

TAXING TREE PLANTING.

Winnipeg Free Press.

It has well been said that he who does his part in awakening, stimulating, and maintaining public interest in tree-planting is worthy of honor as a patriot. Here in Western Canada, as in the States across the boundary, tree-planting is of vital importance to the country's welfare and progress. In recognition of this the Forestry Branch of the Department of the Interior was established, for the promotion of tree-planting on the prairies, as well as for the increase and conservation of the forest wealth of the Dominion generally. Young trees are furnished by the Dominion Government to individual owners of land, and expert advice also and superintendence in connection with the planting of them and the care of them. The Government is also doing a great amount of tree-planting itself. The purpose of Arbor Day is to impress upon the public attention the importance of tree-planting.

It might be expected that the railway companies, which have reaped, and are reaping, such abundant wealth from Western Canada, would, as a matter of self-interest, to say nothing of public spirit, co-operate in the encouragement of tree-planting on the prairies. Everything that helps to further the development of this country means more money for the railways. But they do not let considerations of that sort interfere with the operation of the principle of 'all that the traffic will bear.' They believe in putting that principle into complete operation in the present, right now, and of doing it up to the hilt.

In one of the early articles in the present Free Press series on freight rates, comparisons were placed before the public, showing the rates on trees, shrubbery, and nursery stock in this country and in the adjoining States, for corresponding mileages. The comparisons covered Western Canada and the adjoining States, both for carload lots and for less than carload lots; the rates on this side of the boundary running from twice to nearly three times the rates across the line.

From St. Paul to Crookston, for example, a distance of 300 miles, the carload rate (16,000 lbs. actual weight) is \$33.60, as against \$76.00 from Winnipeg to Wolsley, a distance of 296 miles; and from St. Paul to Neche, a distance of 401 miles, the less than carload rate on nursery stock in boxes is 24c. per 100 lbs., while from Winnipeg to Moose Jaw, 400 miles, it is 67c. It is not necessary to set forth further figures here. The view taken by the railway traffic officials in this country is that trees for planting and other nursery stock are simply freight

on which to levy 'all that the traffic will bear.'

A CANADIAN FOREST RANGER.

Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

It has always been difficult to understand the difference in mental attitude toward the restraints of the law that exists between the American and the man who lives just north of him, across the Canadian line. In that country it is not considered a hardship to pay either reverence to Nature or a tribute to those in whose charge lies the protection of Nature and natural resources. A thousand miles north of the British line one has seen a fire guardian, the only officer of his kind in a section of country hundreds of miles in extent. A splendid, quiet, self-respecting chap this man was, too; one whose word was law and accepted as such unhesitatingly by red and white. Part of this man's duty was the posting of fire notices, each of which had a good, stiff penalty attached, in all the places where human beings, red or white, were apt to see them—steamer landings, fur posts, traders' stores. Nor did this man dread the red men so much as he did the newcomers of the white race, always more careless about fires than were the aborigines.

One day during a steamer voyage this fire guardian saw smoke rising on the horizon far inland from the river on which we were travelling. He stopped the boat at once, got his pack together and went ashore. As he figured it out, this fire was forty miles away, probably at the edge of a certain large prairie surrounded by heavy woods. He would reach it in the afternoon of the second day on foot. He would carry most of his camp kit on his back until that night; then would cache some of it, and would leave yet more of it midway of the next day, cached against his return to the river, where he could get supplies or find the trail in and out of the country. He did not know who had started the fire or what shape the fire itself would have by the time he got to it. All alone, a sturdy and self-reliant figure—representing the law, representing civilization even in the wilderness, representing a decent regard of organized society for the organized society that is to follow us—he set out on foot for his wilderness journey across an untracked country. In all of one's experience with outdoor men, rarely has one met a better, simpler and nobler figure than this one. His profession is precisely that of our own forest rangers. We ought to back these men precisely as an older Government backs its young men in an older wilderness than ours.