

WESTERN CANADA SECTION

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WESTERN WHEAT PRICES.

Fire Clay Industry in Saskatchewan—Manitoba Telephone Rates—Winnipeg's High Pressure System.

Monetary Times Office,
Winnipeg, March 2nd.

The prospect for a good opening of spring trade in the West is already being realized and in many cases even now marked difference is shown, so that the whole situation is very encouraging. Plants that have been shut down for the past few months are again commencing operations. The Manitoba Rolling Mills who manufacture all kinds of bar iron, have had to start work again to keep up with the demand. Other lines of business are also much better than they were a year ago. Mr. E. F. Hutching, President of the Great West Saddlery Company, says that business is so good that this year we have increased our staff 30 per cent. over previous years. Every department is running full time. Our factories at Calgary and Edmonton are also running to the full extent of their respective capacities, and are practically as busy as we are here.

The manufacture of fire brick and sewer pipe in Western Canada will be commenced this spring at Weyburn, Sask., where the Western Fire Clay Products, Limited, with a capital of \$600,000 claim to have one of the finest beds of fire clay in the world, from which they can produce fire brick, pressed brick, sewer pipe and other clay products. All the material to be manufactured by this company has in the past been brought in from the United States, which means that a large amount of money hitherto sent out of the country annually for building requirements can be kept at home. The Western Fire Clay Products, Limited, have interested many Western men in this proposition, and their head office will be in Winnipeg.

Lower Telephone Rates.

Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba are to have lower telephone rates. This announcement was made last week by Hon. Robert Rogers, when speaking on the matter of Government telephones. The reduction is made possible after one year's experiment of the old Bell rates as it is reported that a substantial surplus is on hand after the year's operation. The reduction in rates will be received with gratification by every telephone user, running as it does from 50 to 20 per cent., according to various conditions. The chief changes in the rates:—On residential phones there is in Winnipeg a straight reduction of \$5 a phone, or from \$30 to \$25, with alternative of paying \$15 a phone and two cents a call in addition. On party lines the price has been reduced from \$24 to \$18. To joint users in the same residence from \$15 to \$5 a year. There are also considerable changes in the rates for business phones. Two firms using the same phone, for unlimited service, pay \$30. Business firms have the right to pay \$25 a year and two cents for every out call; joint users, \$15 a year.

Cost of High Pressure Plant.

Some time ago a special committee was appointed by the Winnipeg City Council to enquire into the cost of the high pressure plant which, to the time of being taken over by the city, had cost more than a million dollars. This committee after making thorough investigation find that two local contractors would be willing to duplicate the plant at a saving to the city of thousands of dollars. Figures of such startling discrepancies appear and the matter has assumed such serious proportions that the Board of Control has decided that a searching investigation be made and the following resolution in the matter was brought forward by the committee,—That a judge of the County Court of Winnipeg be requested to investigate all matters respecting the purchase of a site, the plans, specifications, tenders, contracts, construction and installation of the high pressure plant and also to investigate any malfeasance, breach of trust, misconduct on the part of any employee or the part of any members of council, officer, employee or agent of the city, or any firm or firms having any contracts with the city respecting the high pressure plant. That this special committee be empowered to employ counsel to conduct the investigation into the matters connected with the high pressure plant.

Alderman Adams appeared to voice the feeling of the committee when he declared that the results of the investigation to date were serious enough to place the whole question

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before the city council. Well-known and reputable contractors would duplicate portions of the plant for about \$75,000 less than those portions had actually cost. Furthermore, certain employees had failed to account for some of the lumber. These facts and the discrepancies in the prices given for excavation work called for strict investigation.

Winnipeg's Public Parks.

The city of Winnipeg has something to be proud of in the number of parks which it now possesses, and the parks board in the past year have done a lot of good work. The new Assiniboine Park on the western outskirts of the city comprising nearly 400 acres, is a great acquisition, and a good deal of time and money was spent on it last year. The parks board held their annual meeting a few days ago and it shows the tangible interest the city council is taking in making Winnipeg as beautiful and attractive as possible.

On January 1st there was a credit balance of \$16,864 receipts from other sources amounted to \$54,599.35, total available for the maintenance and improvement of parks \$171,464, about \$300 less than the estimated receipts. The total expenditure for the year was \$68,167.21, leaving a net credit balance of \$3,297.16. The expenditures for local improvements, boulevard maintenance, Brookside cemetery, and sundries, amounted to \$34,973.09, making the total expenditure for all purposes of the board during the year \$103,140.30. The amount expended on Assiniboine Park in the year was \$39,094.45.

There were 24 streets boulevarded last year, the total mileage being 9.3, as against 9.5 in 1907 and 11.5 in 1906. The average cost of constructing boulevards was 12.12 cents per square yard last year as against 15.26 in 1907, and 17.97 in 1906.

Unusual Wheat Prices.

There has again been considerable animation in the wheat markets during the past week. New record prices for the season have been made in nearly all markets. Chicago

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