

The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JULY 27, 1886.

COMMERCE WITH THE ANTIPODES.

The trade letter to the merchants and manufacturers of Canada just issued by our townsman Mr. Alex. Woods, who will leave soon for Australia to fill the position of Agent General of Canada in that Antipodean land, has reached us, and contains many points well worthy of the serious consideration of those to whom it is addressed.

After pointing out briefly but lucidly the methods to be adopted to stimulate trade between Canada and Australia and New Zealand, Mr. Woods starts out with a statement of the figures and exports from Canada, the United States and Great Britain to Australia during the year 1885, which are as follows: Value of Canadian exports \$433,717, of United States exports \$10,534,138, and of British exports \$134,195,000, and after reviewing these figures, the Canadian commercial economist is forced to the conclusion, that some well directed effort is necessary, if Canada is to attain the position in connection with this trade which she should fill.

The fact that Great Britain sent last year \$134,195,000 worth of goods to Australia, while Canada sent only \$433,717 worth furnishes a comparison not at all flattering to the enterprise of the business men of the Dominion, notwithstanding the consideration, that Great Britain is one huge hive of low paid industry, which must depend to a very large extent upon the returns from its exports to enable its toiling millions to import a large share of their bread from foreign lands. But the contrast becomes aggravated or intensified at least, when we find out that the British exports to Australia comprise many commodities included in our exports to Great Britain, and some of which the British market depends upon Canada for a regular annual supply. We have no means of ascertaining the proportion of our annual exports of \$89,238,361, which is again exported from Great Britain to their Antipodean customers, and if we had figures on this point, we believe they would not say much for our trade enterprise.

A large proportion of Mr. Woods' suggestions are specially intended for the

manufacturers of Eastern Canada, and if under our national protective policy these manufacturers have made the progress they are credited with having made, they should be in a position to turn Mr. Woods' suggestions to practical and profitable account. But there are facts and figures contained in this trade letter in connection with our agricultural and dairy products, which are of interest to us in the Northwest. Oats for instance are quoted in Australian ports at from 62 to 75c a bushel, and a freight charge of not more than 30c a bushel will take them from Manitoba there, thus allowing a margin over the 25c a bushel at which it is now generally conceded it will pay our farmers to raise them.

Butter, Mr. Woods states is quoted in Australia at from 25 to 50c a pound and the packing and freight from this province there should not exceed six cents a pound at the outside. Here again is a wide margin for our dairyman over and above the price at which butter production will pay liberally in this province. In fact Mr. Woods shows that the bulk of the Australian supply of butter is drawn from Great Britain and Ireland, a statement which should astound Canadian dairyman when they consider how much Great Britain is dependent upon the Dominion for its own supply of butter.

There are other items of information in this trade letter which are of great interest to the people of this Northwest, but it is unnecessary to follow them out in detail. Collectively they point in one direction, and that is that in this Antipodean market exists a demand at good figures for the very class of products from which our farmers must draw a goodly share of their profits. We have no trouble in finding a market for the high grades of hard wheat raised in this country. That commodity is wanted everywhere, and our production and exports of it can increase twenty-fold without fear of any glut taking place. We have but few places in the world to compete with in the production of this cereal, and still fewer if any which possess equal advantage with us in the competition. But we have to compete, and to some extent under disadvantages with the eastern provinces and eastern States in the production of oats, and we are badly handicapped when we enter upon exporting to Europe butter and other dairy products. The eastern man has the decided advantage

over us in freights, and the expense of an extra handling. When we reduce these to the lowest possible minimum, we have still from three to four cents a pound of a disadvantage to contend against, which can only be overcome by advantages for cheaper production, which we in some measure possess, but which are greatly neutralized by the fact that closer proximity to the export market gives the eastern man the advantage of being able to avail himself of all its favorable turns while the Northwestern exporter has to take much greater chances of meeting with glut or scarcity.

How valuable the Australian market will be to the agriculturist of Manitoba, depends to some extent upon the policy pursued by the managers of the C.P.R. Should they display as much eagerness to attract traffic to the Pacific as they display to get it to the Atlantic, and offer equal advantages to either coast, then there will be every incentive to Manitobans to try and get a footing in the Australian market. On other hand, should a policy of concentrating every power in Montreal, and discriminating against the cities and towns of Manitoba be pursued, the work of opening up direct trade relations between this province and the antipodes will be an uphill undertaking.

MANITOBA'S VACANT LANDS.

At the half yearly meeting of the Winnipeg Board of Trade held on Tuesday last, the question of the colonization of the vacant lands around Winnipeg was taken up and discussed at great length and although a definite course of action was not agreed upon, a preliminary step was taken which may yet be the key to unlock the difficult problem of how these vacant but valuable lands can be settled up.

At first sight the question does seem a strange one for a Board of Trade to interfere. Such organization are usually made up of men who have but little interest in land questions, and although some members of the Winnipeg Board are against their own will, and in a few cases without their own consent owners of vacant lands, seven eighths of the men connected with it are not land owners at all, and have no personal interest to serve by assisting in the organization of any colonization scheme. Boards of trade are supposed to work and act only when the in-