

Along the Main Line West

Notes of a Trip by a Commercial Representative

The towns in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories are, with few exceptions, situated on some line of railway, having, as a general rule, come into existence after the construction of the railway and location of the station. These stations are usually placed at a distance of from seven to twelve miles apart, and it is a noticeable fact that in most parts of the country there is a town of considerable importance at every second station, the intermediate one having only one or possibly two stores and a few dwellings. This rule, however, does not hold good on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, as at most of the stations there is a very fair sized town with one at irregular intervals of much larger dimensions. This may be accounted for by the fact that the country tributary to the main line was the first to develop and the smaller towns have kept pace with the growth in the surrounding country.

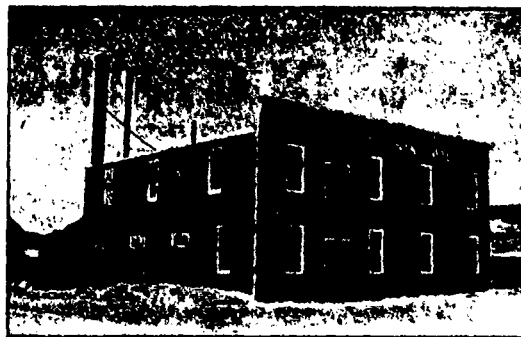
Poplar Point and High Bluff are the only towns between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie. These are both small places, but show signs of growth. Mention has been made of Portage la Prairie in a previous issue. West of this town Burnside and Bagot, are the next stations reached. These must also be included among the smaller places along this line.

MacGregor, the next station, is a very good business point. All the different kinds of goods required by the farmer are to be had here, there being two or more dealers in most lines. Several changes in ownership have occurred in the last year. Thos. Stinson, fruits and confectionery, sold out to Moeckel & Course; Geo. Freeman, confectionery, biscuits, etc., sold out to James Pierce; P. W. Martin bought the general stock of Little Bros.; H. Dunbar now owns the blacksmith business formerly belonging to John Little; E. E. Turner opened a butcher shop; B. A. Rose, of Douglas, bought the bakery business from Mrs. George Rogers, and James Martin started in boots, shoes and groceries in a stand which he had fitted up for the purpose. While there are large quantities of wheat grown in this district most of the farmers have also some cattle to sell each year, and one authority estimates that there were at least 1,000 head sold from these parts last season. Quite a number of these were young cattle which were sold partly on account of lack of feed and also to make up for the shortage in the crop. Another source of revenue to the settlers here is the sale of fire wood, of which a large amount is shipped from this station every winter.

At Austin there are two general stores, two hardware, two confectionery stands, bakery, harness shop, drug store, lumber yard, three implement warehouses, butcher shop, a flour mill of 150 barrels daily capacity and two elevators. The land surrounding this town was originally all covered with bush or scrub, but a large part has now been cleared off and is being cultivated. The farmers here raise in addition to grain large numbers of cattle and their funds are also swelled

by the proceeds received from the sale of the wood taken off their land when clearing it for cropping.

Sidney is also in a mixed farming district and, like MacGregor and Austin, ships out a lot of firewood each year. This business has fallen off somewhat this last year owing to the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway branch from MacGregor, which runs through part of this district and shortens the haul for the farmer considerably. A station, known as Elrans, has been opened just north of Sidney, but as there has been only one general store opened there the merchants of Sidney still receive the most of the business. It is quite probable that other stores will be started at this new town and secure their share of the trade, but as Sidney is surrounded by a good district which is becoming better settled each year it is not likely that any decrease in the volume of business will result. Two new stores were opened last year and some buildings erected. John McElrea, grocer and hardware merchant, erected a substantial brick block, the front portion of which is occupied by Arkell's drug store, started last fall, and the rear portion by Mr. McElrea for storage purposes. On the upper flat is a large hall, seating 300 persons.



Jas. White's Planing Mill, Carberry, Man.

planting of additional trees, such as white spruce, Banksian pine, Scotch fir, etc., as soon as feasible.

Mention has already been made of C. J. Hurt's flour mill. This was built a little over a year ago and is equipped with the latest improved machinery of the universal bolting system. This makes a cleaner and better flour than the old style, economizes space, and uses very little power. The mill is lighted with electricity and has a power hoist connecting the different floors. This year a wheat drying machine was added.

The planing mill started two years ago by White & Parrott is now owned by Jas. White. He manufactures all

G. R. Kerr, harness maker, has sold out to W. Rabe, who also handles boots, shoes and men's clothing. A. F. Elliott, general merchant, is retiring from business and H. Higgins has opened out with a stock of groceries, and will shortly add clothing and the other lines belonging to a general stock. W. Dickson, general merchant, has been here for many years and has worked up a good business. W. Goldsmith handles agricultural implements and D. A. McElquhan has a hardware store and also sells farm implements, while J. Birtles takes charge of the fresh meat supply for the town and district. The farmers' elevator at this point was burned last fall, leaving still two elevators and a flat grain warehouse.

Griswold has long been known favorably among business men. It is surrounded by a good farming country and the business done each year by the merchants here represents a large sum of money. It has four elevators which go to prove that a large amount of grain is raised, although the crop was a light one this last year in common with other parts of the country. The A. E. Hill Co., Ltd., H. A. Searth and Speers & Paul have general stores, each carrying a large stock, and J. G. Humphrey has a furniture warehouse. Alex. Speer bought out the butcher business of A. H. Speer, but with the exception of this change the merchants now in business here are the same as at the time of our visit a year ago.

Oak Lake is somewhat larger than the last two places. It has one strong drawing card in the flour mill of Leitch Bros., which is among the finest in this western country. This is 1250 barrels daily capacity and turns out a very fine grade of flour, "Anchor Brand" being well known to the trade. The crop yield last season averaged probably about twelve bushels to the acre, and even with this short crop about 400,000 bushels were marketed here. There are four elevators and the mill to handle this crop. The country to the south of the town is sandy, and while there are some high ridges of fair farming land, this portion is, on the whole, best suited to mixed farming as there is a great deal of hay land; the northern portion, however, is a very fine farming section and no further proof of this need be shown than the handsome and substantial buildings of the farmers. The weekly "News" is now occupying new quarters and the Presbyterian congregation erected last year a brick veneer church at a cost of about \$4,000, including the furnishings, which comprise seats for nearly 400. The cut we show of this church was loaned by the "News." A number of very good farm houses were built last summer and a brick church erected about eight miles north of the town by the Methodist congregation.

The district from which the town of Virden draws its support is rolling prairie land, best suited for mixed farming. Within a radius of about four miles of the town the soil is sandy, but beyond that it is heavy and admirably suited for wheat growing. While most of the farmers own some cattle, they have not as yet many to sell, but each year they are increasing in number, recognizing the fact that mixed farming is the surest and most profitable. There are four elevators and a mill here, which shows that this is a good grain market, but the amount of wheat shipped out this year was far short of the ordinary output. This decrease is due to the



Flour Milling Plant of C. J. Hurt, Carberry, Man.

A. Gillis also built a two story brick block, which is occupied by H. E. Hamilton, implement dealer, and John Bolton, who started a bakery and confectionery business last summer. The flour mill of Geo. Rogers has been purchased by C. J. Hurt, of Carberry.

Carberry is the largest and most important point between Portage la Prairie and Brandon and comes well to the top of the list of business places in Manitoba. It has many fine buildings, both business and residential, and is a clean, bright and attractive looking town of about 1,200 of a population. It has many large stores filled with the newest goods, offering a wide range from which to select. The country tributary to this point is one of the choice wheat sections of Manitoba, and an idea of the quantity of grain raised may be formed from the fact that there are eight elevators here as well as a flour mill of 180 barrels daily capacity. In addition to the grain, nearly every farmer has some stock, and in certain sections stock raising is gone into quite extensively. There are several cattle buyers at this point and one of these estimates last year's shipments at from eight to ten thousand head, but many of these, no doubt, were brought in from points nearer some other station. About six miles to the south of Carberry is a district known as the Sand Hill region, which is covered with spruce trees, and is little or no use for settlement. The Forestry association are petitioning the department of the Interior at Ottawa to reserve this land as a central Manitoba park, and to undertake the

lines of goods required for buildings in the way of sash, doors, mouldings, etc., and has worked up a good business.

Some business changes have occurred during the year. J. Slemon bought out C. N. Des Forges, butcher; the firm of Smale & Treavor, butchers, is now Treavor & Lee; Beck & Stacey opened a restaurant and confectionery stand last year and report having done a good business.

Douglas is the next town reached. There are several stores here but it is hardly likely that this will ever become a large town as it is too close to Carberry and Brandon.

Brandon has already been mentioned in this journal recently. It is the second city in importance in Manitoba and from its railway connection is likely to assume importance in the not very distant future as a distributing point.

Still proceeding westward along the main line Alexander is next reached. The district surrounding this town is best adapted to grain growing, although most of the farmers keep some stock and have a few head of cattle to sell each year. The crops in this section last season averaged about six or seven bushels to the acre, but this low average is due not alone to the unfavorable season, as a destructive hail storm swept a portion about two miles wide and six or seven miles long. Jas. Forman, hardware and lumber merchant, reports a good business in lumber during the year, a number of good buildings having been erected through the country.

John McElrea Block, Sidney, Man.