

would fill the bill much better, providing it would work successfully. Some years ago The Commercial suggested that some one of an inventive turn of mind should get up a machine for burning fire guards, as well as for burning over weedy land or stubble. Machines for this purpose are now offered. A machine has been invented by a Winnipeg man, and we also notice that a machine for burning fire guards has been invented by a Manitoba man, which is claimed to be a great success. The machine, it is said, will burn a strip eleven feet wide, and the cost of operating is very small. If these machines are as great a success as they are claimed to be, every municipality should have one. They would also be very useful to individual farmers for burning off stubble or weedy land. Besides getting rid of the stubble, millions of seeds of weeds would be destroyed by burning over the stubble land.

CHARTER MONGERING

One of the companies which secured a charter to build a railway through the White pass, on the road to the Klondyke, is reported to have sold an option on the charter to another company, and if the deal goes through the first company will pocket about quarter of a million dollars as a result of its success in securing a charter from parliament. This charter-mongering in railway and other schemes is something which should be checked. It has become a disgrace. Companies seeking valuable franchises, should be obliged to put up a considerable deposit with the government as a guarantee of good faith, the deposit to be liable to forfeiture when charter-mongering is indulged in.

GUN ACCIDENTS

Several persons perished from the severe bush and prairie fires experienced in Manitoba this fall, and a great deal has been said about these regrettable calamities in the press. Every fall, during the shooting season, the victims of gun accidents are numerous. Of the latter we hear very little, no doubt because it is the usual thing. The victims of gun accidents we have always with us, at least during the shooting season, while a fatality from a bush or prairie fire is a comparatively rare occurrence.

HUDSON'S BAY CO.

It is reported that a history of the Hudson's Bay company is to be written and published. It will certainly make a very interesting volume. A history of the company will practically be a history of Western Canada, and it will form a most interesting and valuable addition to the literature relating to a vast portion of the Canadian dominion.

MISPLACED MEN

It is sometimes remarked that there is always a good opening in positions of trust for really valuable men. It is true that it is often difficult to get hold of a really valuable man, but at the same time capable men are often found in inferior positions, and are dominated over by men who are much their inferiors. The best man does not always get the best position by a long ways. Sometimes it is by lack of push or lack of confidence in his own abilities, that the best man remains in the inferior position. The writer, in his own experience, has known cases where an individual, through sheer cheek and unlimited confidence in himself, has pushed himself ahead and eliminated over the tops of several others who were his superiors in every respect except perhaps in the ability to push themselves ahead. Lack of confidence in one's self, if carried to a great extreme, may be classed as a lack of ability, but it is not always so. There is a medium. The number of "small" men who occupy "large" positions is not altogether an indication that competent men are scarce. It often means that the "small" man has had sufficient confidence and vigor to push himself ahead of others who perhaps were much more capable to fill the position. Certain it is however, that we find many small, narrow men in important positions. Men without any breadth of view or fine sense of honor, are sometimes found at the head of a large company; men who for some flimsy excuse would dock twenty-five cents from the subscription price of a weekly paper; while occupying a minor position in the employment of the same concern may be found men who would do honor to the best position in the keeping of the company. Really valuable men for certain positions are no doubt often hard to find, but just as often the best man is overlooked. Principals often make mistakes in advancing employees, by mistaking push and confidence for solid ability. The "small" man in the "big" position is no means a rarity, and his position makes him seem all the smaller, but there are more really valuable men occupying very humble positions.

TARIFF EFFECT ON HIDES

Frank Lightcap, hide and wool dealer, Winnipeg, has returned from an extended trip east. Formerly a large portion of the hides and wool purchased in Winnipeg was shipped to the States, but the new United States tariff has somewhat upset the calculations of the Winnipeg dealers in these lines. Mr. Lightcap, therefore, went east to study the situation in eastern markets, with a view to shipping his purchases that way. After

visiting Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and other eastern markets, and studying the situation thoroughly, he has come to the conclusion that even in the face of the present high tariff, hides can be shipped to the States from Manitoba to almost as good advantage as to sell them in the east. That this is a correct conclusion is born out by the fact that even in Ontario, with tanneries close at hand, hides are being exported to the United States. Mr. Lightcap says there is keen competition in the hide trade at Toronto and Montreal just now, owing to an attempt at both places to run some buyers out of the market. He also was surprised to notice the very poor class of cattle killed for the local market at Montreal. Mr. Lightcap visited Chicago, Minneapolis and other points in the United States on his way back; and found the impression prevailing that the present high duty on hides would not long be maintained. On wool, however, the feeling is that the duties will be maintained until there is a reaction in the public sentiment upon the tariff question. He says that enormous profits have been made on wool this year, owing to the recent big advance in the States by holders of that article, but he predicts low prices in Canada next year for wool, as we are now practically shut out of the United States market. This year, however, owing to the large shipments to the United States before the tariff went into effect, stocks in Canada are light and holders here will make good profits.

DUTY ON MAIL MATTER

The new customs regulations, allowing mail matter of less than 50 cents in value to be admitted free of duty, is a great boon to the public. The collection of duty on articles of trifling value, especially catalogues and similar things of no intrinsic value to the receiver, has been a source of irritation in the past.

YEAR BOOK

The Statistical Year Book of Canada has been issued by the Department of Agriculture. This is a very useful book of reference, issued annually by the Federal Government. A large space is devoted to trade statistics, but many other subjects are dealt with, such as population, railways, official information, minerals, canals, marine, postal and financial matters, etc. It is prepared under the direction of Geo. Johnson, chief of the statistical department, Ottawa.

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