

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 Can-
ada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also
reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manu-
facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, SEPTEMBER 24, 1898.

CROPS AND PROGRESS.

Sufficient progress has now been made with the threshing of the crops to indicate what the result will be. It now appears that previous estimates have been under the mark. While the growth of straw was rather light this year, the weather was most favorable for filling out the heads to the best advantage. In proportion to the growth of straw the heads are long, heavy and filled to the tops. Threshing returns show that some apparently poor looking crops are yielding surprisingly well. Taken all around, the crops this year will prove good, and certainly vastly better than last year.

Since threshing returns began to come in, it is evident that the provincial government's August estimate of the wheat crop is a very moderate one. The official estimate was 17.41 bushels per acre, on an average of 1,488,232 acres, making a total crop of 25,913,155 bushels. Last year's final official estimate was 14.14 bushels per acre, on an area of 1,290,882 acres making a total crop of 18,261,950 bush. These figures are for the province of Manitoba alone, and do not include the grain districts in the Territories. To begin with, we have an increase in the wheat area this year of about 200,000 acres, besides a considerable increase in the area of other important crops, making by far the largest crop area ever grown in Man-

itoba. The official preliminary estimate of the yield this year is 3.27 bushels per acre greater than the final estimate of last year. It is now admitted that the preliminary estimate this year is too low. Manager Thompson, of the Ogilvie Milling Co., says this estimate will be exceeded by over 7,000,000 bushels, or in other words, that the wheat crop will exceed that of last year by about eight bushels per acre. While some districts suffered from drouth, and are only producing a moderate crop, there are other large areas in which the crop is extra good. Altogether, the quantity of wheat available for shipment from Manitoba and the Territories will be the largest on record, and exceeding that of last year by twelve or fifteen million bushels. The quality of the crop is also very good, so far as inspection returns of new wheat show. A comparison of quality with last year is not a fair test, as the last wheat crop was exceptionally fine and uniform in quality. While this crop cannot be expected to reach last season's average, it is showing good quality, grading mostly No. 1 and No. 2 hard and No. 1 northern, all high grades. The wheat crop of the territories is estimated at 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 bushels.

While the wheat crop is turning out much better than for the past two years, there is even a greater difference in the yield of other grains, compared with the two previous years. The crops of oats and barley will be almost double that of either of the two preceding years. Many of our farmers have had to buy feed during the past year, but for the next year there will be abundance of everything. What this means in a country so largely dependent on agriculture can only be surmised by those familiar with the situation. It certainly indicates that a prosperous future is before us. During the past two years of comparatively light crops, the country has made very satisfactory progress.

The country is now in very different shape from what it was a few years ago. Farmers are not now dependent on crops alone. During recent years we have developed an important dairying industry, and have also established an important export live stock industry. These are features which have added greatly to the wealth of the country. The beautiful crop of 1898 will give us a big boost on the road to further growth and development.

That the country has made even rapid progress during the past two years of comparatively light crops, can be shown in several ways. The large increase in the area of land under cultivation is one unmistakable proof of progress. Railway construc-

tion at present going on in the extension of six different railway lines in Manitoba alone, is another important evidence of progress. Besides these grain district railways, we have the railways building in the mining sections, bordering the prairie regions both east and west. The development of these mining districts promises great things for Western Canada. Another evidence of progress, showing growth in our agricultural population, is the increase in sales of farm lands. Sales of farm lands, as shown by the returns of the land companies, have shown a remarkable increase during the past three years. In 1897 the increase in sales by the Canadian Pacific railway land department was over 100 per cent, the number of acres sold being 199,481, compared with 87,878 in 1896. To date this year the gain is much greater than in 1897, the sales to the end of last month being three times what they were for the same period of last year.

Business at Vancouver.

Sept. 19, 1898.

New Westminster's misfortune has stimulated Vancouver trade, as all supplies for the new stores for immediate use have been purchased from the jobbing houses here while the price of labor has gone up with a bound, carpenters refusing to work under \$4 a day, and they are very scarce at that. The huge loss at Westminster has rudely reminded those underinsured in British Columbia to bestir themselves and fire insurance companies are kept busy at their offices without going to the trouble of hustling for business, and the new premiums will help the insurance companies very materially in paying their heavy losses.

Shipping has been very active this week. Numerous Klondike boats are returning loaded with passengers and a good quantity of treasure, while the out-going and Oriental and Australian boats have had full cabin stowage lists and compliments of freight.

British Columbia Fires.

(B. C. Correspondence.)

The all absorbing topic of conversation in trade circles is still the New Westminster fire, now that the shock is over, and people have time to think rationally, it is acknowledged on all sides, that but for the heavy losses of small dealers, the fire was not altogether disastrous. The large establishments were well insured and the agent of the Sun Life, a company holding about a quarter of a million on mortgages on business property, says that while deploring the catastrophe and attendant suffering, he could not regret the fire as it directly bore upon the company's business, as the Sun Life was amply insured, and the mortgages were not profitable as the city did not go ahead as quickly as anticipated. As a matter of fact, Westminster, the most beautifully located and the handsomest centre on the coast, had built ahead of herself, and although it is sad to think of the destruction of six blocks of stone and brick buildings in the business heart of the city, it was an open secret,