

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, MAY 7, 1888.

## PORK PACKING.

The thirty-ninth annual report of the Cincinnati *Price Current* of pork packing in the West, has been received. Statistics for other parts of the United States and for Canada are also given, and compared with the returns for previous years. The growth of the pork packing industry in the Western States has been one of the marvels of the century. The rapidly increasing population and large consumption of hog products at home, has given great stimulus to the industry, whilst the facilities which the country afforded for raising hogs cheaply, has rendered an export business in the cured product both possible and profitable. The great corn growing regions of the West afford so to speak a perfect paradise for the hog, and the capabilities of the region in this respect have been largely utilized. In recent years exports of hog products from the United States have greatly fallen off, owing to prohibitory measures adopted by the importing countries, against the American product. For instance, in 1881 France imported 70,002,856 pounds of American hog meats, and but 186,716 pounds in 1887. In the same time German imports fell from 43,000,000 pounds to 3,000,000. Great Britain continues to be the largest importer of these meats, amounting to 577,799,000 pounds in 1881, and 380,345,000 pounds in 1887. British America imported 53,828,000 pounds of hog meats from the United States for the year ending June 30, 1887, an increase of over 16,000,000 over the previous year. British America is next to Great Britain the largest importer from the United States in these meats. Belgium stands third, importing 19,627,000 pounds in 1887. Lard is included in the above figures.

In 1860 the total of meats and lard exported from the United States was 107,000,000 pounds, and in 1863 reached 439,000,000 pounds. Then followed a decline to 98,000,000 in 1886; for five years, 1867 to 1871 inclusive, the annual average was 128,000,000 pounds; in 1872 the exports were largely increased, and exceeded any previous year—the annual average for five years, 1872 to 1876 inclusive, being 568,000,000 pounds. The

next five years marks the largest exports recorded, reaching 1,233,000,000 pounds in 1881, the preceding year being about an equal quantity, and for the five years ending with 1881 the annual average was 1,076,000,000 pounds. This was also the period of lowest average prices. Since 1881 values have averaged decidedly higher, especially the first part of the period, and the exports have been much reduced, declining to 627,000,000 pounds in 1883, and 754,000,000 pounds as the annual average for six years, from 1881 to 1887 inclusive.

The Western reported packing in recent years has been 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 hogs annually. Eastern packing, for which returns have been obtained, has been 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 hogs. The annual number killed by regular packing concerns is approximately 15,000,000 hogs, for the entire country. It is estimated that including the number of hogs killed by farmers and butchers, the total would amount to about 30,000,000 hogs annually, about 40 per cent. of which gets into commercial channels. It will thus be seen that, after making allowance for exports, the people of the United States consume annually about 25,000,000 hogs. Reduced to pounds the consumption of hog products, including lard, is placed at about 60 pounds per capita of the population, 50 pounds of which would be in meats, and the balance in lard. One is almost tempted to exclaim that this is rather hoggyish.

The drought of last summer throughout the corn states of the West, had the effect of driving the hogs to market, and animals which were not intended for the market before last winter, were at once disposed of. This caused a short supply last winter and produced a sharp advance in prices. In turn the advanced prices have operated unfavorably upon the distribution of the product, both for home consumption and export. The shortage in the pack will therefore be overcome by the decreased consumption at home and exportation. The winter pack in the West for the season 1887-88 is placed at 5,921,181 hogs, a decrease of 517,828 hogs as compared with the previous year. For the summer season of 1887 some 5,611,526 hogs were packed, a decrease of 32,477 as compared with the previous year. As to the prospective supply of hogs the *Price Current* does not look for any great diminution in the supply as compared with the previous year, for the

coming season. The total number of hogs packed in the districts outside of those included in the figures given of packing in the West, are as follows: Eastern States, for summer and winter 1887-88, 2,258,557 hogs; Pacific coast, for 1887, 225,000 hogs. These figures, as in the case of the West, include only hogs packed in factories, and not those killed by butchers and farmers.

The *Price Current* also gives figures of pork packing in Canada, as follows: Total packing for 1887-88, 216,214 hogs, against 256,485 hogs for the year 1886-87. The last year named is the largest on record for packing in Canada. The falling off for 1887-88 is attributed to the high price of hogs in the United States, whence a portion of the supplies for packing are drawn. Last winter only 4,900 hogs were imported into Canada from the United States, against 24,000 for the same time a year ago. For Manitoba, Winnipeg is credited with having packed 4,125 hogs, against 6,700 for the previous year. Montreal packed 28,000, against 20,000 for the previous year. The balance were packed in Ontario, Toronto packing 36,264, Hamilton 20,000, Ingersoll 9,300, Aylmer 7,000, and other points from 400 to 5,000.

## SETTING A PRECEDENT.

An important bill has been introduced into the Manitoba Legislature, which if passed will establish a precedent in dealing with municipal corporations which have got into financial difficulties. That the bill will be passed it is almost certain. At the time of writing it has received its second reading, and in the ordinary course of events will doubtless become law, especially as the Attorney-General has taken the measure in charge. This measure has grown out of the unfortunate situation in which several Manitoba municipal corporations have been placed financially. The causes which led to the municipal difficulties are well known. Excessive obligations were contracted during the period of inflation, about the years 1880-82. The country was developing and expanding at an abnormal rate, and the future looked so hopeful that little thought was taken of keeping down expenditure. The greatest difficulty with corporations as well as with individuals (as many merchants have experienced to their sorrow), is to economise during periods of prosperity. There is great danger of running excessively into debt