

# THE PRAIRIE.

(ILLUSTRATED)

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ERNEST BEAUFORT, Manager.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1890.

THE question of prairie fires must be grappled with at once, and the responsibility of those causing them established beyond a doubt. Every year for years past we have heard and read of disastrous fires wiping out the whole of the feed, embarrassing the richer and ruining the poorer settlers in the Northwest. We, in this country, have everything in our favor, a wet spring, a warm summer, magnificent harvest weather, and two to three months of snow (a magnificent fertilizer) in the winter. But these natural advantages will all go for nothing, if the country is to be constantly devastated by fire. One of the worst of the present year in the Calgary district was that of a few weeks ago, which completely wiped out thousands of acres of pasturage, causing great loss to the owners. Every endeavor should be made to discover how this fire originated, and the matter tested in the law courts, if no settlement can be arrived at.

The law should compel every individual and every company to take such precautions as would render it impossible for a fire to spread, even if one were started, in the shape of fire-guards along the C. P. R. and round the farm of every settler in the country.

Is there no remedy for this state of things? The only one we can suggest is for the government to take the responsibility upon themselves. They should appoint officers, whose sole duty it should be to see the law carried out, and to enquire into the cause of prairie fires, when they occur, collect evidence and bring charges against the suspected parties; or else we would suggest that such duties should be attached to the office of Homestead Inspector or Forest Ranger, or to that of some other official employed in the various Dominion Land offices

throughout the Territories. It is not fair to put the onus upon settlers, many of whom are poor men, and who cannot afford to incur the enmity of their neighbors. The police do all they can, but their duties are too many and varied to allow of their carrying out this properly. It must eventually resolve itself into a question for the government, and the sooner this is recognized the better for everyone concerned.

MUNICIPAL affairs are duly, very dull, we might say, stagnant. No one seems to know whether the present members will offer themselves for re-election, whether Mayor Lafferty will run again—in fact, no one seems to know anything. The present council, collectively, have done well, and can show a good record, but, individually, several members would do well to retire and seek that seclusion which they are so fitted to grace. The election will soon be on us, and it behoves our citizens to bestir themselves in the matter.

SWEET, delightful, charming, fascinating woman, how much you have to answer for, since the days of the fair and lightly-clad Eve. The last dear thing in petticoats and Parisian costumes, to upset the proverbial applecart is Mrs. O'Shea. Poor old Ireland has been indulging in "divarshons" for many years past, but things were, comparatively speaking, calm, cool, and collected, when we look at the present state of turmoil and ructions—before Parnell the Patriot, became known as Parnell the Seducer. Another injustice to Ireland, with a vengeance.



OUR Familiar delivers himself, in this issue, of something which has burdened his mind for some time past. It is this: England has been pouring her millions into the United States, to foster American industries, while, at the same time, in her own possessions, north of the border, there is an inconceivable mine of wealth lying dormant, for want of the same enterprise that she so willingly bestows on our friends south of the line. It is true, we do not hear so much about the sale of breweries, stockyards, &c., &c., as we did a short while past; perhaps Englishmen are beginning to realize that the Americans, having got these millions into circulation throughout their country, are not quite such chumps as to let it go again without some pretty tall scheming. Be that as it may, it is our part, who are privi-