

The Commercial

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WEEDS SPREADING.

A drive out in the country about this time of year, would convince anyone that very stringent measures are urgently required to compel farmers to destroy the weeds. In this district, at least, there appears to be little regard paid to the weeds, and from reports received from some other sections of the province, we infer that much the same conditions exist in many other districts. The municipalities have the power to compel residents to destroy weeds, and they can also take action to destroy weeds on vacant farms, but it appears the law is practically a dead letter in several municipalities. Year after year the writer has observed this disregard of the weed question in the districts around Winnipeg. A drive out in the country a few days ago revealed the fact that many fields of waving weeds could be observed on lands not in crop, while many fields sown to grain were a mass of weeds. There should be no difficulty at least in destroying the weeds upon the land not in crop. The dreaded French or stink weed is now ripe, and hundreds of acres are covered with a luxuriant crop of this weed. Some fields of this weed were observed which had been cut, and left lying on the ground, and in one case the weeds were being blown across the road on to another farm. An investigation showed that the seed was fully matured. This is a custom which the writer has observed has been prevalent in this district for years, namely: cutting fields of weeds after they are ripe and allowing them to lie on the ground and blow all over the country. In one instance in a previous year the writer saw a man cutting a field of thistles which were so ripe that the downy seeds were flying in clouds as the machine moved through the field, and no attempt was made to burn the weeds, as they were observed lying on the ground some time later in the season.

In some municipalities the duty of looking after the weeds is left to the local inspector, who also has charge of the statute labor work, and it sometimes results that both the statute labor and weed inspection is little better than a farce. The office is sometimes taken with the object of making as much money as possible out of the job, without regard to the work performed. In fact, the result of this is sometimes simply a fraud upon the residents, but perhaps more particularly a fraud upon the holders of vacant lands. The weeds are cut upon vacant farms, and the officer draws his pay for the work, when in reality the weeds might as well have not been cut at all, as the work is done after they are ripe, or so near ripe that there is sufficient nourishment in the plants to mature the seeds. Another charge we have heard is that residents are sometimes given exemption from cutting

the weeds, while non residents are charged heavily for work performed in a useless manner.

As for the statute labor, it is a primitive and absurd system of doing local municipal work. If the statute labor were computed at the rate of 50 cents per day and the work done by contract, better results would be obtained. The main object for the statute labor regulations appears to be to place an extra tax upon the holders of vacant lands. The gain to the municipalities from the actual work done in the performance of statute labor is next to nothing, while non-residents are charged at the rate of \$1.50 per day for the statute labor against their lands. In some cases, the municipal official in charge of the work, known as the pathmaster, is supposed to make a good thing out of his job. We are informed that in one municipality in the Winnipeg district last year, the pathmaster received pay for about thirty days of statute labor alleged to have been performed by him for absentees, while he actually put in only two or three days work. We also heard the statement made about another pathmaster, that he systematically collected pay for statute labor from absentees without performing the work.

These are only rumors, but they call attention to the absurdity of the system of performing statute labor. Our remarks will also show how the regulations regarding noxious weeds are carried out in some municipalities. This whole system of statute labor should be abolished; and something should certainly be done to make the law compulsory upon municipalities to take proper measures to destroy weeds. The local government has recently appointed an expert as dairy instructor for the province. This is a wise thing to do. We do not know, however, of any official more needed by the province than an expert in charge of this weed business, backed up by very stringent legislative authority.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE COMMERCIAL acknowledges the receipt of a copy of certain resolutions adopted by the Melita Farmers' Institute, from the publisher of the Melita Enterprise. In the said resolutions certain proposals are made regarding desired changes in the law for the collection of debts, etc. The resolutions will be discussed at the next meeting of the Central Institute, and we may find space for comment upon them in The Commercial in a future number.

FARMERS who have homesteaded in Manitoba are exempt from municipal taxes until their lands are patented. It is alleged that some of them have neglected to take out their patents after they were entitled to them simply to avoid paying taxes. It is proposed to ask the Dominion government for an act to enable municipalities to levy taxes on homesteaders who have been long enough on their lands to entitle them to a patent.

THE number of mercantile wrecks is decreasing. There were 331 failures in Canada for the first six months of the present year, this number being twenty less than for the same portion of last year. The liabilities aggregated \$6,629,246 for the first six months of the present year, as compared with \$9,500,612 for the corresponding period of 1894. This large reduction in liabilities shows that many of the failures have been small affairs. Manitoba had only 27 failures for the six months, or twelve fewer than for the like period of last year. In the territories there were eight failures, against five last year. There was also an increase in British Columbia, where the number of failures was 51, as compared with 39 last year.

A VERY peculiar charge was made against the Patrons in Parliament at Ottawa lately. The Patrons in Ontario have established a binder twine factory at Brantford. It was alleged that the Patrons who control this factory had approached the Consumer's company and also the managers of the government factory, with a view to secure an advance in the price of binder twine. The Patrons probably find that the profits in manufacturing binder twine are considerably less than they figured on—too small probably to leave them any margin of profit. The same thing holds true in many other branches of manufacture, though the Patrons generally entertain ideas of fabulous profits made in trade.

COUNTRY merchants should get an allowance for bad eggs. This time of year a good many eggs are spoilt or beginning to spoil before they reach the stores of the country dealers. Care should be taken to sift these out by candling all eggs taken in, and thus save a considerable loss. Eggs spoil very quickly this warm weather and they should be shipped promptly by the refrigerator cars. Experts say that an egg which shows the least discoloration when candled, has begun to spoil and that three days will complete the work and make it unfit for use.

THE sheep ranchers of the territories want restrictions increased against sheep coming from the United States, and they have got up a petition to forward to Ottawa with this object in view. The ranchers had quite a serious time on account of scab, which was introduced from the United States in 1893 and spread to many of the ranges, taking two years to eradicate the trouble. It is claimed that the pest is now eradicated on the western ranges. It was prevalent in the neighborhood of Winnipeg two years ago, on account of sheep brought here from the west. It is fear of another visitation of scab that is now leading the western sheep men to ask for greater restrictions on sheep imported from south of the boundary.

A MUNICIPAL convention has been proposed to be held in Winnipeg during the Industrial Exhibition week. By all means an effort should be made to carry this proposal into