

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, DECEMBER 3, 1898.

Business at Vancouver.

Vancouver, Nov. 28.

Wholesalers complain that trade has been very dull this week. Produce men claim that as far as their business is concerned the winter months are bound to be dull, as it is then that the market is overstocked with goods, while the demand is not relatively increased. There are now fifteen produce commission houses doing business in Vancouver, besides the wholesale grocery firms, and just at present there is not enough business to go around. It is expected, however, that the Christmas trade will improve matters very materially. In the dairy market good creamery is scarce and jobbers are asking 24c for small lots and prophecy still higher prices. Eggs are extremely scarce, fresh laid retailing at 65 cents. Cheese is advancing; fruits and vegetables are unchanged. A great deal of peddling is still going on in food stuffs, and it is still rather early to regulate prices. Wholesalers report the flour and feed business very dull.

Active building operations are still in progress. The weather is moist but mild, and it is likely that building will continue all winter. Money is very easy, Victoria capitalists advancing it readily at 6 per cent on risks that would have been refused by many at 8 per cent two years ago, so that faith in the future of Vancouver is being amply demonstrated.

Australian shippers are feeling the markets with the idea of possibly laying down large consignments of butter in British Columbia this winter. Last winter the Australian butter sold well here, but as the cost of shipping, freezing, etc., is about 9 cents a

pound it is a question whether it can be sold at profitable prices.

Although there were only five banking days last week the clearings at Vancouver were \$777,244, with balances of \$118,958. This beats the record for Vancouver since the clearing house was established here a few weeks ago.

The Trades and Labor council of Vancouver has passed a long resolution deprecating the action of the Canadian Pacific railway in having locomotives running on the Pacific division repaired at Winnipeg—namely engines 607 and 678, the former having a new fire box put in at Winnipeg, and the latter being sent to Winnipeg to be repaired after an accident.

British Columbia Salmon Pack.

The Commercial has obtained interviews with several cannery men regarding the cannery industry. They claim that with very few exceptions the canners on the Fraser river came out losers at the end of the season. Although the short pack and scant supplies on hand jumped the price in Europe of talls, from 15 shillings and 6 pence to 21 shillings, the pack was only one-third as large as last year, aggregating about 325,000 cases against over 1,000,000 cases last year. Besides this, although it is just as expensive to handle a small pack as a big one, the fishermen got from 10 to 25 cents this year per fish from the canners, and last year from 6 to 10 cents per fish only. The sockeyes, the most marketable salmon, also continued to run after the season closed.

Although there are 35 canneries on the Fraser, the pack was only double that handled by the few scattered canneries in the northern rivers, the Fraser river pack being approximately 200,000 cases and the northern pack 100,000. Added to this pack was the fall canning amounting to about 50,000 cases of cohoes or white salmon. These cohoes, however, are not marketable in England, as the pink color of the sockeyes are more inviting for table use. The cohoes, however, have a ready sale in Canada, where the people have been educated to the idea that although the coho salmon is cheaper than the sockeye it is equally desirable as an edible fish. Again the taste of the English epicure is evidenced from the fact that wholesalers in Europe will pay 24 shillings for a case of flats or salmon packed in shallow tins, when they will only give 21 shillings for talls or parrower, deep tins for the reason that the fish looks better, when it is taken out of the shallow can. The flats are harder to pack, and so the canners must charge more. A few canneries on Puget Sound pack more than the big string of canneries in British Columbia, for the following reasons: Traps are used and big funnel-shaped nets stretched completely across points in the track of the salmon, thus preventing them from continuing their trip to the spawning grounds on the Fraser, and trapping them at the same time. Then to protect the Canadian fishermen the Dominion government charge half a cent a pound duty on fresh salmon to prevent these trapped salmon being purchased by the Fraser river canners—salmon that are really the legitimate supply of the Canadian canners. The United States fishermen further get the benefit of the Fraser river hatcheries. Without spending a cent to breed salmon for the Fraser they get a share of the

results of Canada's enterprise by capturing the two-year-olds before they can reach their spawning ground.

Puget Sound canners at present are able to sell their fall pack in Montreal after paying the duty, at 5 cents a case cheaper than the Fraser river pack.

The present government recently suggested further restrictions on canners in favor of fishermen and to preserve the food supply of the Fraser as long as possible. These restrictions called forth such vigorous protests however that it is likely they will never become law. At present the canners are at loggerheads with the fishermen. The former claim that twenty licenses should be granted each cannery by the government, and the fishermen claim that ten licenses are quite sufficient for each cannery. The government at Ottawa, no matter what political power is at the helm, has apparently never been able to fairly deal with the salmon canning question in British Columbia because they cannot understand the question at such a distance from the scene of operations and canners here strongly advocate appointing government commissioners here who can intelligently recommend the government from year to year what regulations it is most desirable to enforce for the benefit of all concerned and to check the aggressiveness of the unrestricted United States canners.

Smuggling.

Some of the Manitoba papers have been discussing the question of smuggling along the boundary in Southern Manitoba. A representative of The Commercial recently interviewed a number of Southern Manitoba merchants, but they did not have much complaint to make. In fact they were generally averse to giving the matter publicity, as they thought that very little injury was being done and probably the Canadians were greater gainers than losers thereby. At some points along the boundary, markets can be reached more closely on the Canadian side, and Dakota people come to the Canadian towns and sell grain and buy goods. In other cases it is more convenient for a few Canadian settlers to go to towns in Dakota. Differences in prices are also an inducement, but taken all around, the towns on this side of the boundary gain more trade than they lose by any little smuggling going on.

Buy at Home.

Country merchants can afford to sell and do sell most lines of staple goods just as cheap as the big eastern department stores. On some fancy lines on which the profits are large, the department stores no doubt sell cheaper. Taken all around, The Commercial has always contended that consumers can buy to better advantage from the local merchant. Counting cost of express or mail charges, time in writing away for goods, and the dissatisfaction which often results from buying an article before inspecting it, the odds are altogether in favor of the local dealer.

A Prince Albert merchant is proving the assertion that there is no great saving in price in sending away from home for goods, in a very effective manner. He publishes in his advertisement prices from the catalogue of one of the big department stores, compared with his own prices for the same goods, showing in many cases that the local prices are lower than the department store catalogue.