

THE COMMERCIAL

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

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Advertisements purporting to be news matter, or which profess to express the opinion of this journal, will not be inserted.

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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, NOVEMBER 17.

BUTTER AND CHEESE MAKERS' UNION.

The sessions of the new Manitoba Butter and Cheese Makers' Union held last Thursday and Friday, to which reference was made in last Saturday's Commercial were more than usually interesting. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss ways and means of improving the dairy products of Manitoba, particularly cheese, which it is well known is not what it should be as regards quality. The promoters of the new union are engaged in both the making and selling industries themselves and have been for some time pointing out in their individual capacity the faults that have made necessary the formation of this new union, which appears to be in some respects usurping the functions of the old Manitoba Dairy Association and they have been subjected to rather severe criticism at times for their course in the matter. Now that the opinions they expressed have taken shape in the formation of this union the truthfulness of their contentions is being generally admitted and the industry awakened to a sense of the danger with which it is threatened. The meetings of last week were well attended and there seemed to be no two opinions as to the reality of the difficulties which have confronted the dairying industry of this province. It was also gratifying to note that the opinion of the meetings seemed to be unanimous upon the main points brought out in the discussions. Unity is above all things needed if this fine industry is to be placed and kept in the place which it ought to occupy as compared with other provinces of Canada. There can be no room for dissension. Not only must the makers of the goods be at one with each other in effort to improve the industry, but the dealers must also be at one with the makers, and the government's dairy department with both. It cannot be said that this has been the case for some time past and the inferior quality of cheese is largely due to lack of unanimity and singleness of purpose in the management of the industry.

The new union starts out under good auspices if the attendance and feeling at last week's meeting are anything to judge by. There seemed to be no division of opinion so far as those engaged in the industry are concerned, and a good programme of work for the future was mapped out. Before the gathering broke up

a deputation waited upon the government to urge certain reforms which are thought to be necessary. A full report of the meeting is given elsewhere in this issue.

Dairy Convention.

A meeting of the new Butter and Cheese Makers' Union of Manitoba was held in the City Hall, Winnipeg, on Thursday and Friday of last week, the purpose of which was to rally all those engaged in active dairying for consideration of the position of that industry in this province. Cheese making received the greatest amount of attention as this is the branch which has been found fault with most this year. The cheese makers were well represented and there was also present, Messrs. McKellar, Murray, Lutley, C. C. McDonald, Shunk, Cluff and Alex. McDonald, and the president of the union, S. M. Barre.

The first meeting was called to order at 2 p. m., Thursday, by President Barre, who delivered the following address:—

The season of 1900 has been most favorable to milk production, almost a continuous growth of succulent grass, no flies and an exceedingly fine fall has resulted in the production of probably the largest quantity of butter and cheese ever made in Manitoba. Prices has also been very favorable from spring till fall, when a sudden decline in cheese values, without any apparent reason, took place. With considerable quantities of cheese in our factories, frequent complaints with regard to its quality, restricted demands in the local and British Columbia markets, and large quantities of Ontario cheese going into British Columbia we felt that the cheese business had reached a point where it required our best attention. Also numerous complaints have been received with regard to our butter. We know that its quality needs to be much improved, and that we are making very little use of some of our best markets. Although our public accounts show a liberal expenditure of money (between \$5,000 and \$8,000 a year) for the purpose of improving our dairy industry, all agree that we are not progressing as much as we should and our dairymen are anxious to know the reason why. This has led us to organize this butter and cheese makers' union, and to call this meeting, to which you are all most cordially welcome. We are here for the purpose of investigating every condition connected with the manufacture and sale of butter and cheese made in factories, etc.

After 15 years of dairying in butter and cheese factories it is important to know to what extent such factories have been successful and to establish the possibilities of both branches of dairying, butter and cheese making. This will have a great bearing on our future work. The fact that we are not progressing, shows that we must have spent our energy in the wrong direction. Investigation shows that 50 cheese factories were organized and operated in this province, 61 of which have ceased to exist, leaving only 25 in operation to-day. This proves that Manitoba is not adapted to cheese making on a large scale, cheese factories can only succeed in a few thickly settled localities where land is mostly divided into river lots—this facilitating milk transportation. The total number of creameries so far organized and operated in the province is 30, divided into two classes, local and central. Out of 32 local creameries organized during the last fifteen years, 16 are idle or have gone out of existence, some of them have been transformed into cheese factories. The above results show that local creameries are not as a rule the best adapted to our special conditions and that there are only a few localities where such creameries have met with considerable success. This we fully understood quite a few years ago, when we negotiated with the Canadian Pacific railway and other transportation companies, and secured for farmers the liberal cream transportation rates extending 150 miles and over, which we now enjoy. This enables us to establish central creameries, which have so far proved to be of great value to our scattered population and are also enabling us to carry on dairy work, winter and summer. Hence the total number of butter and cheese factories is about 45. It is small to compare with the size of the province, but is by far too large for the number of cows available. In some localities there are too many, they are seriously interfering

with one another; some of them really stand in the way of real progress in dairying. The tendency in all provinces of the Dominion is to reduce the number of factories and to make them as large as possible—and it stands to reason, if it is an advantage for 60 farmers to club together and send their milk made into butter and cheese. It is assuredly a far greater advantage for 5,000 farmers to do the same thing. (See the St. Albans creamery making 25,000 pounds of butter a day.) The larger the factory the less the cost of making, the more facilities for shipping and the larger returns for farmers. The gathering of large quantities of butter in central factories will facilitate weekly shipment, and is a most important point in a province like this, where we stand about half way between two of the largest distributing cities, Vancouver and Montreal. So far as our central creameries are concerned, we realize that our cream transportation facilities are yet to be much improved, but these needed improvements can not come about unless large quantities of cream are shipped to one point so that any division or subdivision of patronage in such creameries will only be an impediment to progress. The above interest should be entered into one as much as possible. The total number of butter and cheese factories organized is 122. Total amount of failures, 77—or over 60 per cent.—so that everything considered, particularly when central creameries can reach the furthest localities of the province—any effort to increase the number of butter and cheese factories (except perhaps in very rare cases) would, in my opinion, only result in a waste of capital and labor.

We find that our largest cheese factory is only equal in size to the smallest in the province of Ontario. We also find that the best cheese, and the cheese selling at the highest price, has been and is made in localities where we find only one large and well built and well equipped factory. The same rule applies to butter factories. The small cheese factories and the too large number of such small factories in one locality has proved disastrous to the dairy interests in this, as well as in other provinces. As a rule they are poorly built and equipped and the butter and cheese makers have no power over their patrons, who are constantly threatening to leave and go to another factory, unless the milk is accepted such as it is, good, bad or indifferent, and the result is a poor quality of cheese and a loss to farmers—so that competition between factories instead of being a benefit is a curse to the farming community, and I do not know of any way of curing this evil except by legislation or the imposing of a heavy fine on any dairyman receiving milk or cream rejected from another factory. The sparsely settled condition of the province has led to the establishment of about 50 cheese dairies from which comes a considerable quantity of poor cheese. We also find many of them in the close proximity of cheese factories, which is a great mistake, for no matter how well dairy cheese may be made it will always lack in uniformity, in color, texture, flavor and finish, qualities so desirable and absolutely required to obtain the highest prices. Nobody wants a carload composed of twenty varieties of cheese. The owners of a number of such cheese dairies will soon have to face the question of combining their interests and organizing a good large cheese factory, which would no doubt be far less troublesome and more profitable than home cheese making. Cheese dairies may be useful in localities where no factory exists and to meet the requirements of local trade. We have already proved that we can make here, just as good cheese and butter as in any part of Canada. Aye, even a little better, since, thirteen years ago, we have beaten Ontario with our butter at her own shows, and we came out second to none with our cheese at the World's Fair, Chicago.

Now let us see what the British Columbia and Montreal trade thinks of our cheese and butter.

The following will answer this question:

Victoria, Aug. 15, 1900.

S. M. Barre, Esq.,
Winnipeg, Man.,

Dear Sir,—We are wiring you to-night that we have sold in Victoria 240 large cheese, late made.

We had great difficulty in making sales on account of the inferior qual-

ity of Manitoba cheese received in last car, and it is only by showing your letter of the 11th guaranteeing the quality of the goods that we have made these sales. The rest of the trade has ordered a car from Ingersol, Ontario, and state that they would rather pay one and a half to two cents per pound more for Ontario cheese than for the cheese you shipped last. There is no doubt you have shipped here little better than skim milk cheese. The writer had a piece of Manitoba cheese to-day which is dry and tasteless and such stuff should not be shipped here."

Yours faithfully,

MARTIN ROBERTSON,
Vancouver, Sept. 28th, 1900.

S. M. Barre, Esq.,
Winnipeg, Man.,

Dear Sir,—

Enclosed please find statement of claim for losses on cheese. The cheese was sour, crumbly, granulated and could not be used even for a free lunch counter. It came from car shipped in July and branded

Yours truly,
MARTIN ROBERTSON.

We may here be allowed to state that although our firm makes considerable cheese, we buy still more than we make, and the car of which our agent complained so much, we had purchased. I think we make just as good cheese as any one in Manitoba, but I am satisfied it could yet be improved.

Now let us see what Montreal thinks of our cheese. At that time cheese was selling at 11½¢ at factories.

Montreal, Oct. 3, 1900.

S. M. Barre,
Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sir,—We have your telegram saying that cheese can be bought at 10 to 10½¢ f. o. b. Winnipeg. This is altogether too dear for this market, as we can buy such as the very best of yours would be at 10½ to 10¾¢ f. o. b. here.

Yours truly,

A. A. AYER.

I can show you in my warehouse cheese which has been left there on commission. The owners of it offered it to every dealer in town and nobody would buy it. The cheese is a disgrace to the trade. That the quality of Manitoba cheese is not up to the mark has been fully shown by the reports of the Judges at the last provincial exhibition, which report says: "The cheese judged, as a whole, was considerably under the average. There was some sour cheese present, and the fault with most of the cheese was that it was too stiff and hard from allowing too much acid to develop in the making. Yet this was supposed to be the best made in the province of Manitoba."

Now, what about the quality of our butter? Advice from British Columbia show that our creamery butter gives fairly good satisfaction when shipped fresh; but as a rule it has no staving qualities, and we are in a position to show you that the bulk of our creamery butter, particularly that which is made in hot weather, will only grade number two in the Montreal market, and that we are in no position to take the best advantage of that market, when conditions are favorable. In July last creamery butter was worth 22¢ f. o. b. Montreal; it was worth 15¢ here for British Columbia market. We bought a car from one of the best built, equipped and managed creameries of this province on the Manitoba and Northwestern railways. In that creamery we find a first-class cold storage. The butter landed in Montreal cost about 19¢, and none of it was over a month old. Had the butter proved to be of a suitable quality it would have been shipped to England at a good profit, but unfortunately such was not the case. It was reported as No. 2 creamery, and here follows the last advice we had about it:

Montreal, Aug. 28, 1900.

S. M. Barre,

Dear Sir,—The creamery is quieter and a little lower. We have not been able to take a profit out of the car of creamery butter you sold us yet. We may be able to sell it back to you to go to Victoria and Vancouver, B. C.

Yours truly,

A. A. AYER & CO.

Montreal, Oct. 30, 1900.

S. M. Barre, Esq.,

Winnipeg, Man.

Dear Sir,—Replying to yours of the 20th, the greatest difficulty with the