

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 27, 1896.

RED RIVER IMPROVEMENT.

A scheme is said to be on foot to form a private company to improve the navigation of the Red river between Winnipeg and Lake Winnipeg. Mr. T. C. Livingstone has been at Ottawa and he says the government are anxious that the work should be undertaken by a private company. He further says that the government would liberally assist the proposed private company by a cash bonus on completion of the work. Mr. Livingstone says he has the promise of a Dominion charter for his proposed company, authorizing the construction of the necessary work to make deep water navigation between Winnipeg and the Lake.

No doubt the government would be quite willing to charter the proposed company, and furthermore, the government would no doubt be quite willing to vote a bonus to the proposed company "on completion of the work," as the chances are against their ever being called upon to hand over the bonus.

The improvement of the Red river so as to permit of lake steamers navigating the river beyond Selkirk, is a most important question. There are no very costly obstacles to overcome. The only impediment to the navigation of the river is the St. Andrew's rapids and this could be overcome at an expenditure of from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000 according to different estimates already made. At the same time we believe this is a work which should be undertaken by the Dominion government. It is to all intents and purposes a Dominion government work, the Dominion having sole powers of legislation in matters regarding navigable streams. When a bonus was proposed by the city of Winnipeg some time ago, to aid in the carrying out of this work, The Commercial objected to it on the ground that it was a Dominion work, which the people of Manitoba have a right to expect shall be done at the expense of the federal government.

Mr. Livingstone intimates that his proposed private company should be aided by bonuses from the city and province. The Commercial believes that neither the city nor the province should be called upon to contribute anything to aid this undertaking. The Dominion government appears to have funds to spend in canals in the East, such, for instance, as the Tay canal, which are of much less importance than the improvement of the Red river. The Dominion has not yet undertaken any important public work in the improvement of our western navigable streams, though there has been a pressing demand for this work for many years, and now evidently they desire to shelve it by giving a charter to a private company to carry out the work.

In the opinion of The Commercial great care should be exercised in the matter of this proposed private company. It looks too much like a scheme to postpone the work. Once the private company were chartered, the government could object to do anything, on

the ground that this company had been formed to carry out the improvements, and it would not be fair for the government to step in until the private company had been given plenty of time to see what it could do. In this way the matter could be kept hanging fire for years, while the government would be in a position to meet any pressure upon them to urge them to undertake the work.

Before this proposed company is chartered the matter should be thoroughly investigated by the public, and the board of trade and city council should have a say on the subject.

The reception the present proposal will receive will depend very much upon the names connected with it. So far the only name mentioned is that of Mr. Livingstone. It is to be hoped that no representative men will allow their names to be connected with the enterprise, unless they are fully satisfied that it is a bona fide enterprise, and that there is good reason to believe the work can be carried through in this way at once.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

A COMMITTEE of Winnipeg gentlemen have decided to call an immigration convention, to be held at Winnipeg on or about the 26th, 27th and 28th of February. Delegates from each municipality throughout the province and Territories, as well as from the larger towns between Port Arthur and the Pacific coast will be asked to attend. Representatives will be invited from the Winnipeg city council, board of trade, grain exchange, jobbers' union, exhibition association, Hudson's Bay company, Canadian Pacific railway, Northern Pacific railway, Manitoba and Northwestern Railway, and Great Northern Railway. The railways will be asked to supply a cut rate to delegates from outside points. The movement to hold this convention, is an outgrowth of the recent immigration convention held at St. Paul, Minnesota.

THE payment of claims against the Territorial Exhibition, was discussed in the Senate at Ottawa last week, but Premier Bowell did not hold out much hope that the Dominion would pay the claims. In reply to Mr. Perley he is reported to have said: "With regard to the liabilities for the fair at Regina he did not know that the federal government was bound either in honor or equity to assume that indebtedness, and they certainly were not legally bound. If it was shown that the debts were incurred by the lieutenant-governor upon his own responsibility, there might be some claim in equity against the government whose officer the lieutenant-governor was. The government had, however, only given a money grant to assist the fair and had taken no further responsibility." To this Senator Loughheed asked: "Did I understand the premier to say that the government repudiated the fair liabilities incurred by the lieutenant-governor?" The premier replied: "I did not say so. I said it was a matter for consideration. Would it not be well for the honorable gentleman to establish a claim before he talks of repudiation." It may be explained that large claims against the territorial fair remain unpaid. It was certainly expected all over the Territories and in Manitoba that the Dominion would

satisfy these claims. The exhibition was looked upon here as purely a Dominion government affair, and practically its sole management was in the hands of Governor Mackintosh, who is a Dominion official. The Dominion is surely morally responsible for these liabilities, the premier to the contrary notwithstanding. The government should also be held morally responsible for the men they place in power as lieutenant-governors. It seems only reasonable to expect the Dominion to wipe off these claims, when we consider how the exhibition was brought about and managed throughout by government influences. Eventually we believe the claims will be paid by the Dominion, and they should be paid at once, as no doubt much hardship has already been caused by the delay in straightening up the affairs of the exhibition.

THE COMMERCIAL has spoken several times about the loss sustained through the careless handling of poultry, but there still seems to be room for a full course of lectures upon this subject. Both the farmers and many country merchants seem to require further advice upon this matter. A few days ago we saw a barrel of turkeys in a Winnipeg store, which had been shipped in from the country, that was certainly a disgrace to the shipper. Nearly half the value of the turkeys had been lost by improper handling. In the first place, a barrel is not a suitable thing to pack poultry in. In the second place, these turkeys had evidently been frozen before they were packed, and they had no doubt been thawed out by the shipper, to admit of being packed closely in the barrel, for they had been packed in so closely as to form a solid mass when frozen again. The consequence of this freezing and thawing and freezing again was that the birds looked black and dirty. They looked as though they had been lying around a dirty warehouse for a few months, and altogether they were about as uninviting a lot of goods as we have seen for some time. Poultry, or any other flesh food, once it becomes frozen, should not be allowed to thaw until it reaches the consumer, as it presents an objectionable appearance by being frozen and thawed. The shipper saved space in packing by thawing these turkeys, but he utterly destroyed their appearance, and greatly reduced their value.

THE statement published recently in the Winnipeg Free Press, and credited to the St. Paul Pioneer Press, to the effect that large quantities of oil cake were shipped from Minnesota to Manitoba, is entirely untrue. Flax seed meal is produced in Winnipeg in larger quantities than is required for consumption in Manitoba, and the surplus is exported east. The product of flax seed has not been imported into Manitoba for years. The St. Paul paper has evidently been stuffed.

WHILE The Commercial has some doubts as to the feasibility of the proposed dairy exchange in Winnipeg, there is one point which would appear to greatly favor the formation of the proposed exchange. We refer to the loss sustained by holding dairy goods at the factories or in country stores. This has ever been the great complaint about Manitoba dairy goods, that they have been held until