

"Rather dear?" queried the "News."

"Too dear to my liking," replied the dealer.

"Talk about combines," said he, "the fish combine exacts money from the people every day. It keeps the fish supply down and the prices up. The worst of it is, it is a Yankee combine; in fact there are two of them, one in Detroit, and the other in Chicago. The late Government seemed to give these companies everything their own way, and the small fishermen had no show. It is quite time for the new Government to take a hand in the matter."

Fresh water salmon retailed to-day at 25 cents a pound, fresh haddock at 10 cents a pound, cod higher at 12½ cents a pound. Smelts were up to 15 to 20 cents a pound.

The "Mail and Empire," Toronto, Wednesday, February 7th, 1906:

INTEREST AROUSED IN OUR FISHERIES.

We know that about a million and a half dollars' worth of fish are caught in our lakes every year, that a handful of Canadians get a miserable living out of the industry, and that the Fish Trust pays some license fees for the privilege of depopulating our waters. The nets with which they are caught are not made in Canada; the gill nets come chiefly from Scotland, and the pound nets from the United States. About \$25,000 is paid annually to overseers and guardians. The fish themselves are eaten in New York and other American cities. **For only five per cent. of the catch is consumed in Ontario.** As Mr. Harris says: "We have an expensive organization of clerks, 127 overseers, guardians, cruisers, patrol boats, and hatcheries distributing fry. With all this staff, outfit, and the accompanying expenditure, the people of Ontario cannot place a full-grown fresh water lake fish on their tables except as an occasional luxury." We are surely playing a losing game.

FIRE GUARDING.

It is time that the growing sentiment in favor of some systematized effort to restrict the fire-waste of Canada was crystallized into a measure or measures looking towards the investigation of fires and the punishment of those who either set them or by carelessness permit them. The States of Massachusetts and Ohio have notably set the example in the neighboring Union in appointing fire marshals with power to investigate fires and to secure the arrest of incendiaries. And the results of the action of these officers have in marked degree lessened the number of incendiary fires in those States, and also the number of fires from "unknown" causes. By their efforts, too, "fire-bugs" have been put in jail; and it is a gratifying fact that the precepts of these officers and their deputies scattered over the country have stirred up the public to look more carefully into the fire-inviting surroundings of their own dwellings and shops, and to pay more attention to the proper construction of buildings.

"Shall we have a fire marshal for Ontario?" was the question put to the writer the other day by a man who had studied the subject. And the reply was, "Why for Ontario alone?" Every Province and every municipality might appoint an officer to lessen the dreadful fire-waste and produce a vast economy over and above his pay. But if Ontario is to have a fire marshal, the great point is to get the right kind of man. Ohio is fortunate in securing as its fire marshal a man of wide knowledge and resolute skill. Massachusetts, too, has benefited by the occupancy of a like post by a man of ability and technical knowledge. We know of another State in the Union, however, which has a fire marshal whose political affiliations prevent his doing his duty lest he shall offend some person or persons who may have to do with his

retention of office. Similarly, we have heard of a Canadian municipality which has fire commissioners who are of but little use for a like reason. Power of action by such officers must be centralized, else local friendships or local feuds would interfere with the administration of justice. Such are the dangers of political appointments.

The general manager of a fire insurance company in Edinburgh, Mr. James Allan Cook, in an address before the Insurance Actuarial Society of Glasgow, said the other day, dealing with fire-waste—which is far less serious in his country than in ours: "The time has come when this subject should be taken up seriously by the national and city authorities. In endeavoring to saddle insurance companies with charges of fire protection, municipalities are but fighting the shadow of the trouble, while the trouble itself grows and the community suffers. It is no more the duty of a fire insurance company to pay for fire extinction than for a life insurance company to pay for drainage systems and a marine company to pay for lighthouses."

SHOES AND LEATHER.

This winter the weather has been the main factor in the creation of several features in the boot, shoe and rubber trade. On the whole, its influence has not been a good one. For several weeks of the period during which we look for our coldest, most wintry weather it was more like spring. Rubbers, therefore, were at a discount, and overshoes scarcely looked at. The heavier forms of footwear also have been little favored. One can scarcely avoid the conclusion, therefore, that, in some lines, the stocks of held-overs must be quite large, particularly in the country districts, where considerable orders ahead are more the rule than in the cities, where close proximity to wholesalers causes retailers more and more to depend upon the former for the carrying of supplies. While, however, the sales of the heavier grades of boots and shoes and of rubbers have been restricted by the unseasonably warm weather, the call for the lighter grades has been larger than usual, so that, on the whole business has not been in such a poor way as some have thought.

Spring trade is now about over, though a few straggling sorting orders continue to be received. For the coming season the prospects are believed to be very good. The country is prosperous, and people these days demand a quality of shoe hardly dreamed of a few years ago. Not only that, but they want more of them. Prices will no doubt keep firm at the figures to which they were recently advanced. Hides and other materials, labor, etc., are all high, though it is true that there was, a week or two ago, a decline in hides of a very distinct character. This is hardly likely to influence the result, however, for, as a matter of fact, it was due almost wholly to deterioration in quality, which is always at its worst about now. Allowing for quality and waste, prices are now practically very little different from what they were two months ago. There is very little change in leather. Trade has not been distinguished for any large volume, but there is a good, steady undertone to the market, and active improvement may set in at any time.

As to payments, they have been fairly satisfactory, though some slowness is expected as a consequence of the weather conditions.

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