

1,038; in 1904—men, 999; women, 166; children, 8—total, 1,173; in 1905—men, 895; women, 211; children, 9—total, 1,115; in 1906—men, 999; women, 192; children, 6—total, 1,197. The number of patients in fever and smallpox hospitals was:—In 1903, 3,279; in 1904, 2,598; in 1905, 3,174; in 1906, 4,035.

The increase is doubtless large, but does not confirm the sensational reports that have been published.

COUNTRY HOTELS.

Occasionally we hear complaints of poor hotel accommodation in the smaller towns, and in the larger ones, too. When a new town is started in this country, one of the first buildings to be put up is a hotel. It may be crude at first, but it comes. There is no more alert business in the west than that of hotel-keeping. Now, while the hotel is nearly always a private concern, we are of the opinion that it should be under the eye of the town authorities in more respects than its liquor license. It should receive more attention at the lodging end. There is nothing drives a man more quickly from one place to another than poor accommodation, if he be a transient, or one looking into the prospects of the locality. We venture to state that there are places in the west that have well-organized publicity bureaus that have not a first-class country hotel. If you want business men and good settlers to come into your town, don't forget that an unpleasant lodging place may so disgust them in one day that they will take the next train for some other place.

We claim, then, that every section of the country should see to it that there is at least one up-to-date hostelry, where new comers and visitors may be helped to form a good impression of the community. We have found hotels in different towns that are a credit to their localities, but in a great many instances the proprietor pays more attention to the liquor department than he does to the comfort of his guests.—"The Commercial."

RATS AS INCENDIARIES.

Many fires, the origin of which are ascribed to "unknown causes," are caused by rats. Especially is this the case where they can have access to the common friction match; for, strange to say, they are exceedingly fond of nibbling at the phosphorous on the ends. This fact is amply proved by a number of cases: a recent one, vouched for by an eye-witness is as follows: some workmen, who had been repairing a gas pipe, left some broken but unexploded matches upon the floor; soon after they left, a rat came out of his hole, and finding one of the matches, commenced to nibble at the sulphur

end; in a moment there was a flash, and a lighted match was burning on the floor, which had it not been immediately extinguished, might have created another fire from "cause unknown."

They will also carry matches to their nests, where they have been found in numerous well authenticated instances. One instance was where, on the removal of the floor of a stable, several nests were found, made up of straw and other easily inflammable material, in quantities sufficient to set fire to surrounding woodwork, in which were several matches. Another similar case was where a dwelling-house floor had been taken up to repair steam-heating pipes, a rat's nest was there found with several matches in it, evidently obtained from an open match "safe" in the room below. In both of the cases, of course, the matches had not been exploded, for had they been, they would never have been found, and the verdict of the burning would have been "cause unknown," in the first case, and "steam pipes" in the other.

In view of this predilection of rats for matches, it is but the exercise of ordinary prudence on the part of match users to put them in closed boxes, or have them otherwise beyond the reach of these hungry rodents.

WESTMOUNT TAXABLE PROPERTY.

The recent statement prepared by property valuers, in Westmount, shows the value of taxable property, in Montreal's premier suburb as amounting to \$13,931,255. The value of property exempt from taxation, amounts to \$2,147,365 which if added to taxable property makes the present total valuation \$16,078,620. Taxable property in Westmount last year amounted to \$12,439,895.

QUERIES' COLUMN.

In order to furnish our readers with information we propose to devote this column to replies to correspondents. Letters should be addressed to "THE CHRONICLE, Enquiry Department, Montreal."

Answers will only be given to such communications as bear the writer's name, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and only to questions referring to matters of general interest in regard to which the Editor of Queries' Column will exercise his own discretion.

1584.—F. D., Oshawa.—Lake of the Woods preferred is a cumulative 7 p.c. per annum security. The dividends are payable in quarterly instalments of 1¾ p.c. on the 1st March, June, September and December. The common stock pays semi-annual dividends of 3 p.c. or 6 p.c. per annum, in April and October.

1585.—J. L. S., New York.—The highest price touched for sets on the Montreal Stock Exchange