

The Commercial

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POLITICAL FORECASTS.

Evidently the politicians of this province are busily preparing themselves for the election of members to the local legislature which must take place within a year or so from the present date. The members of the Government and their supporters are sounding their own praises all over the province, and claiming credit for every good thing which has befallen the people during the past three years. The construction of every mile of railway in the province since then they are claiming credit for, and are no doubt regretting that the Hudson's Bay line is not also in course of construction so that they might father that great undertaking. If they do fail in making out a good case for themselves it will certainly not be for want of plenty of cheek and strange perversion of everything possible into a favorable aspect for themselves.

On the other hand we have the champions of the opposition thundering over the country the misdeeds of the Government, and uttering fearful breathings about asylum jobs, coal steals and other defalcations, all of which if implicitly believed would go a long way to founding a belief that the late rebellion and the grain damaging frosts of the past years were attributable to the blundering and rascality of Mr. Norquay and his colleagues.

Like leaders like followers, and we see the liberal clubs and conservative clubs being reorganized and ready to do the work, and if necessary the very dirty work of their party leaders, until the most brainless "me too" of a political bigot or dupe begins to imagine himself a something of consequence in the affairs of the country. To be plain, the bulk of the electors of Manitoba are being arrayed under the opposite banners of Grit and Tory, and are being stuffed carefully with the belief that they will in the party ranks do wondrous service in promoting principles which never enter into a provincial contest. In short an election is approaching in which the party which can collect together most blinded political partisans will have the best chance of success.

It is wonderful how the work of breaking up organizations inimical to party

interests is being pushed alongside of the forming of those with an opposite tendency. We have a powerful illustration of this in the treatment accorded to the Farmer's Union and its leaders. While the members of that body were howling over wrongs real and imaginary, and passing anti immigration resolutions with the suicidal effect, if not the malicious intention, of injuring themselves and the country of their adoption, the Union found plenty of political partisans to condone their folly, if not to commend it, with the hope that it (the Union) might become useful for political purposes. But just as the organization was getting over its folly, settling down into a state of probable usefulness, and consequently becoming dangerous to party interests, politicians of all shades of opinion discovered in connection with it and its leaders some awful causes of offence, and the work of demolishing it and crushing its power was at once commenced. How well the work has succeeded it is needless now to state, for even farmer's unionists are not outside of the influences of party prejudices, and the material for its own destruction could be easily found within its own ranks.

We have in Manitoba no trade organization with a political or even party checking aim, and among the business men of the province the party leaders will not require to undertake any work of crushing. The materials for party purposes are there all split and ready, and political discordance can be started without any difficulty. The idea of business men combining outside of party ties to defend their own material interests at the polling stations is much more unlikely than even farmers following such a course, and the prospect is many years ahead of the present state of political enlightenment in Manitoba. We may as well make up our minds to see during the coming campaign many an honest and solvent business man fighting stubbornly for the election of some sheriff-proof political scalawag who less than two years previously supported rascally legislative measures for the robbery of the honest men who are foolish enough to still remain his supporters. To avoid being ranked among such a class, of what in slang would be termed "political suckers," it is necessary to throw aside party influences, and be guided purely by enlightened self interest, the modern definition of patriotism; for we must say that within the range of

party limits in this province there is no scope for guarding personal interests, and in trying to choose between existing parties there comes forcibly to our mind the advice received in boyhood from a played out English pot house politician, which is as follows: "Have nought to do wi' politics lad, for a wigg's a prig and a tory's a highway robber." We doubt not but many good sensible citizens of the prairie province will be forced to follow this negative but not unsound advice during the coming election.

THE HUDSON'S BAY RAILWAY.

The thermometer of Manitoba's hopes takes some sudden bounds up and drops down, as news favorable or unfavorable of the probabilities of a Hudson's Bay railway are laid before the public, and it is not to be wondered at that such is the case. Whatever faith the people of the province may have in other means of developing the Northwest, the construction and operation of such a road is the only course which promises a full fruition of their hopes. We have already had a fair trial of a road through Canadian territory to the Atlantic, and the most enthusiastic supporters here of the bold and spirited policy, which has resulted in the construction of that road, are now shaken in their opinion as to the benefits it confers on the country, if they are not convinced that it must ever be manipulated so as to keep the Northwest under control commercially, and in the fullest sense dependant upon the east. While the east contains the bulk of the population of Canada, and the Northwest only a few hundred thousand souls, this state of affairs can be easily maintained, and even in years to come when our increase of population would demand better treatment, the tight eastern grip would only be slowly and reluctantly removed.

We have also looked to the south for independent connections with the Atlantic support, and even if we did secure such, we would only have the relief, which competition over a round about route would compel. Even this partial relief we have been time and again denied, and the present pool between the C.P.R. and S.P. M. & M.R., by which the latter, a foreign road, is practically bought off from competition with the funds of the people of Canada, shows what license the Dominion Government will allow to a corporation in whose interests the debt of the