

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 Northwest Territories and British Columbia and the Territories.

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale commission, retail and general stores of Eastern Canada.

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D. W. BUCHANAN,
Publisher.

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NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS.

Thursday next being Thanksgiving day, and a public holiday, printing operations on The Commercial will commence on Wednesday. Advertisements are requested to change their announcements are requested to send in copy as late as Wednesday noon.

Transient trading case An interesting case was argued at the city police court last week under the transient traders by-law recently passed by the city council. The Commercial of last week briefly noted as a result of the matter, but did not state the circumstances. An Ontario judge in the case, under the by-law for having peddled a lot of apples among the retail trade of the city. The prosecutor, was the assistant city license inspector. The prosecution case rested upon whether the defendant was a transient trader within the meaning of the law. The defence contended that as farmers are expressly excluded from the operation of the act, and are under the city charter free to sell their produce in the street or to whomsoever they sell, and as the defendant is a farmer, he should therefore be exempt from the license tax. The case was finally dismissed on this ground. The reason for it is plain. One of the most important points which this by-law was intended to cover has been passed through a slip in the wording of the law. It has been a subject of complaint here for years that every all a number of irresponsible individuals whose interest in this country extends no further than the city conference of their person, are permitted to come in from the east and without contributing a cent towards the revenues of the city, walk off with a goodly share of the same amount of its sales in fruit and other lines. The by-law was passed as a remedy for the wholesale fruit trade here, and its members are well able to take care of their own interests in matters of this kind, but the principle is now fully acknowledged in our local municipal law, and it should be made therefore operative that transient traders within the accepted meaning of the term must be made to pay a fair sum for the privilege of doing business in the city. In the case of this kind, whatever interest he may have in a particular property, does not alter the fact that he is also an applicant

dealer, and is generally recognized as such, and for the purposes of the Winnipeg by-law he is therefore a transient trader, and should be treated as such.

SPECULATION IN LANDS.

Now it is French capital that is to come to Canada for investment. A French gentleman has stated at Montreal that he is here in the interest of French capitalists who will invest several million dollars in Canada. Unfortunately, according to the statement of this gentleman, this capital is not to be invested in legitimate industry, mining or commercial interests, or in anything which will tend to build up or develop the natural resources of the country. It is to be invested in western lands. The gentleman innocently relates how French capitalists had heard about "the possibilities" for investment in Canadian lands. How various companies were buying up these lands and reselling them to settlers at good profits. The French capitalists have decided to take a hand in this speculative business. They will first form a company, with a capital of \$2,000,000, for the purchase of lands in Northern Alberta.

It is very unfortunate that the vast source of national wealth contained in the public domain has been administered in such a way as to make vast speculative operations of this nature possible. The greatest property that a nation could possess the people of Canada owned in the vast area of fertile lands in the west. This vast national asset has been administered that its value has been to a great extent lost to the nation. By maladministration, vast areas of the best portions of this public domain have been allowed to pass into the hands of speculators who intend to tax the people who undertake to develop these lands and make them productive and of real value. If we had had a good system of administration of the crown lands, this great speculative evil would never have been possible.

The only argument which can be advanced in favor of these land companies is, that they will work to bring in settlers. This is at best a very poor argument. We ought to be able to obtain the settlers without the aid of these corporations. These numerous land corporations which have come into existence within the last year or two, have not been formed for the purpose of bringing in settlers. They have been formed for the purpose of speculation and making money out of the land. The settler is a secondary consideration. It is only through the settler that the lands can be given any real value. The speculators saw the settler's coming, and they rushed in ahead and grabbed up the lands, with the object of making the settler pay a higher price for the land, or in other words, taxing him for the privilege of developing the land and adding to the value of the remaining lands he has to buy. These corporations have been grabbing the lands by the thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres, where the actual settlers have been securing.

TRANSIENT TRADING CASE.

Nor is it true that the corporations are selling the lands entirely to settlers. Some corporations which secured control of vast areas of land, less than a year ago, and made money on large blocks to other speculative operators. With each sale the value, or rather the price of the land, is advanced, for reselling does not add anything to the value unless the settler comes to develop the property and

give it real value. The evil effects of the present speculative movement in our western lands are already becoming apparent. The cost of the land to the actual settler has been doubled, and in some sections trebled, as a result of this speculative movement. The land corporations, of course, reap the profit. In some of the older sections farms which were occupied one or two years ago, are now vacant. While the new land corporations of large capital have been buying up large blocks of land in the comparatively unsettled districts, there has been considerable speculation on a smaller scale in the purchase of individual holdings in the older settled districts. In some cases farmers have been induced to sell out, thinking they were making a good profit on the land, and some of these places are now vacant as a result of their having passed into the hands of speculators. It is not necessary to go many miles from Winnipeg to find vacant farms, which have been made vacant by the present speculative movement. Within a few days a land concern in Winnipeg has had a man out making a systematic canvass from one farm to another in find farmers who were willing to dispose of their land. This is one phase of the land movement which is proving injurious to the country.

It is ridiculous to say that with our vast and rich resources in land, we could not get settlers without the land corporations. By allowing the lands to pass into the hands of corporations, we have simply enabled these landed proprietors to place additional burdens on the new settler. The more the actual settler has to pay for the land, the less he will have wherewith to buy implements and provisions, and other things necessary to enable him to go on and develop his property.

With the experience we have now had, it is to be hoped that not another acre of the public domain will be disposed in this way. With a wise administration of the public lands from the start, who will say that we might not have built our roads and railways and carried out other improvements on the strength of the enormous asset represented by the crown lands?

PROBLEM OF WHEAT RATES.

The Portage la Prairie board of trade does not agree with the Winnipeg board that "the charging by the Canadian Pacific Railway of a higher rate than that of the Canadian Northern Railway is a gross injustice to the people along the lines of the former company." This, of course, refers to the wheat rate, which is 2 cents per 100 lbs. lower on the Canadian Northern Railway than on Canadian Pacific Railway points. At the meeting of the Portage board, the press correspondent states, it was maintained "that it was not logical to way—to reduce the rate on wheat to the same rates as that given by the Canadian Northern Railway. The latter corporation had made a bargain with the government, and had received a huge consideration for any reductions they might give, and in keeping to their old rates the Canadian Pacific Railway was doing as well as any business concern might do—particularly when they can get more wheat to haul than they can carry, notwithstanding the Canadian Northern rate." Briefly, the Portage board points out that the Canadian Northern Railway Company would pay a high price for the people of Manitoba, to make this cut in grain rates to Lake

Superior points, and that the Canadian Pacific Railway is not bound in any way to meet the cut. The position of the Portage board is certainly logical. It is greatly to be desired that the Canadian Pacific Railway management will decide at an early date to reduce the grain rates to a rate equal to that charged by the Canadian Northern Railway. The double rate is a matter of considerable annoyance to grain men, in handling their business. It is also working an injury to certain towns along the Canadian Pacific Railway lines, which are situated close to competing points on the Canadian Northern Railway. The lower freight rate from points on the latter road enables the grain buyers at such points to pay more for wheat than can be paid by buyers at Canadian Pacific Railway points. This trade naturally tributary to those Canadian Pacific Railway points is drawn to Canadian Northern Railway points, much to the disgust of merchants at the former places.

It is quite proper for the Winnipeg board of trade or any other organization or private individuals to use their best efforts to try and induce the Canadian Pacific Railway to meet the Canadian Northern Railway rate. At the same time, if the Canadian Pacific Railway management fail to be induced, we have no reason to say nasty things about the company. The people of Manitoba bought this rate from the Canadian Northern Railway, and they have no objection to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the same rate. We paid our money and took our choice. If the result has not proved as satisfactory to the people as we expected, we have only to remember that it is our own bargain, which has led to the present situation. The Winnipeg board does not, it may be stated, claim that the Canadian Pacific Railway should reduce the rate on wheat simply on the ground that the other Lake Superior line is giving a lower rate. The board has always maintained that the rates are too high, and to this extent it can consistently advocate lower rates, regardless of the Canadian Northern Railway contract. The board also protested against the ratifying of that contract. During the discussion of this matter at the board meeting, Mr. Georson made one good point which it might be well for the Canadian Pacific Railway management to consider carefully. He pointed out that while the Canadian Pacific Railway has all the business in western Canada, it can handle, the present policy may assist in permanently building up Canadian Northern Railway points, to the detriment of Canadian Pacific Railway interests in the future.

If it were not such a serious matter, the present situation regarding grain freight rates in Manitoba might be characterized as amusing. It is quite true the Canadian Pacific Railway people have what might be vulgarly called the laugh on us, and if they persist in running it in, we will only be the laughing stock of ordinary human nature for them to do so.

The Pacific Packing & Navigation Company has exported from Seattle 225,000 cases of Alaska salmon to the United Kingdom this season. The Kambray recently sailed for London with 100,000 cases of salmon. The London and Liverpool with 30,000 cases; the Klinton for Liverpool with 65,000 cases; and the Pine Bury will leave Seattle in a few days with 50,000 cases for Liverpool. The London 225,000 cases of salmon were shipped to South Africa, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand 65,000 cases by way of Vancouver.