

The Nail Combination.

The value of trade combinations even to the members who compose them has repeatedly been proved to be worthless, the latest instance of alleged treachery on the part of a combine firm having been developed in connection with the cut nail combination of this city, which was inaugurated some time ago under the most favorable auspices. A number of differences had been adjusted between our principal nail manufacturers and all sores were healed; there was also a general hand-shaking, and a profusion of congratulations all round. Rules and regulations were drawn up and adopted and all the members swore fidelity to the new cause, and promised to act on the square, so help their maker. For a time a short time things progressed favorably, until a well known firm of the new commercial knight-hood saw an opportunity of stealing a march upon the other members of the combine, and throwing overboard this bond of agreement and all conscientious scruples made a bold dash for securing the bulk of orders, by offering to fill them at a big cut below the combination price. The result was that the "kicker" scooped in orders for about 3,000 or 4,000 kegs that should have been placed with other firms. As soon as this gross breach of faith was discovered the combine was smashed into smithereens, and a war of cutting between its members is being continued at a frightful rate. One rich manufacturing concern which has been imposed upon by the "kicker" above referred to vows vengeance and now offers to sell at such low rates that a number of orders taken by the "kicker" have already been cancelled, so that the erring knight of the nail combine, may yet have to pay for his rashness, as he may be compelled to fill all his orders at a loss or relinquish them to his arch competitor. — *Montreal Trade Bulletin.*

Two New Crops for Minnesota.

"Flax and Hemp in Minnesota" is the title of a pamphlet of seventy pages, just issued, the same being the report of the House committee appointed in January to investigate the practicability of flax and hemp culture in that state. This report, says the *Minneapolis Tribune*, is one that should be placed in the hands of every farmer in that state, for it points out in the estimable value of a hitherto neglected source of wealth. Flax is now cultivated in the west for its seed alone. For this purpose, 1,000,000 acres are sown annually in the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas and Nebraska. The aggregate acreage under flax in Europe, says this report, is about 3,114,300 acres, producing annually about 457,675 tons of fiber. It is therefore estimated that the states named would, with proper care in cultivation, produce 160,000 tons of fiber worth \$300 per ton, making the total value of the product \$48,000,000. If successful in Minnesota, why not in Manitoba?

The Loss in Farming.

A dispatch from Lansing, Mich., says "The farm statistics soon to be issued from the office of the secretary of state will show that the three great crops, wheat, corn and oats, were produced last year at an actual loss. The total cost of the wheat crop was \$18,200,000. Its total value \$16,700,000. The total cost of

the corn crop was \$12,250,000. Its total value \$7,250,000. The total cost of the oat crop was \$10,130,000. The total value \$7,300,000. This includes into cost on the farms, and, boiled down, means that the farmers of the state lost on their three principal crops all interest on their lands and a considerable outlay of cash besides."

This is eminently unfair. The value of the lands in the southern part of the state is figured at \$50 per acre, and at \$31 per acre further north. It allows nothing for the support of the family, nothing for gardens, and apparently nothing for pasturage and small crops, of which almost every farmer plants more or less. It figures the rate of interest at 7 per cent., while the average productiveness of land the country through is less than 5 per cent.

And what of it? How can any man in any business be guaranteed a profit? — *American Elevator and Grain Trade.*

Furs in England.

The London correspondent of the *New York Fur Trade Review*, says — "Skunk is in as great demand as at the sales, and our opinion of this article has not altered, but we believe it will have a very large sale. Persians are certainly not the favorites that they were last season, but we quite anticipate they will be in better demand about August and September. Sable, notwithstanding the fact that prices in the Hudson's Bay Company's sale were lower, there seems to be a growing feeling, particularly in the West End for this article, and surely it has been in the low water long enough, and we should not be at all surprised to see the article advance in price at the next spring sales. Mink, on account of the high price obtained at the last sales this article is selling very slowly, but should there be a decline in Lampson's May sale mink will go well there; but at present prices our manufacturers cannot handle it.

The recent order in council granting a rebate of canal tolls on grain passing through the St. Lawrence canals does not cover grain passing through after having been stored at Ogdensburg for the convenience of the Montreal grain men. Those who are interested in the Ogdensburg route have ordered the shipment of a couple of cargoes of grain from Chicago via Ogdensburg with the intention of entering a test case in the Canadian courts for the purpose of compelling the Government to grant the rebate.

The Canadian Pacific special, consisting of seven cars with the steamship *Empress of India's* passengers and mails, reached Montreal at 5:40 in the afternoon of May 2, having made the run in 90 hours, the last run of 123 miles from Smith's Falls being made in two hours and five minutes. Passengers and mails left Yokohama on the evening of April 17th. This time across the Pacific ocean and continent verifies the prophecy made some years ago by President Van Horne that the journey from Japan to London could be made inside of twenty-two days. The Imperial Government has recognized the shortness of this route by ordering their mails for Japan to be sent via the C. P. R., the first batch consisting of mail bags from Paris, London, Dublin and other cities, having gone west from Montreal on May 1, to catch the *Empress of India* on her outward trip to Japan.



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