

keeping qualities. Then as to the cutting of the large knuckle bone. This exists entirely in the imagination of, I suppose, Mr. W. A. McKinnon, Canadian trade agent at Bristol. There is very little bacon sent to England from Canada except what is known as Wiltshire sides, from which the knuckle bone is not taken. I do not believe that the veriest novice in Canada as an expert packer ever does this, so that our representative in Bristol will have to be quite sure that his statements are facts.

It reminds me of the would-be naturalist, who wrote a description of the lobster, describing it as a fish red in color, that moves backward. The author sent this to Frank Buckland, the celebrated naturalist, of world-wide reputation. In acknowledging it Mr. Buckland thanked him for his very interesting account of the lobster, but added: "It is not a fish, neither is it red in color, and it does not walk backward."

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Per Wm. Davies, President.

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THE GROWING WEST.

A tribute to the remarkable progress of recent years in the Canadian North-West, and on the Pacific slope generally, is paid by a prominent gentleman of Montreal, who visited the west coast during April and May. This gentleman is Mr. H. Stikeman, general manager of the Bank of British North America. He had not been out west since 1902, and remarked great changes, especially in these three particulars: (1) The importance of the cities; (2) the rapid growth of the towns; (3) the tremendous increase in the quantity of land now under cultivation. Another thing he noticed was the high degree of contentment prevailing among the farmers and ranchers; this was the case in British Columbia as well as in the Territories.

A reason why not every one rushes to prairie farming is found in the following statement: While people are coming into the country east of the Rockies by thousands, one also sees the forest lands being cleared up, and when you ask why any one should go to the trouble to cut down trees and clear off stumps, when sections of land can be had on the prairie at such advantageous terms, the following sensible explanation is forthcoming:

"It is argued that where the forest exists the rainfall never fails, and many prefer to labor awhile and clear homes for themselves where there is no possibility of drouth; hence all sections of western Canada are being filled up with an excellent class of settlers."

There is to-day less distance between the farmer and the cities or good-sized towns. Indeed, the cities and towns want the farmer close to them, for the sake of what he produces on his land or on his fruit trees, or in his dairy. And cattle-raising is becoming a great source of riches to the North-West settler—likewise the price of cattle is going steadily up. While Mr. Stikeman lost no opportunity of talking with people of every class in the great West, he had naturally very close conference with the members of the banking fraternity, with the result that he returns to the money centre of the Dominion strongly of the opinion that the western Provinces are sound to the core. He considers that all the banking facilities the West requires are now at its doors.

As to the banking methods of the West, Mr. Stikeman, himself of decidedly conservative views, declares that "the conservative methods of the Canadian bankers have been pretty well sustained in the West, but in view of the fact that there are so many competing institutions in the country, a good many farmers have probably borrowed money to add to their holdings, instead of waiting and making the required sum out of farming operations." He believed, however, that the country is very prosperous, and its general conditions eminently sound.

As is generally known, the Bank of British North America does business in the Pacific United States, and has a branch in San Francisco as well as offices in British Columbia and the Yukon. The general manager brings satisfactory news from Dawson City. From their own

representative and from other reliable sources he learns that, like all other placer mining districts, the amount of gold yearly obtained is receding, and the floating population has decreased; but that land must long produce gold. He likewise discussed mining conditions in British Columbia, where, he declares, that the wildcat methods have no longer their abiding place. "The attention of experts is now given over to the question of treating low-grade ore, because the future of the Province is bound up with its solution."

MUNICIPAL MOVEMENTS.

Two news items of great interest to the believers in municipal insurance were reported on the 18th inst.—very antagonistic in character. One was that the London (Eng.) County Council had decided to buy the North London tramways and electrify them; the council to spend \$60,000,000 on the project, which will add another 100 miles to the lines already owned and managed by the people of London. The other item refers to some strange proceedings in Philadelphia. Here, says the despatch, amid scenes of disorder unprecedented in the annals of that city, the city council voted to lease the city's gas works to the United Gas Improvement Company for a term of seventy-five years for the total sum of \$25,000,000, the money to be paid in various amounts before the end of 1907. The vote in common council was announced after three hours of debate, and a great uproar was started in the gallery, which was crowded to the door. From all over the gallery came hisses and cries of "thieves." The outburst was somewhat startling to the presiding officer, who made a vain effort to quell it. Finally he sent for a squad of police officers to clear the gallery. The crowd continued to hiss, and called the council thieves and other names until the police arrived.

At a joint meeting in Galt of the town council, board of trade, trades and labor council and citizens on the 11th inst. it was decided to recommend the council to establish a loan fund of \$10,000 as an initial step for the purpose of assisting prospective builders of moderate-cost houses. The idea is that anyone who has a piece of land within the municipality on which he wishes to erect a dwelling-house will be loaned a sum not exceeding \$1,000, for which the municipality will take a first mortgage on the property, said loan to be repaid in equal annual instalments, interest and sinking fund to be calculated on the price for which the municipality can sell the debentures, said debentures to run for a period of fifteen years. Possibly special legislation would have to be undertaken to authorize such an action, but no great difficulty is apprehended in obtaining it.

THE NEW TRANSCONTINENTAL LINE.

The first report of the Transcontinental Railway Commission has now been presented to Parliament, and would appear to confirm the favorable impressions previously formed with regard to the easy grade obtainable and the character and resources of the country traversed. It is stated that the board have decided in favor of taking over a portion of the survey work on the eastern division, which was performed by the Grand Trunk Pacific, and paying for it the sum of \$289,863. As regards the route through the country east of Winnipeg, it is hoped that a better line will be discovered than that advised by the railway surveyors, though this is looked on as being very fairly satisfactory. Another point upon which settlement still remains to be reached is as to whether the line shall run north or south of Lake Abitibi in Ontario. It is now definitely asserted that the Abitibi region and the country to the west of it are very inviting in the agricultural and climatic sense. The districts around Clear Lake, Que., and from there to Moncton should also be quite valuable with railroad facilities. Arrangements to secure uniform specifications in the eastern and western divisions of the new Transcontinental Railway have been approved. It has been asserted that there are almost insuperable physical difficulties in the way of constructing a direct line between Moncton and Levis, but the route, as the surveys show, runs all the way through