

# THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, and the only newspaper of Ontario west of Lake Superior, and the Province 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 this country. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale commission, manufacturing, and financial houses in Eastern Canada.

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## WESTERN FUEL SUPPLY.

The coal strike in the anthracite regions of the United States has directed some attention to the coal deposits in Western Canada. It has been well known for years that there is an enormous area of coal lands in Western Canada, extending all the way from southwestern Manitoba westward to the Rocky Mountains, and northwesterly far beyond the present range of settlement. Throughout this vast region coal has been located at many points. In many places it can be seen in outcroppings along the cut bank of a stream. West of the summit of the Rocky Mountains, in the vast province of British Columbia, coal is found in many districts, hundreds of miles apart. Throughout the vast region extending from the western portion of Manitoba to the Pacific Ocean, there may be said to be abundance of fuel, speaking generally, within easy distance of every part of the country. The coal found throughout this wide extent of territory naturally varies materially in quality, but it practically all belongs to the bituminous and lignite classes, so far as has yet been shown by practical mining operations. One mine produced an anthracite coal which sold well in Winnipeg for a time, but the supply of this appears to have been exhausted, as it has not been in the market here for the past two seasons. As a large portion of the coal territory has as yet been but very imperfectly explored, further supplies of anthracite may be discovered later. Some of the mines produce very fine qualities of bituminous and coking coals.

The lignite coals in the southeastern portion of Assiniboia territory are mined quite extensively, and supply a large part of the fuel used throughout the Rocky Mountains in Manitoba, and the adjacent portions of Assiniboia. At Lethbridge, in Alberta territory, a fine quality of bituminous coal is mined on a large scale. This coal is sold freely as far east as Winnipeg. At Fernie, just across the summit of the Rocky Mountains in British Columbia, a very extensive coal mining industry has grown up within the last few years, since the Crow's Nest railway was built. This coal is used largely in the form of coke, by the steel-making and mining country on both sides of the International boundary, and for other purposes in

the region tributary to the mines. It has not been shipped eastward as far as Winnipeg heretofore, but may be sold in this way from this quarter this year. At Frank, in Alberta, also on the Crow's Nest line, eastward some distance from Fernie, a new mine is being opened on an extensive scale, and a considerable supply of coal is looked for from this quarter in time. A fine quality of steam coal has been mined at Camrose, Alberta, or the Canadian Pacific Railway main line, west of Calgary, and also in the same district, at Antracite, a very fine quality of coal has been mined for some years. This latter coal was sold along the railway as far east as Winnipeg, and much was exported from it as a factor in the fuel supply of the country, but last year, and this year none of this coal has been obtainable at Winnipeg, and the supply, so far as this mine is concerned, appears to have failed.

These are the principal points in the interior where coal mining operations are carried on. There are a number of other mines in various parts of the country, which are operated to some extent, but most of these are only worked for local purposes, the coal being used only by the settlers in the surrounding territory. These local mines have probably not been developed on a sufficiently large scale to permit of mining any large quantity of coal on short notice. On the Pacific coast of British Columbia an important mining industry has been established for years. The mines on the east coast of Vancouver Island are worked quite extensively for export as well as for the home requirements of the British Columbia coal districts.

From the foregoing it will be seen that there need be no suffering in Western Canada as a result of the prolonged strike in Pennsylvania. We have abundance of coal and wood fuel at home for all purposes. The consumption of Pennsylvania anthracite in Western Canada has been confined principally to Winnipeg, and some of the other larger towns throughout the country. The consumption of the imported coal has, moreover, been a matter of choice and not of necessity, and has been confined to people who preferred the hard coal, regardless of price, owing to the fact that it is cleaner to handle and less subject to cause disagreeable odors in burning. It also requires less attention to stoves and furnaces. Winnipeg, however, is to a large extent a wood-burning community, and the same is true of all the northern and eastern portion of Manitoba. In the southern and western portions of the country, the native coals are largely used. The present trouble in Pennsylvania is, however, a permanent increase in the consumption of native soft coals. An increased demand for stoves and grates suitable for burning these coals has been noticeable of late. Those who formerly used the imported coals, but who will now supply themselves with fuel burners specially adapted to consuming soft coals, may be expected to continue the use of these coals even after an equilibrium has been established in the supply and price of Pennsylvania anthracite.

## STEADY, NOW!

The present season of prosperity throughout Western Canada is not without its dangers and temptations to the business community, and in fact, is more than in any other seasons of prosperity that in times of adversity. During close times business

men are more inclined to keep their affairs well in hand. They give closer attention to the details of their business, keep their stocks down, avoid unnecessary expenditures and practice economy. In fact, they try to know just where they stand and endeavor to keep their expenditures within their income.

When the season of unusual prosperity comes and every one is talking good times, there is a real time of trial for the business man. This is the time to test people and show the real stuff of which they are made. There is the temptation to branch out; to expand; to build a larger store and put in a heavier stock than is generally carried. To increase personal as well as business expenses, and just here we may state, it is a much easier matter to increase expenses than to contract them. There is also the temptation to the business man to embark in speculations outside of his regular business. Here in the West the speculative spirit is rampant, and in real estate, though it may take other forms, in the investment in stocks or in some other business enterprise outside of the one regularly carried on and mainly depended upon by the merchant.

Business men in mercantile lines are, of course, not the only people who are liable to be carried away in times of prosperity. The farmer buys more land. He sees the price of land going more before the price gets too high. The next year may be one of adversity with him, but he is unable to pay the merchant on account of having invested his means in land. The merchant, who has also branched out in other ways, on account of the prosperous times, needs an increased income to meet the altered circumstances, and the time of adversity for the farmer certainly hard upon the merchant. He has his income cut off at a time when he required an increase therein.

The clerks also and other men on salary will also speculate in times of great prosperity. They hear of money being made by some other person and their hard-earned savings are placed in some investment, which may or may not prove remunerative. If only the actual surplus were used for outside investment, the result would not often be so disastrous. Speculation is not often confined to actual surplus in hand. The country is assumed beyond the actual cash amount invested. This is particularly true of real estate investments, which makes this kind of speculation specially dangerous to many persons. The assumption of the obligation means that a continuance of great prosperity is often necessary to enable a speculator to meet the obligation. Thus in time of contraction there is an additional burden to be cared for.

Western Canada is now enjoying an unusual season of prosperity. Prospects ahead are good for the development of the country. There is need of caution, however, at the present time. There is certainly a great deal of speculation accompanying the legitimate development of the country. The temptations to spread are great. There is special need now for business men to keep their affairs well in hand and be prepared for the future. There is not such a speculative "boom" as we have had in this country. There is not likely to be as disastrous a collapse. That there will be ups and downs is certain, and we never know just when the change may come. The

failures following the collapse of the last "boom" experienced in this country showed that the commercial community almost everywhere was overloaded with goods. Many who were forced to assign could have pulled through if they had kept their stocks down to reasonable dimensions. Everybody loaded up, and the result was the purchasing of goods far beyond the requirements of the country, and which it took years to consume. This was probably a greater cause of disaster than outside speculations.

The present period of prosperity has been far reaching. It has brought development and advancement in Western Canada has been specially marked, the whole continent has enjoyed prosperous times. It is known that waves of prosperity and waves of adversity follow each other, just as warm and cold waves succeed each other. The season of prosperity has lasted well, and it certainly has been a time of inflation. Enormous capitalizations have been effected in plethoric numbers. The great rivers of speculation have been poured out upon the public for consumption. Heavy speculation in stocks has been a feature of the situation for some time, and no doubt most stocks have undergone great inflation. Only large stocks there with a big break in Canadian stocks, which ruined a number of investors. It is said that Canadians have been heavy investors in stocks of late. A financial depression now would cause enormous losses in stocks.

Can this thing go on ad infinitum? No. What the result will be we cannot comprehend. Whether it be evolution or revolution there will certainly be a change. Wise is the man who keeps his house in order, or, in other words, who keeps his affairs well in hand. Who is not carried away by prosperity, and who is therefore best able to withstand a period of adversity.

## Enlarging Its Premises.

The Stuart-Byrthout Machinery Company, Limited, is making an important addition to its premises at Winnipeg. A new building 40x130, two storeys high, is being erected at the back of the present one on Main street north, which will be used as a machine and boiler shop. The machinery on the upper storey being reserved for this latter purpose. This will greatly increase the capacity of the company's repair department, and will enable it to handle much work which has hitherto been turned away. The machinery for the new works is already here and ready for installation. The entire plants of two defunct eastern shops has been acquired. The installation is a completely filled five cars, and is probably the largest single shipment of plant ever handled in Winnipeg. The new building is being rushed.

As a result of this expansion in the premises of this firm its senior partner, Mr. Jas. Stuart, has voluntarily offered up to devote all his time to the business. He is resigning his position as city works commissioner with that end in view. The rapid growth of many of our western towns is causing them to put on metropolitan airs and there is a growing demand in the west for electric lighting, waterworks and other modern improvements. Mr. Stuart-Byrthout Company proposes to cater more largely to this trade and will also devote a greater amount of attention to the construction of mill enterprises of all kinds. Several orders of this kind have lately been booked. Electric lighting plants are at present being installed for the Arrow Mill Company, of Birtle, Man., McCullough and Sons, of Brandon, and the City, Man., and Smith & Hunter, millers, Carnduff, Assn.

A wire from Montreal on October 10 said: In an interview to-day ex-Alderman C. F. Smith, head of J. Ross McCready's committee, said that there is any prospect at present for a Canadian combine of boot and shoe manufacturers.