

THE CLAYWORKING INDUSTRY.

Saskatchewan is comparatively a new Province with respect to the rest of the Dominion. Within the last fifteen years settlement has been very rapid, and the handiest and easiest materials of construction have been used. In the early days there was a lack of stone or wood for the construction of places of habitation for man and beast, hence the settler turned to the sod, and built himself rude shelters of this material.

With the dissemination of the knowledge that the prairie lands promised rich harvests of grain, small settlements, favourably located regarding transportation, rapidly grew to towns and cities. During this feverish and optimistic period building materials of the best were required in abundance, and at short notice. The resources of the Province were unknown, and established structural materials were looked for in the American market. In supplying this demand the American brick makers as far south as St. Louis, and east to Pennsylvania, reaped a harvest. While this rush was on, only two common brick plants and two face brick plants were in operation, and that for only part of the time.

On the strength of the boom a plant was built at Claybank before the coming of the Canadian Northern railway to the locality, but, unfortunately, the railway was not available until the wane of the building boom. This plant at Claybank, owned by the Dominion Fire Brick and Clay Products Co., has turned out a fine range of flashed brown face brick, made by the dry-press process from the refractory clays of the Fort Union formation. At present, the company is concentrating on the production of refractories, and the outlook is very promising. The product made should be equal to the standard firebrick imported from the United States.

One of the oldest and largest plants in the Claybank area is that of the Estevan Coal and Brick Company, located on the bank of the Souris valley, one mile south of Estevan. It is producing an excellent red face brick made by the dry-press process, and common, buff, stiff-mud brick.

Six miles south of this, at Shand station, the Maple Leaf Mines, Ltd., (Shand Coal and Brick Co.) operate a stiff-mud brick plant, using buff-burning calcareous clays. The product is an excellent grade of common wire-cut brick.

At Weyburn, the Weyburn Brick Company operated a dry-press and stiff-mud plant for a number of years; but it has been shut down since 1914. The raw materials present some difficulties, and, should the plant be operated again, it would be well to consider using the refractory clays of Yellow Grass and Halbrite.

East of Weyburn, at Arcola, the Arcola Brick Works operate a stiff-mud brick plant for making common buff brick.

In the oldest settled part of the Province, along the main line of the Canadian Pacific railway, several small, soft-mud brick plants have been