

THE TORONTO WORLD

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PROTECTION AND THE NORTHWEST.

The Montreal Witness has a letter from Mr. J. Scott, Presbyterian missionary, West Lorne, Manitoba, in which we find the following: Do our rulers at Ottawa encourage agriculture? A settler paying \$25 in Pembina in Dakota, costs \$30 at West Lorne in Manitoba only three miles distant.

Apparently the reverend gentleman would like to see a state of things which would be anything but for the good of the country. This is what he would have us do. He would first have Ontario people tax themselves heavily to raise the millions necessary to develop the great country that is to be, in the Northwest.

The British associated chamber of commerce is communicating with the government and soliciting the influence of members of parliament in support of the appointment of a standing committee of the house of commons with a view to secure more adequate attention to questions of commercial interest.

It is a common remark now, enforced by the experience of many on Ontario's frontier who has looked up in the Northwest that capital he had, much or little, that really there has been an enormous amount of Ontario money sunk up there already.

But what a benefit to the settlers it would be, surely, if they could only get ploughs and other requisites at Pembina prices. Mr. Scott knows little of the tricks of trade, and of American traders, above all, he does not know that American manufacturers of agricultural implements, and of many other things besides, have now a long-established and well-organized system of warfare against foreign competitors.

Were there no Canadian manufacturers to supply the market the American \$85 sweater would quickly jump to \$100, and the 90c pitchfork to \$1.25. American manufacturers do not really produce these articles at any less cost than we do; but they have regularly two prices, one for the home trade and the other for export; the design of the low export price being to kill off competition in foreign markets.

One thing remains to be added. Present prices of implements and other heavy articles may be high in the Northwest, in great part on account of high freight charges. But a great change in this respect is drawing near. Next summer the Thunder Bay branch will be open through to Winnipeg, and over the magnificent water stretches of Lake Huron and Lake Superior heavy freight will be carried cheaply by first-class lake steamers. That alone will make a wonderful difference, far more than people generally seem to imagine. Next autumn, who knows? The Grand Trunk may gain an entrance into the promised land, and make a greater difference still. Let somebody else prophesy what is to happen after that.

There is something queer about the trouble in St Paul and Manitoba stock at a time when the road has actually more than it can do, and when its weekly earnings show a great increase over corresponding dates last year. It might not be making bold a guess to say that there must be "a nigger in the fence" somewhere. Certainly the trouble is not sufficiently accounted for by anything known to the public; except on the supposition that the former quotation of 160 was up in the clouds all the time, and without bottom to rest upon.

Everywhere we copy what the Montreal Gazette says about the only failure encountered by that eminently "successful" man, the late Sir Hugh Allan. The Pacific rail scheme of 1872-3 fell through, our contemporary says, not from political causes only, but from the hostility of strong and influential financial interests in England.

Sir Hugh intended to call in American aid, but the Canadian government was pledged to accept British co-operation only, and when aid from the latter quarter was sought it could not be obtained. It strikes us that, to a certain extent, a parallel with the present syndicate enterprise would hold good. For the syndicate scheme has had some American assistance, more or less, while we have yet to learn of any financial help obtained in London. In time to come, perhaps, the syndicate may be able to raise millions in London, but present conditions will have to be altered somewhat ere that takes place.

The New York Graphic said recently that the demand for stocks and the mania for speculation, which always spring up in the time of prosperity, have been too liberally supplied. Too many stocks have been manufactured, too many railroads have been built, and the inevitable collapse has brought about a series of losses and discouragements, from which a rapid recovery cannot be expected. To which it may be added that combination and consolidation of the natural result of too much competition must quickly follow. And it seems to be coming on now pretty fast, in many quarters and in various ways.

An American paper says that the beneficent workings of a high-license law for saloons is shown by the experience of Nebraska. In Omaha the number of saloons has been reduced from 120 to ninety-three, and in the state generally the reduction has been about 66 per cent. Drunkenness has been diminished, selling to minors is infrequent, and the civil-damage law has rendered lawbreakers careful not to sell liquor to habitual drunkards. Citizens who are opposed to prohibitory legislation agree that high license has already proved its usefulness in suppressing the low-class saloons, not to speak of the increase of funds thus brought into the municipal treasury. Reputable liquor dealers in Chicago speak favorably of the proposition for the same reason.

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