

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 3, 1891.

A RETAILERS' CONVENTION.

It is now over a year since the retail merchants of Manitoba and the territories met in convention at Winnipeg to discuss matters pertaining to their general welfare. The convention was a success, both in point of the number in attendance and in the work accomplished. Good seed was sown, which has since borne fruit to the advantage of the merchants, individually and collectively. It could not be expected, however, that the first convention would be as profitable to the trade as a second or third would be. In order to be of the greatest value to the country, it would be necessary to keep up an organization, with conventions at intervals to be agreed upon. A convention at least once a year would certainly be of great advantage to retail merchants, and they might be held even more frequently, to advantage.

On the first occasion the retailers came together, without any definite programme arranged upon. It was a gathering of merchants from all parts of the country, drawn together by the belief that there were certain trade matters which should be discussed, but not knowing what would be the outcome of the gathering. The first thing which had to be done was to organize, and a great deal of time was consumed in preliminary work. Now something of an organization exists, and at a second convention, the merchants would be able to get to work quicker, and expedite matters much better than they could have hoped to do at the first gathering. The experienced gained from the former convention would also be of assistance on a second similar occasion.

It is always an advantage to business men, to meet together and talk over matters affecting their trade interests. A exchange of ideas is an advantage in any calling, and remarks from one person draw out ideas from others, which otherwise they never would have thought of. The mere fact of discussion, even where no definite plan of action is resolved upon, will be beneficial to those attending a convention of this class. Men will get their ideas rubbed and brightened up, and will gain information which they will be able to apply in their business to advantage. But besides the good to be derived from general discussion (which alone would warrant the holding of a convention at intervals), there are certain matters affecting the interests of the retail merchants of Manitoba and the territories, which require united action to produce the best results. This is yet a new country, and we are now laying the foundation of our business structure. Now is the time therefore, to see that trade be established on sound business principles. It is to be regretted that some very unbusinesslike customs prevail to a great extent in this community. It should be the aim to remedy these at once. The crop prospect points to the harvesting of an unusually bountiful crop. If nothing occurs to mar our prospects, a splendid outlook will be before the country. Money will be free, times will be

prosperous, and there will be a grand opportunity to reform our improper business methods. The best time to introduce the needed reforms would certainly be during a season of prosperity and financial freedom, though this is often the time when needed reforms are lost sight of. "Hard times" simply show the great necessity for proper business methods in conducting the trade of a country or community; but though not so apparent, correct business customs are really more necessary during seasons of affluence, for it is really during the existence of "good times," that business men are more liable to carelessness. Then when a time of stringency comes, the folly of their past actions becomes more readily discernible.

What THE COMMERCIAL would propose is, that another convention of retail merchants be held in Winnipeg during exhibition week. The Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition will be held from September 28 to October 3. There will undoubtedly be a large number of merchants in the city that week, without the convention, while with the double attraction of the convention and exhibition, there would be a certainty of a much larger attendance than at the first convention. There are such questions as credit business, security for credit accounts, collections, insurance, exemptions, taxation of stocks and many others which could be discussed to advantage at such a convention, and upon some of which united action is of pressing necessity. If the executive of the retailers' association do not care to take the responsibility of calling a convention, THE COMMERCIAL would ask the opinions of retailers generally as to the advisability of taking action in the matter. We think, however, that the officers of the association would be sustained by the trade generally, in calling and arranging for a convention during exhibition week, without further inquiry or delay.

ANOTHER DISTRICT OPENED.

Edmonton, Alberta, July 25. Tracklaying on the Calgary & Edmonton railway was finished to Edmonton this evening. The last spike was driven by Donald Ross, the oldest settler.

The telegram above conveys information of a most important nature to northern Alberta in particular, and Canada in general. It intimates that the great Saskatchewan country has again been invaded by the iron horse, and that a vast and fertile region has been opened to settlement and civilization. Less than a year ago, the first railway was completed to the North Saskatchewan river. Now, a second railway has been constructed to this river, at a point about 300 miles west of the place reached by the first railway to the Saskatchewan.

The Calgary and Edmonton railway, as its name implies, is a line of railway connecting the towns of Calgary and Edmonton, both of which are in the territory of Alberta. At Calgary the road connects with the main line of the Canadian Pacific railway. The road, commencing at Calgary, runs in a northerly direction, a distance of about 200 miles, to the North Saskatchewan river, near Edmonton, the town being situated on the north side of the river, opposite the railway terminus. The road runs through an excellent stock and agricultural country. The region is well watered by num-

erous streams flowing eastward from the Rocky mountains, and along these streams abundance of fine timber, suitable for lumber and fuel, can be obtained. The slopes and foothills of the mountains are wooded, and belts of timber also extend along some of the streams well into the prairie country. Saw logs can be floated down these streams to points convenient to the railway, and there manufactured into lumber. Thus settlers are assured of cheap building material. There are saw mills at Edmonton, and on the Red Deer river. Coal also exists throughout this region. The famous Red Deer country is on the line of this railway. Work was commenced on the Calgary and Edmonton Railway just a year ago last month, so that the railway was completed in the same month in which construction was commenced. The road will be operated by the Canadian Pacific, under lease, and to all intents and purposes will form a branch of this great system.

Edmonton has been an important post of the Hudson's Bay Company for many years, and a considerable settlement has also existed here for years. The town has a population of about 800 to 1,000, with over fifty business institutions, including several important mercantile concerns. Those not acquainted with the circumstances, will wonder how such a town and settlement became established at a point distant hundreds of miles from railway communication. There are several reasons for this. The original location of the Canadian Pacific railway would have taken the great transcontinental line through this district, had it not been abandoned in favor of the southern route. A number of early settlers located about Edmonton, while under the belief that the transcontinental road would pass through the district. The agricultural advantages of the district, induced others to locate here. The location of the town on the North Saskatchewan river, with the advantages of navigation afforded by the river, assisted in making the place an important point. The geographical position of Edmonton is such as to make it the doorway to the great and valuable region north of the North Saskatchewan. This made it an important point in the fur trade, and the principal base of supplies for the immense territory watered by the Athabasca, Peace and other rivers.

Now that the country between Calgary and Edmonton has been provided with a line of railway, an increased inflow of immigration will follow, which will have a beneficial effect upon the trade of Calgary. Edmonton, as the chief centre of northern Alberta, will also be favorably influenced by the inflow of settlement which may now be confidently expected.

Now that we have a railway at the doorway to the great region north of the Saskatchewan, we will likely soon learn more about this portion of the Dominion, about which so little is now known. Exploration, and even settlement will be stimulated in the north country. The North Saskatchewan country has up to the present time been the stopping place of those adventuresome settlers, who wished to be in the vanguard of advancing civilization, and who accordingly selected the most remote parts accessible. But now with two railways to the Saskatchewan, this region will have lost its