

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and commerce in Western Canada, including that part of Ontario west of the Niagara River and the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, and the Territories.

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D. W. BUCHANAN, Publisher.

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ENFORCING THE FRUIT MARKS ACT.

The suggestion has been made by the chief inspector of the fruit division of the department of agriculture that in order to secure still better observance of the provisions of the Dominion Fruit Marks Act this year the retail merchants should take it upon themselves to supplement the efforts of the regular inspector by instituting proceedings through their associations against fraudulent packers of fruit whenever cases arise which have escaped the attention of the inspectors. The wisdom of such a course is quite apparent. The purpose of the Act is to provide all purchasers of fruit with the means to punish persons who are guilty of fraud in putting up or displaying of fruit and it should not be left entirely to the official inspectors to detect and proceed against culprits. The fact has more than once been pointed out in these columns that the inspectors are not able to give thorough inspection to every individual package of fruit and it therefore rests with the retail merchants and consumers to see that cases which escape the notice of the inspectors do not go unpunished. If those at the other end of the business can be taught to know that anything crooked in the putting up of fruit will sooner or later be detected and punished they will soon discontinue such practices. Unfortunately for Mr. Mackinnon's suggestion there are not in this country so far as we know any associations of retail grocers or fruit dealers, but that is only a technical point, as the complaints can be made by individuals and will receive prompt attention whenever properly made. Perhaps it would be well as if the merchants in all larger places were organized so as to be a useful resource as this might have been their united attention. One thing is certain and that is that this year the lines should be drawn as good a deal tighter upon the trade in apples. The act was enforced last year in a lenient sort of a way. Only the most glaring cases of fraud were punished. Now the full effect of the act should begin to be felt and no person who can be shown to be guilty of deliberate or careless infringement of the law should be allowed to escape.

FIRE PROTECTION.

A news paragraph in another part of this issue to the effect that the town of Minnedosa is purchasing a new fire engine furnishes opportunity to make the statement that every community is beginning to pay more attention to the important matter of fire protection. In the past most of the smaller towns and villages have been without any protection whatever

against fire and when outbreaks have occurred were dependent upon chance effort for their suppression. In most cases the citizens have had to struggle hard to secure a foothold in business and were not anxious to enter into any municipal scheme involving increased taxation. Many of them have had no personal experience with fire and were ignorant of the extent to which an insignificant blaze may sometimes spread if not controlled. Now that things are getting upon a better basis in Manitoba this question of fire protection is receiving more attention. It is fortunate that the means for providing such protection is within reach. So admirably have some of the manufacturing companies provided for this want that even the smallest places may for a comparatively small sum put themselves in possession of apparatus which meets every requirement in this connection, and in most cases this cost can be more than covered by the saving effected in

January, \$220,000, greater than in February and \$50,000 less than in March. These figures do not represent any change in the policy of the road but simply the greater cheapness in operating the road in a month free from winter than during the winter months.

Canadian Pacific people, however, tell us that actual transportation expenses are less per ton mile than last year, owing to the strenuous efforts made by the company to get twelve months to bring the rolling stock up to the requirements of the business and the improvements that have been made in the road itself. It will be remembered that Canadian Pacific was incriminated during a great part of 1901 in the matter of making road improvements through a strike of its laborers. The work then left undone has since been accomplished, with the necessary result that certain extravagant places of operation have been eliminated.

In the matter of equipment, something over 2,000 freight cars and 100 coaches have been added during the past fiscal year. The road is only partly dependent upon the equipment companies for its locomotive and rolling stock requirements as it has its

milk, as they are now in the eighth week without rain. This is most phenomenal, and all the factorymen and farmers we have conversed with state that they cannot get to mind such a let: drought spell of dry weather at this season of the year, as we are now experiencing. But in spite of it all the price of cheese has dropped about 5¢ per lb. at country points and in this market since our last report, which seems to bear out the proverbial saying among cheese buyers, that "drought never affects cheese, and all hopes initiated on the strength of a short make from dry weather have proved disastrous." This may be correct, but if the present remarkable meteorological freak of prolonged dryness continues, it must materially curtail the production of cheese, and, eventually, enhance values.

The exports from New York continue to show an increase over those of last year, the past week's shipments from that port amounting to 10,829 boxes, against 6,651 boxes for the corresponding week in 1902, being an increase of 4,178 boxes; and from the 1st of May the shipments were 51,392 boxes, against 29,994

Manitoba Farm Homes—View on Farm of John S. Scott, Pipestone Creek, North of Elkhorn.

insurance premiums. Possibly enough has already been said to set some more of the country business people thinking for themselves on this subject. Where there is already protection and the conditions call for it the matter should be taken up and there is no doubt but that its discussion will in almost every case result in the decision to adopt the obviously sensible course of providing the necessary apparatus.

CANADIAN PACIFIC.

The April statement of earnings on Canadian Pacific is an interesting document both in the comparison between the operations that month as compared with the same month last year, and in the comparison with the other three months of the present year.

The road keeps up its good earnings as compared with last year. It was just about the time in 1902 that attention was first attracted to the excellent results that the road was showing in comparison with the figures for 1901, so that the returns from traffic this year are the more gratifying. Both gross and net show an increase in the ten months of the fiscal year. The exact average increase in gross for the ten months of the fiscal year, the average net increase for the ten months is 9 per cent.

The gross earnings show an increase of about \$700,000 over those of January, \$1,000,000 over those of February, and \$180,000 over those of March. Expenses are about \$70,000 greater than

own extensive shops at several points on the system. It was rather unfortunate that at the very time when equipment demands were heaviest the big plant of the company at Perth should be destroyed by fire, but the company has to some extent recovered from this misfortune by the extension of its Hochelaga factory at Montreal. In consequence the road has been able to keep fairly well up with its motive power requirements, although it has been necessary to call upon the American Locomotive and Engine companies for some of its new engines.

The improvement of the rolling stock, of course, tends to some direction as the improvement of the road, namely, in the direction of decreased cost of operation. Against these friendly influences it is worthy of note that the company last year was compelled to advance the wages of several classes of railroad labor on the line and may in the near future make still further advances. The restlessness of labor that is so prominent a feature of American economics at the present time is not quite so marked across the border, but the recently concluded strike and the street railway strike in Montreal are sufficient evidence that at least a leaven of restlessness is present in the Canadian labor situation—Wall Street Journal.

THE CHEESE TRADE.

The continuance of the severe drought in Eastern Ontario and Quebec has begun to be felt in some of the dairy sections, factorymen reporting a falling off in the deliveries of

boxes for the same period last year, being an increase of about 100 per cent. The shipments from Montreal from the same date amounting to date amount to 147,541 boxes, as compared with 143,915 boxes for the corresponding week in 1902, being an increase of 3,626 boxes; and from the 1st of May the shipments were 51,392 boxes, against 29,994

FUR STYLES.

Fine furs, the very finest furs, will undoubtedly hold highest rank in favor, and from first to last elicit the interested attention of consumers of commanding means. This is the impression that prevails in the trade, and it is based on a careful study of conditions that prevail over a favorable past winter abroad, prosperity at home, comparative scarcity of very choice skins, the steady advance in fashion of all high-class furs, and the quite universal desire of the rich to possess exclusive things, and, being exalted above the possibility of easy duplication, will remain priceless, so to speak, insuring fair returns in profits and satisfaction to all concerned—New York Fur Trade Review.

The Yellow Grass correspondent of the Indian Head Vindicator says: Among the new lines of business opening here, we might mention: S. Taylor in hardware, Huth Bros. butcher shop, J. Jas. Emmott, harness shop; S. C. Hard, blacksmith shop. Waddell Bros. are building a large implement warehouse.