

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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D. W. BUCHANAN,
Publisher.

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 Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, JULY 1, 1899.

WINNIPEG INDUSTRIAL

The coming annual fair of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition Association promises to be the most successful in the history of this enterprising and progressive institution. The interest in the fair is more widespread than ever, and it is now attracting visitors and exhibitors not only from all parts of our own country, but also from abroad. The exhibit in the lines of manufactures will certainly far exceed any previous fair, and in agricultural and live stock there will no doubt also be progress. Some \$15,000 is offered in prizes, many of which are large enough in the important classes to attract keen competition. The attractions, sports, horse racing, fire works, etc., have had the anxious care of the committee for many months, and no pains have been spared to make this feature of the exhibition a great source of enjoyment to visitors from the country, who only on an occasion of this kind have an opportunity of regaling themselves in this way. The buildings have been enlarged and improved, where past experience has indicated that such was necessary, the agricultural machinery department having been largely extended. Business men as well as farmers will undoubtedly enjoy themselves and learn something of value as well by attending the exhibition, and all who can manage to avail themselves of this, the great annual event of Western Canada, should certainly do so.

Business men, many of whom stick too closely to their desks or shops, will certainly find a visit to the Industrial an agreeable change for them.

Interesting Letter.

We publish this week a letter from the great Boundary country, of British Columbia, which will be of special interest to business men, particularly those who have been looking for trade in that quarter. It puts matters just about as they are in that quarter, without either trying to boom them, or to present things in an unnecessarily depressed light.

The Boundary District of B.C. From Commercial Representative.

To the uninitiated it may be stated that the Boundary district of B. C., though to a certain extent undefined, includes all the territory from Christina Lake as far west as the Okanagan river, taking in the new towns of Cascade, Columbia, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Midway, and mining camps like McKinney and West Fork. It is the district in British Columbia which has been most talked about for the past year, and particularly the last six months. It is the territory through which the Columbia & Western railway is being built.

Business in the Boundary district is at present quiet, being to some extent the natural reaction from a period of unusual activity, but also to the season of the year, which in all mining districts is a quiet one. The prospectors, as a rule, are out on the hills, and the working miners either in the mines or on their claims. Winter and spring are the seasons during which mining camps flourish.

Grand Forks and Columbia have been jubilant over the prospects of a smelter, which it has been definitely announced will be built in their vicinity. This has improved local prospects so far as those two towns are concerned, and has stimulated speculation. Greenwood which has been the most important town in the district in a commercial way, and which during the past winter and spring has been the Mecca of the mining men and other visitors, and progressed very rapidly and substantially, is feeling a dull most perceptibly, but its position in relation to the mines is assured and the lull is only temporary. Midway is slowly improving, and Camp McKinney, the properties in which for a time experienced quite a boom, has again lapsed into quiescence. With the exception of the Cariboo Amelia, which is one of the large producers, there is no developed mine at Camp McKinney, and the activity there was largely the result of speculation. West Fork, on a branch of the Kettle River, and Similkameen, are two coming districts, and are attracting attention. Both possess first-class mineral indications.

The Columbia and Western branch of the C. P. R. is being constructed all the way from Robson to Midway, and is ultimately headed for Penticton to make connection with the main line by way of Vernon. The grading is nearly all completed, and it is expected that trains will be running into Greenwood by September or October. The C. P. R. officials announce that freight will be carried to Cascade City by the first of July, whence it will be freighted by teams. This will permanently divert the traffic from the American side. Heretofore,

traffic came in either by way of Bossburg, on the Spokane and Northern, or from Penticton over the C. P. R., necessitating long staging or freighting. All this will be changed upon the entry of the trains, one effect of which will be the general lowering of freights and the cost of living. At present and in the past freights cost all the way from 1.1-2c to 2.1-2c per pound from Bossburg and Penticton. In anticipation of the coming of the railway merchants are ordering very light, and only for present requirements if at all; otherwise for delivery by rail.

Just what immediate effect the railway will have it is very difficult to say. It will throw a large number of freighters out of employment, who may or may not be able to find new holds. There are hundreds of men and teams engaged in the work of freighting, who will suddenly be dispensed with. A good deal of freighting will still be done in the direction of West Fork, Camp McKinney, Similkameen and Adepuc, and the railway will in all probability increase the trade in those directions, but as a whole the freighting business will be materially diminished, and in itself it is a material factor. In a business way the tendency of the railway will be to stimulate buying and probably to overstock; there will be, too, in all probability, a considerable influx of visitors. On the other hand, however, the mines are not sufficient to warrant the large expectations that have been formed of traffic and business on that score. Progress will, it is true, be much more rapid in mining as soon as the railway arrives, as heretofore the cost of bringing in machinery and supplies has seriously retarded development work, which could only be undertaken in a small way by the average mine owner, or by those having very large capital at their disposal. Only a few of the mines will be in a position to ship upon the arrival of the railway, although there are a number which give splendid promise. For this reason there will be considerable disappointment at the outset, especially to those who have been taking too much stock in the glowing descriptions of the mines and their immediate prospects. It takes much longer than most people imagine to produce shipping mines. That is the general experience, and especially in British Columbia. But regarding the ultimate prospects of the mines there can be no doubt whatsoever. The C. P. R. Co. is building in branch lines to all the different mining camps in the district at very large expense, and that corporation does not usually undertake such enterprises without being at first thoroughly satisfied as to final results. In another year probably half a dozen large mines will be shipping and two smelters in operation. It may be even longer. There is always or usually is, a lull in mining towns between the purely speculative period and the active shipping period, when there is a big pay roll—what may be called the transition period,—and the Boundary towns which up to the present have had a fair season of prosperity should not be disappointed if the experience of Nelson and Rossland are repeated there, notwithstanding the large and reasonable expectations of the future. Such things are inevitable as the result of too active speculation in the beginning.

It will be of interest to The Commercial readers to know that it is in contemplation to hold a general conference of the boards of trade of