

THE COMMERCIAL

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, especially devoted to the interests of 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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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. By a thorough system of personal solicitation, carried out annually, this journal has been placed upon the desks of the majority of business men in the district designated above, including Northwest Ontario, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the Territories of Assiniboia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, AUGUST 16, 1897.

A PECULIAR DECISION.

A good deal of trouble has been created in the United States by the action of the authorities in declaring that the new tariff law had come in force before it was actually signed by the president. The law was signed on Saturday afternoon, after banking hours, and when business for the week had been practically suspended, yet the law was declared to have gone into force at midnight on the Friday preceding. There is no retro-active clause in the act on which to base a claim for putting the law into effect before it was required. It is claimed that the law does not take cognizance of a fraction of a day, and that a law which has been passed in the afternoon can therefore be declared to have gone into effect on the morning of that day. The importers who had to pay the new scale of duties on goods entered on Saturday morning, however, do not take that view of the case, and there is trouble accordingly. The question will be decided by the courts.

EXPORT LUMBER TRADE.

An ingenious plan has been proposed by a Mr. John Bertram to protect our export lumber trade and at the same time prevent the exportation of unmanufactured logs and timber. The new United States tariff imposes a duty of \$2 per thousand upon lumber, and it is further provided that if any

country places and export duty upon logs, the amount of such export duty, shall be added to the import duty on lumber. Thus if Canada placed the proposed export duty of \$2 upon logs, the United States would at once raise the import duty on lumber to \$4. This would practically wipe out any export trade which we can still do in lumber with that country. Mr. Bertram proposes that instead of imposing an export duty on logs and timber, we should simply prohibit the exportation of logs. This would get around the new United States tariff and at the same time stop the exportation of our raw material.

The new United States tariff regarding lumber is certainly a hog-gish piece of business. It is simply a contemptible thing. They want our forest products, but they want it in the unmanufactured state. They place a duty upon lumber to keep it out, while providing that the logs or raw material shall come in free. In this way they hoped that the saw mills along their lake frontier would be kept running at the expense of the Canadian forests. So far they may have been justified in going, but when they tried to coerce Canada from protecting her own interests, by providing that any export duty imposed by this country upon logs should be added to the import duty on lumber, they went just a little too far with their hoggishness. Our forest wealth should be protected at all hazards. The government of the United States will leave the consumers of that country to deal with, and the complete stoppage of our export trade to the United States in lumber would probably open the eyes of the consumers there to the unreasonableness of the situation.

Whether or not Mr. Bertram's plan will provide a means of getting around the threat contained in the new United States tariff, it should be tried. In fact it is a question if it would not be a wise policy to protect our forest wealth by imposing an export duty on logs, aside entirely from the situation regarding our export lumber trade to the United States. The timber is one of the great natural resources of the country. When exported in the form of logs, for sawing in foreign mills, the country is deprived of a source of wealth without receiving anything worth while in return. The timber resources of this continent are being exhausted so rapidly that the time is considered not very distant when the value of lumber will be greatly enhanced. It is therefore a question if we should not seek to conserve our great timber resources as much as possible, particularly in view of the unreasonable attitude of the United States in the matter of the lumber duties.

THE TRAMP NUISANCE.

The west is just now suffering from the annual incursion of the horde of lazy vagabonds called tramps. The winter climate of Manitoba and the Territories is not congenial to these vagrants, and they usually migrate in the fall, re-appearing in swarms the following summer. Those who remain seek the larger towns for the winter, where they become subjects of charity. In the summer they can wander about and gain a subsistence by thieving, or intimidating women whom they find alone at the farm houses. Their presence in the cities during the winter goes a long way to explain the great increase of persons asking for charity during the winter season, and just here we may say that a great deal of needless sympathy is wasted upon the lazy rascals.

The tramp nuisance has become a problem which should be promptly and effectively dealt with. The average tramp is simply a criminal, and a very dangerous criminal at that. Thieving and even burglary and highway robbery are not their worst crimes. Murder and outrage are included in the catalogue against them. They are the terror of the lonely women upon our farm-homes. In this country of large farms and sparse settlement, women have to be almost daily left alone while the men are at work some distance from the farm residence. It is the delight of the average tramp to find a woman alone in the house, and he uses the opportunity not to ask for, but to demand a supply of provisions for himself and his lazy comrades.

What The Commercial wishes most vigorously to protest against is the move-on system as applied to tramps, vagrants and unfortunate women. We have protested against this system before and we will do so again. The system is morally and socially wrong, and it is wrong from a common sense, practical business view. By arresting vagrants and ordering them to leave the cities, they are driven out to prey upon the helpless country people. The system is morally wrong because it imposes on others. The city which adopts this plan simply drives away its criminals to impose upon some other community. It is socially wrong for the same reason. There is nothing in the system to suppress the evil or reform the criminals. Society as a whole is not improved by dealing with criminals in this way. It is wrong from a practical, business point of view because good results are not obtained by the system. Winnipeg sends her criminals to Montreal and Vancouver sends her criminals to Winnipeg, and so neither city is benefitted. The object in dealing with these criminals should be to