far as spring crops are concerned, and not a little injury has also been done to the winter grain. If it had not been that the latter was exceedingly strong and luxuriant before