

Fort William, Ontario.

Special Correspondence of The Commercial.

This town, about which so much has been said within the past six months, is situated on the Kaministiquia river a few hundred yards from where it empties into Thunder bay. It is on the main line of the C. P. R., and is the point at which the great lake boats connect with the trains from the west. It may be said to be a production of the present year, as until the opening months of this year, very little importance was attached to it. But the action of the C. P. R. in making it the terminal point for their line of steamships and in establishing their roundhouses and shops in the town was the signal for a general rush to it of merchants, tradesmen and real estate dealers, until it may now be classed among the great lake ports of Canada.

Its harborage is really good, the Kaministiquia being wide enough and deep enough to afford the largest of the lake vessels a safe passage to the docks. For several years it has occupied a leading position as a grain shipping point, the C. P. R. having erected two large elevators here some years ago, each of which has a capacity of over a million bushels. A large proportion of the wheat crop of Manitoba and the territories, passes through these elevators every year on its way to the eastern ports.

Since Fort William was made the terminal point for the lake steamship lines, it has of course been the point at which freight is transferred from water to rail and *vice versa*. This gives employment to a large number of men and adds not a little to the importance of the town. A very large iron sheeted freight shed has been erected, fitted with the best facilities for the quick moving of freight, and with the number of men employed it is possible to unload the largest vessels in a very few hours. Then there are the coal docks, equipped with immense machines for lifting coal from the holds of vessels and carrying it to the coal piles. This also gives employment to a large number of men. As before stated the roundhouse is situated here and has accommodation for 16 or 18 engines. An over-head bridge is now being constructed for the convenience of passengers to and from the boats and trains.

One of the most important additions to the buildings of the town is the new C. P. R. hotel which has just been completed. This is situated at the east end of the town, and although it is somewhat distant from the business portion, is very convenient to the station and steamboat landings.

Judging from what has already been said in this article, the reader might be led to the conclusion that the town is entirely composed of the C. P. R. and its employees. That, however, is not the case, as independent of that company altogether there are a large number of enterprising people settled here who have opened in different lines in business and are fast developing the trade interests of the town.

The site has been surveyed, and is now being cleared for a considerable distance back from the river, which will leave plenty of room for newcomers.

The most prominent financial institution of the town is the Commercial Bank of Manitoba branch. This is under the management of Mr. A. H. Dickens. A fine brick block was erected some time ago in which the business of the bank

is transacted. A branch of Ray, Street & Co., bank at Port Arthur has also been opened here with Mr. Jarvis in charge.

The golden prospects of the town have induced a large number of storekeepers to open here in different lines of business. Among the most prominent of these is John King, who opened a general store some four years ago. He is also an extensive dealer in liquors. The general store of Miller & Morton is a large and well appointed establishment. It has been in existence for several years and has grown from a very small beginning to its present size. In fancy goods, the Bazaar, of which Miss E. J. McCallum is proprietress, takes the leading place. She was formerly in business at West Fort William. A. D. Sutherland & Co., have been doing business here in the groceries and crockery since last summer. There are two firms doing business in clothing, tailoring and gents' furnishings, namely; Vivian & Alford, and Rutledge & Hammond. J. C. Vivian, of the former firm, was in business in Port Arthur for a number of years previous to his opening this store. Garland & Elliott, also of Port Arthur, opened a branch of their Port Arthur clothing store in this place about three weeks ago. Piper Bros., and George Mooring are as yet the only firms in the furniture line; they are doing a fair trade. R. Wood is just opening a watch making and jewellery store, and Dr. Smilie, formerly of Birtle, a drug store, both are in the Commercial Bank block. Madill & Snelgrove are doing a bakery business. A recent addition to the list of hotels is that of S. Adams, known as the Club Chambers. This was opened last January and as Mr. Adams is an old commercial traveller himself, having travelled for an eastern liquor firm for a number of years he is specially qualified to look after the comfort and convenience of that class of the travelling public. *The Journal* is so far, the only newspaper established, but under the proprietorship of Messrs. McLaren & Rutledge it is fully able to keep the people of the town and surrounding district posted as to what is going on in the outside world. The saw and planing mill of Graham & Horne is situated on the Kaministiquia, a short distance up that river and is at present very busily engaged in sawing lumber for the different new buildings going up in the town. The mill gives employment to about sixty men. This is by no means a complete list of the businesses of the town, but it may be accepted as a representative one.

It will be noticed in reading the above that the word West is sometimes added to Fort William. This is not as might be supposed, merely the western portion of the town, but is the name of another town situated two or three miles farther up the river. Until very recently it was customary to use the words east and west to designate which was meant, but the East town has grown so much lately, partly at the expense of the west, that it is not necessary to add the word east to indicate that it is meant, the word west is retained, however, in speaking of the other town.

Before any of these stores mentioned could be opened, it was, of course, necessary that suitable buildings should be erected and that has furnished mechanics and laborers of all kinds, with employment. These buildings, though not all as costly as the Commercial Bank block, are still in nearly every case of a very

substantial kind. Dwelling houses were also required and a number of very nice ones have been erected, and more are in course of erection. The visitor is struck as soon as he leaves the train, with the brand new appearance of the town.

The Port Arthur, Duluth and Western Railway, which is now in course of construction, has at the time of writing, reached a point about one mile from the proposed site of its Fort William station. This is on the opposite side of the town from the C. P. R. The agreement between the town and the railway company provides that unless the line was completed to the town before the first of July no grant would be made by the town to them. But, by prompt and energetic work which shows the mettle of those in charge of the construction, the line is now almost completed and will be so some days before the date agreed upon. There is no doubt but that this line will be a great boon to Fort William, and it will exercise a very great influence over the future of the town.

The residents of Fort William have unbounded faith in its future and judging from the progress it has made since the closing months of 1890, when it first began to attract attention we should judge that they are in a fair way to have their hopes realized.

A Novelty in Foot Wear.

Morton, Alexander & Morton, tanners and manufacturers of boots and shoes, Winnipeg, have introduced a novelty in foot wear, in the line of dog skin boots. The skin of the dog when properly prepared, makes a most valuable article of leather for fine boots and shoes. The firm prepare the skins at their own tannery here, by a secret process, and herein lies the great value of the leather. A number of samples of dog skin leather were examined, and they appeared to be of excellent quality. The leather has a splendid appearance, is fine in the grain, takes a high polish, and is light, soft and flexible, readily adjusting itself to the foot. It is claimed that it is also very durable, and retains a fresh appearance longer than other fine leathers. It resembles Dongola goat in appearance, but is finer in texture. The manufacturers claim that it is superior to the famous kangaroo leather. Fino haired dogs, such as retrievers, spaniels, etc., make the best leather, while that from coarse, straight haired dogs is thicker, stiffer and coarser in appearance. A bulldog hide shown, was as heavy as kip. A number of pairs of boots and shoes made from dog skin were examined, and they appeared equal to anything offered.

The firm buys all the desirable dog skins offered, and they require all they can get for use in their shoe manufacturing department. There are a good many useless curs about the city, which would be of considerable service if turned into shoe leather by Morton, Alexander & Morton's process of tanning.

MONTREAL *Trade Bulletin*—One of our leading merchants remarked to an eminent financier a few days ago "the long credit given to dry goods men was, in many instances, an encouragement to fraud and dishonesty." The financier admitted that such was undoubtedly too frequently the case where nine months credit and renewals obtain. Severe as such statements sound, there may be more truth than poetry in them.