

the bursting of hose at a critical time does not reflect upon the efficiency of the men, but the lack of a wrench at a moment when it is needed worst to replace a length does not show the preparedness to be expected of a modern brigade.

It is timely to sound a warning to our manufacturers and merchants as to the danger of storing specially combustible materials in the midst of valuable merchandise. In the Eckardt fire a year or two ago the blaze broke out near where quantities of matches were stored. And now, in the Eby, Blain case, matches were stored on the top flat, where the fire broke out. In some wholesale warehouses packing cases are carelessly allowed to accumulate, and packages of paper or flimsy stuff are in too great quantity for reasonable safety. There is, if we mistake not, a city ordinance requiring the segregation of such materials in appropriate places, such as within lined walls. But such an ordinance is more honored in the breach than in the observance. For another thing, our firemen need to know more about the structure and interior arrangement of our prominent buildings, commercial or other. Part of the brigade might with good effect be engaged day by day in making intimate acquaintance with the interiors of buildings. And it is our opinion that some drill in the handling of imaginary fires might be of important service. Some of the men are valiant and capable fire-fighters—none more so; but it would be too much to say that they all know their business thoroughly.

WESTERN CROP REPORT.

There is reason to think that the grain crops of Manitoba and the Territories will turn out well. Not so phenomenally well, perhaps, as the sanguine people of the North-West have been predicting for many weeks, but that a good crop over increased acreage is likely. Yesterday's telegram from Winnipeg to the Monetary Times says:

"Rain has been general throughout the West during the past week. The crop is headed out, and is maturing rapidly. With continued favorable weather it is expected that the harvest will begin during the latter half of August. Crops are looking well and the prospects are good."

CANADA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY.

Canada's sovereignty over the waters of Hudson's Bay has been asserted by the Dominion Government in no uncertain language. The question came up the other day in the House in connection with an item of \$200,000 for the purchase, equipment and maintenance of vessels to be employed in patrolling the waters in the northern portion of Canada; also for establishing and maintaining police and customs ports at such points on the mainland or islands as may be deemed necessary from time to time. Last year, it will be remembered, an expedition was sent out to explore and patrol these northern waters. The instructions given to Capt. A. P. Low, who was in charge of the "Neptune," the vessel chartered to undertake this work, were to explore as far as he could during the season the northern waters and establish a port somewhere

on Hudson's Bay, no definite location being ordered. Then, as soon as the ice broke up in the spring, the expedition was to go north and explore Baffin Bay and Lancaster Strait, and then come back to Cape Chidley, at the entrance to Hudson's Straits. There the "Neptune" would meet another steamer with coal and provisions.

It is evident, from past experience, that no time should be lost in protecting Canadian interests in these northern waters. At the present time there are whalers and fishermen of different nations cruising in that locality, and unless we take active steps to assert that these lands belong to Canada we may, perhaps, find ourselves in the face of serious complications. This is the real reason underlying Capt. Bernier's expedition on the "Arctic," which is the vessel which has orders to relieve the "Neptune." She will patrol the Hudson's Bay waters, establish ports at suitable locations, and assert Canada's sovereignty in general.

THE DRY GOODS TRADE.

It is now not too soon to attempt some sort of a forecast as to the fall trade in general dry goods. As a fact, it is something that already engages a good deal of the attention of both wholesale and retail merchants. So far as orders at present arrived or on the way serve to show, prospects are very good; in some lines they are judged by some to be ahead in quantity and value of what was the case at this time last year. And so far as the situation has developed yet, there is no reason why this record should not continue. The chief conditions affecting the trade are good crops and the possession of plenty of spending money on the part of the masses. So far nothing has taken place to cause doubts as to these two factors, though, of course, it is full early to speak of assured excellent crops. With regard to the latter question, the consuming power of the people, its present largeness is evidenced on every hand. In no branch of trade does this influence make itself more felt, or more quickly, than in dry goods.

Referring to prices, they are steady to firm in practically all departments. The intense feeling about cotton, naturally enough, has disappeared; nevertheless, it would be a mistake to imagine that the market for that commodity, or for goods made therefrom, is an easy one. On the other hand, recent events, such as the extensive strike in the Fall River district of New England, will act in a contrary direction, and are certainly likely to counterbalance the effects of the drop in raw material, even if the latter should have the effect of causing declining values for finished goods, which, owing to the necessities of the case, explained in a recent article, could hardly be hoped for for some time to come.

When we come to the consideration of woolens, everything points in a "bull" direction. For this, not only is the short domestic clip responsible, but the great rise in values in every country in the world. Raw wool is now almost double the price it was ten years ago, and—what is of more recent happening—yarns, too, are just about double what they were held at in 1892. These figures refer to the British markets, but these fairly represent world conditions. For some