



A Unique Meeting Point—Four Transcontinental Railways, the Canadian Pacific, Canadian Northern, Grand Trunk Pacific and Great Northern meet at Portage La Prairie—The Pipes shown on left contain the Signal Wires, all Controlled from one Signal-tower

A WESTERN JOURNEY

Winnipeg, June 30th, 1908,
THE third stage of my journey carried me from Winnipeg to Edmonton over the Canadian Northern Railway, back to Warman Junction, a few miles south to Saskatoon, and back to Winnipeg via Regina. In this portion of the trip I travelled nearly 1,700 miles, of which over 1,300 miles was through territory which has been settled in the last five years. It comprises many different varieties of soil and landscape, but the whole district has one characteristic—it produces wheat. No matter what the size of the town, whether the buildings in each numbered dozens or hundreds, there were the inevitable elevators along the inevitable railway sidings. In northern Manitoba and north-eastern Saskatchewan there were a few miles of territory where the landscape was not dotted with little clumps of primitive farm buildings, but otherwise you cannot look out of the railway carriage window over any portion of the country without seeing growing grain, farm-houses and hamlets.

No matter how pessimistic the traveller may be, no matter how easily and persistently he is able to call up doubts and supposititious difficulties, no one may travel over this country and return unconvinced. It is the granary of North America. It has been tried and proven. It is the great West. It will be the home of millions. In the great provinces which comprise the West, or to give it its newer name, "Central Canada," there are only about a million people as yet, but in ten years there will be from three to four millions. This is not a prophecy. The development has gone too far for mere prophecy. The experimental stage is passed. An occasional bad harvest will make little difference. The great future is as certain as to-morrow's sun-rising.

The population of Manitoba has been multiplied by twenty-five in a period of thirty-eight years. The population of Saskatchewan and Alberta have increased even faster. Seven years ago Edmonton had a population of 2,626, according to the Dominion census; to-day it has 19,000 citizens. Five years ago Saskatoon was a village; to-day it is a town of over 5,000. Five years ago, Kamsack, Humboldt, Vonda, Langham, North Saskatchewan, Lloydminster, Vermilion, and Vegreville, were unknown names, but to-day they are thriving towns along a transcontinental railway then unbuilt. There are over one hundred stations on the C. N. R. between Winnipeg and Edmonton. There will be as many on the new C. P. R. line from Winnipeg to Westaskiwin, just south of Ed-

monton. There will be at least half as many on the C. P. R. extension to Lacombe. Another hundred will be added to the geography when the G. T. P. opens in the autumn between Portage and Edmonton. Three hundred and fifty new towns on these four lines alone. There will be easily another hundred and fifty on short lines and extensions. Five hundred new towns in five or six years supply sufficient evidence that the experimental stage has passed. Towns don't grow until after the farmers have got to work on the land. Where there are no farmers, there are no towns.

PROPHECIES SURPASSED.

I was considerably astonished when one man told me that nearly everything the authorities had told about the Northwest in the years gone was wrong—"dead wrong." They said that Southern Alberta was suitable for ranching only, and that it would never be a wheat-producing district. To-day it is filled with farmers who make fortunes out of Red Winter Wheat. An idiot of a Mormon farmer wandered into the country, stuck in his plough, and proved the impossible. In the same way, the Government said that the district immediately north of Regina would not support a farming population; to-day it is considered one of the finest districts in the West. The truth is that wherever grass will grow in the West, wheat will grow. In some places it will grow better than others—a trite remark, but one which applies to every province and state in North America. Adjoining sections of western land are not necessarily equal in value. One may be worth \$30 an acre; and the other only \$10. Every 640 acres must be judged on its own merits, even though they all grow more or less grain. Buying farms from a map is not a safe proceeding, unless it is done on a large scale, so that there will be a fair average.

NOT ALL WHEAT.

Nor should the reader fail to remember that wheat is not the only product which turns to gold in the West. In nearly every town you will find the farmer's wife bringing in butter and eggs and poultry. She hasn't a great deal to sell yet, but this spring she has paid many a little grocery bill in this way. The potatoes grow large—larger in the north than the south; and potatoes bring ready cash in this country of hungry prospectors and engineers and bridge-builders and railway navvies.

Then hay, oats and barley are staple products. Vast quantities of these are grown. When it gets too late in the spring to sow any more wheat, the farmer sows oats or barley. When he wants to

give his land a change of occupation, he rotates his grain crops.

Then there is the cattle business. If I were to predict that in twenty-five years the Canadian West would be producing as great quantities of pork and beef as the United States West, and that some of the largest packing houses in the world would be situated there, many people would smile at my enthusiasm. Yet up at Edmonton, in the north-west corner of this great Northwest, the Swift company, of Chicago, is just completing a packing house which will employ 250 people, and handle a million dollars worth of products annually. At Edmonton—just think of it—where the railways at present are halting for breath after their mad rush across the great wide prairie. When these railways have pushed north and west of that capital city for two or three hundred miles, that packing house will need to be duplicated and triplicated. And the Edmonton district does not produce the largest quantities of hogs and cattle, by any means. Farther south, this industry has been longer established and has attained to larger proportions.

In Manitoba in 1906-07, the farmers fattened 18,000 head of cattle, and stalled 150,000 milch cows. The butter produced was valued at over a million dollars. There was also produced nearly sixty million bushels of oats, barley and flax. Alberta and Saskatchewan grew forty million bushels of these same three grains. As for horses, cattle, sheep, and butter, the newer provinces combined produced even more than Manitoba. Add to this Alberta's coal, of which there are immense deposits throughout the whole province, and the point is emphasized that the West is more than a wheat country.

THE GREAT RIVALRY.

Aside from wheat rivalry, the greatest rivalry in the West is that among the jobbing and manufacturing centres. There is a town rivalry. Winnipeg is now the great wholesale centre of the West, but there are younger towns determined to contest with Winnipeg every inch of debatable ground. Fort William, situated at a point where coal may be brought by water, believes that it will be a centre for heavy manufacturing—agricultural implements, stoves, engines, and such like. Its cheap electric energy from Kakebeka Falls will aid in bringing this about. Regina is already a jobbing centre, and it hopes to be the next large city west of Winnipeg. Calgary is already boasting that over two hundred commercial travellers are employed by the whole-