The Commercial

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## FINANCING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

The ability to finance successfully is a qualification aimed at by every ambitious business man and one which is not always attained even by men who are thoroughly competent in their knowledge of business affairs. *The ability to finance in a time* of general prosperity, when banks are eager to press their funds upon any reputable business man, seems a very simple matter, as the generally accepted idea of financing is to provide funds sufficient to meet the ordinary demands without leaving a balance of any magnitude lying unutilized. *To preserve a reserve to meet* the exigencies of a period of contraction should undoubtedly be a duty incumbent in prosperous times, and it must be admitted that too few of the rank and file of business men observe this rule as closely as they should. It should be remembered that the first aim of banks is to make money and in so doing they act in a purely selfish spirit at all times, and after all are not greatly to blame for so doing. In a time of general prosperity, when their funds are within the reach of almost any man in business, their action may seem on the surface almost philanthropic, but their aim is to make money all the same, and when a time of contraction sets in they are ever the leaders of financial parsimony. Their policy is then to save if they cannot make money, and in this policy of economy they usually show themselves, like all other corporations, without souls. In fact no corpora*tion can be so crushing in its exactions* as one whose business is to deal in money only.

In Manitoba business men have had their time of financing *ad libitum*, when in boom days their own names and those of their junior clerks on notes were sufficient to secure hundreds if not thous*ands of dolars at most banks in the pro*vince, and now they are experiencing the trials of financing under difficulties. Banks still profess to be able to supply funds for all the legitimate demands of trade, and if we allow them to be judges of what are legitimate demands they are perfectly correct. But if we are to look to banks as institutions which should aid in lightening financial pressure in a time of depression those of Manitoba have signally failed in their mission. They have reduced their financial risk to a point as low as can be reached with any hope of still holding a footing here and being ready for making profit when a more prosperous state of affairs returns. Like all other institutions of human organization they have reached an extreme of caution, and that extreme often proclaims men unworthy of credit and unable to finance who would be considered perfectly safe in any portion of Eastern Canada. An instance has recently come under our notice where a man with some $5,000 liabilities and some $15,000 assets, the bulk of which are realizable in short time, has been compelled to resort to an assignment owing to inability to finance *at any of our banks.* Such a man could, in any eastern city, procure all the funds he required at any bank and avoid reaching the insolvent list through a policy of financial niggardliness such as he has met with here. Truly he has been trying to finance under difficulties.

During the time of real estate inflation in this province banks here were the worst institutions in the country to encourage the dangerous upward movement as is now borne out by the immense sums some of them have lost in speculative loans and the equally large sums locked up in unrealizable investments by others. From inflatory they have now rushed to contractive extremes and are now unwilling to make any calculation upon a man's real estate, except to rank it as one of his credit disqualifications. There are in the city of Winnipeg at present not less than one hundred property owners scarcely one of whom has now the power of financing for $1,000 at any bank in the city, but who if similarly fixed in any eastern city, would have no difficulty in procuring ten times that amount It can be safely said that such men when they do get a chance of financing are compelled to do so under difficulties.

Only those who have lived in the Northwest *during the past two years* can comprehend the financial straits men who are reputable, honest and solvent have been forced to to avoid sacrificing the fruits of years of industry and providence. That some of them feel more keenly than others the struggle they have gone through may be attributed to the fact that they have seen the time when the same banks which now keep a galling pressure upon them, were not only liberal but more or less obtrusive in their financial assistance.

There is the old saying that favors are usually pressed upon those who do not require them, and withheld from those who do, and it finds corroboration in the action pursued by banks in Manitoba during the past three years.

## AMBITIOUS FARMERS.

People have long been accustomed to *divide the pursuits of civilized men* not professional into three distinct spheres, namely, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and it has been a recognized belief that to insure success in any of these fields a special training or at least some experience was necessary. Further it has been generally conceded that few men can prove successful in all these at the same time. But if we are to judge by the recent action of the Manitoba Farmers' Union, all these accepted ideas are sheer nonsense and every branch of society's industrial and other affairs has been mismanaged in the most blundering and dishonest fashion, with the exception of the labors of the agriculturist in which only the pure milk of honesty, frugality and business competency has shone forth.

About a year ago a convention of farmers and agitators assembled in Winnipeg for the purpose of airing their grievances, real and imaginary, and as is not unusual with a body of people who think themselves injured, it was not long before the gathering developed into a scolding society, the aim of which was to abuse every person outside of its own class as a leech which lived by sucking the life blood out of the farmer. Philosophic outsiders excused a large share of this petulant *abuse and trusted that another* season of busy work on their farms would cure the real farmer portion of the growlers of their discontent. This sensible conclusion might and probably would have been reached but for the fact that a few schemers like to depend upon this discontent for their living or at least for the notoriety which they seemingly *liked. The* results are that as soon as a time of leisure has been reach discontent and growling is again at work.

Last year the so-called gathering of farmers were content to abuse the Dominion Government and those two favorite targets of their spleen, the miller and the grain buyer. This year they have taken a wider range and have concluded that a