

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MARCH 20th, 1887.

A NEW INDUSTRY.

A new industry will shortly be inaugurated in Winnipeg, and this is nothing less than a movement in the direction of canning fruits, vegetables and meats. The industry will be started on a small scale, but this is not in itself an unfavorable feature. Many of the most colossal industries have been started in a very modest manner, and have grown with the increasing demands of the trade to great dimensions. Indeed, in commencing a new line of business, in a new field, it is always the safer plan to commence in a moderate way. No matter how carefully an estimate of expenses, supply and demand has been prepared, actual experience may show that matters have not been gauged properly. How many industries are commenced on too extensive a scale, and are thereby rendered unprofitable, through excessive investment; plant which is too costly in operating, etc.? On the other hand it is better and easier to start on a small scale and work up, than start on a large scale and work down.

In one direction the field here is not likely to be over-estimated, and this is in the demand. The consumption of canned goods is very large in the Northwest, in proportion to the population. This is a well-known fact, and the reasons for such are so apparent as not to require special notice. Only one point may be mentioned to show this, and that is the convenience of preserving and handling canned goods in such a vast country, but thinly settled, and where supplies are often not readily obtained. On this point there need, therefore, be no fear of the result. The next thing, or rather it should be the first thing in connection with a manufacturing industry, is the supply of raw material. This undoubtedly is limited in many directions, but is capable of being greatly increased. In vegetables, for instance, it would only require a demand to bring forth an abundant supply. Large quantities of canned beans, peas, corn and even tomatoes are consumed in Manitoba and the Territories, all of which could be prepared at home. In meats there should certainly be an unlimited supply, and these also are largely used in a canned state, throughout the country.

In fruits the prospect for supply is not so favorable, though even in this branch many varieties of small fruit could be produced here to good advantage. In the matter of expenses, only a practical test in a proper way can rightly determine the advantage of canning such articles as the country produces to advantage. Still the prospects would seem favorable to the success of the undertaking in this particular. Some of the articles of canned goods now used in the country, have to be imported from foreign countries, and are subject to a heavy customs tax, whilst those varieties prepared in Eastern Canada, would be at the disadvantage of the freight rates for a long haul. Taking these matters of supply, demand and expense of manufacturing into consideration, the field here would therefore not seem altogether unfavorable for the successful prosecution of a canning industry at Winnipeg.

VACANT LANDS.

The published details of the plan originated by Mr. Duncan MacArthur and others, for the settlement of the vacant lands surrounding Winnipeg and throughout the province, which it is proposed to submit to the Local Legislature for sanction, have provoked a deal of discussion, both in favor of and against the scheme. The main objection seems to be found in the fear that the company organized under the proposed scheme would become something of a landed monopoly, and in time might prove a serious evil in itself. The first proposal under this scheme is to the effect that any "five or more persons, possessing among themselves not less than 40,000 acres of land, free from encumbrance and ready for settlement, shall have the right to become incorporated for colonization purposes." Such a corporation would be given power to "purchase, hold, improve, lease, sell, cultivate, colonize lands," etc. One of the objections taken is, that 40,000 acres of land is too large an amount to entrust to such a corporation. Instead of limiting the amount of land to not less than 40,000 acres, it has been urged in some quarters that the limit should be to not over that amount. Forty thousand acres of land does not seem a very large amount in this country of "magnificent distances," but it grows in magnitude when it is shown that it would provide large farms (160 acres each) for 250 families, or homes for 1,250 people, at the small average of five to a

family. Even 10,000 acres seems a large amount when considered in the same way, that it would provide homes for over 300 people. It has therefore been argued that 10,000 acres of land should be sufficient to allow of incorporation, and the amount should be limited to not over 40,000 acres. There is certainly some force in these arguments, and additional weight is given to them when it is considered that a company incorporated under the plan proposed would have power to borrow money from the Government at a low rate of interest; and in addition the Government would be asked to grant an annual subsidy to the company to assist in recouping it for its outlay in securing settlers. With these favorable features to the companies, it would be necessary, as previously intimated by THE COMMERCIAL, that such restrictive legislation should be enacted in connection with the carrying out of the proposed scheme, as would effectually prevent companies organized under the measure from becoming landed monopolies or speculative ventures, working in part upon the credit of the people. Were it the only object of companies formed under the proposed plan to work solely in the interests of the province, in securing the settlement of our vacant lands, no such restrictions would be necessary. But it may be asked: For whose benefit would these companies be formed, in the event of such an act becoming law? Undoubtedly the gentlemen who have originated the scheme, have the interest of the country at heart. It must be remembered, however, that men are but human, and that few schemes have been floated without some prospect of personal gain.

LOOKING AFTER IMMIGRANTS.

There are undoubtedly a great many mistakes made in connection with the management of our immigration policy. One popular error is, that the main thing is to get immigrants into the country, and that they can be safely left to themselves once they are landed within our borders. This is a very grave mistake, and one which has undoubtedly cost the country a great deal in the past. It has been frequently said, and the statement goes without contradiction, that the best emigration agent is a contented settler. Almost every settler arriving in the country, has friends in his native place whom he can influence to come here or remain where they are. How necessary