

—Hudson Bay continues to attract attention elsewhere, even if Ontario people seem scarcely alive to the possibilities of this great salt water sea which is within 300 miles, as the crow flies, of Lake Superior, closer indeed to Toronto than Montreal now is. A writer in the "New York Herald" of Saturday last, describing his recent travels over the Temiskaming Railway and the Algoma Central, speaks of the many charters granted to different companies to build railways connecting the lake cities with Hudson Bay, the supposed intentions of Wm. Mackenzie and James J. Hill, and adds that "throughout the British North-West it is regarded as one of the mighty probabilities of the future." The article, which is written from Winnipeg, after showing the difficulties of sending Canadian prairie grain at some future day by rail to Fort Churchill, and thence through Hudson Straits (navigable only 3 1-2 to 4 months in the year), says:—"The probability is that we shall have railroad connection with Hudson Bay within a couple of years, and that a large part of the game for Chicago, New York, Toronto, will come down over these roads. The country will then be filled with tourists, and the Hudson Bay region may be a favorite summer resort for the North American continent."

THE ANNUAL ASH HEAP.

Taking as his text the terrible conflagration in San Francisco, Mr. F. W. Fitzpatrick, consulting architect and secretary of the International Society of Building Commissioners, Washington, B. C., makes a strong plea for really fire-proof construction in congested centres. In the Pacific city it is true that the water protective service was ruined by the earthquake, and that to this extent the fire started and spread by means beyond human control. But even so, had the buildings been better constructed and more in conformity with what is actually known of the requirements by up-to-date builders and by city authorities, the loss might have been almost infinitely smaller.

The same lesson is to be learned from Baltimore and from other cities where there have been great conflagrations in the last few years. Sufficient strictness has not been exercised in having buildings of thoroughly fire-proof materials. The result is the enormous yearly waste by fire on the American continent. Insurance premiums are high, but notwithstanding this, even in years which may be called normal, the amounts the companies lose yearly are sufficient to stagger one. And a disheartening feature of the matter is that, whatever care we may take from this time forth, the proportion of buildings in the congested portions of great cities, which are properly constructed is so small compared with those which are hazardous that we can look for little improvement for years to come. The experience of Baltimore or San Francisco is, in the opinion of Mr. Fitzpatrick, quite likely to be repeated in New Orleans, or New York, or Boston, or any one of a dozen other cities on this continent at any time in the near future.

For this state of things he thinks the architects are to blame, and that the insurance companies share in that blame. All we can now do is, to put it in his own words:—"To build well, to absolutely eliminate wood from the structural parts of buildings, to bar everything but entirely fire-proof structures in congested districts and to throw such safeguards about the old buildings as we can. For instance, if a roof requires shingling, don't shingle it with wood; use asbestos shingles. If the sides of a house are rather dingy, the wood work rotted out, don't repair with wood, put on some form of metal lath and stucco the thing. As repairs become necessary, do the repairing even in highly inflammable buildings, with non-inflammable materials and thus little by little, less and less fuel will be offered for fire. When painting is necessary, use something that has been proved fire-retardant to at

least a slight degree. In your new buildings close up your stair and elevator wells in fire-proof partitions; in your old ones use wire glass and metal. Minimize the fire risk everywhere you can. It is simply a matter of using less inflammable stuff and more intelligence."

SHEEP RAISING AND WOOL GROWING IN NOVA SCOTIA.

A sheep-raising conference was held at the Board of Trade rooms in Halifax the other day. Influential men from every part of the Province were in attendance; farmers, woolen manufacturers, members of Parliament, agriculturists, in fact, a general representation. It was a surprising response to a call for a meeting to consider the causes of the decline of sheep-raising and wool-growing in Nova Scotia, and to discuss means of restoring that industry to its former position. In the last decennial census period, the decline in sheep-raising amounted to 15 per cent., and in wool to 25 per cent. The output of wool in the Province in 1901 was 872,544 pounds as compared with 1,072,234 in 1891; whereas it was pointed out that we should be raising from three to six million pounds of wool annually. A number of reasons were advanced for this decline, all of which were reasonable. The dog nuisance was the cause of decline most insisted on, farmers having given up in despair after seeing their flocks repeatedly wiped out by marauding irresponsible dogs. The decline in the price of wool some years ago was another cause advanced; as was also the reason that has operated with the same effect in Australia, namely, the advanced price for meat, making it more profitable to raise sheep for the butcher than for the cloth-maker. As a result of the conference a strong committee was formed to attempt to remedy existing evils. They will disseminate information regarding the profits of sheep-raising in all parts of the Province, and endeavor to secure legislation dealing with the nuisances complained of. Almost the whole of the Province of Nova Scotia is eminently suited to the raising of sheep, and with proper attention it could be made one of our most important industries. It does not appear to have occurred to the farmers that one way of protecting sheep from dogs is folding them at night. There is a constant demand for domestic wool from the different woolen factories in the Province, and their proprietors are taking hold of the present movement and encouraging it in every way.

BELL TELEPHONE COMPANY.

An interesting discussion came up in the Parliamentary Committee meeting on Wednesday with reference to the Bell Telephone Company's bill to increase its capital stock from the present sum of \$10,000,000 authorized (\$9,000,000 paid up) to \$50,000,000. This increased capital is deemed necessary by the directors in order to provide for the many improvements and extensions which may, some of which will, have to be made during the next ten years. It is explained that for new exchanges and subscribers' equipment \$2,500,000 will be required this very year, for conduits and cable system, \$900,000; for long distance, \$700,000; for buildings and real estate, \$400,000. As an illustration of the widespread investments made by the company throughout Canada it may be stated that its property in Ontario is valued at \$5,500,000, in Quebec \$4,500,000, in Manitoba \$2,000,000, in the North-West \$300,000. The company's proposals came in for some criticism on the part of several members of the committee. Mr. Lancaster expressed the view that such an increase in capital would make an enormous wall against any move for Government telephones in future and would create a great monopoly, while Mr. Cockshutt urged that no such increase ought to be made unless the company should stand to surrender its monopoly of municipal streets. Mayor Coatsworth, of Toronto, who was also present, spoke along similar lines. He asked that such an increase in capital stock should only be allowed under restrictions that

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