

The Mennonites.

Jacob Y. Shantz, of Berlin, Ont., has furnished for the press interesting particulars of the founding of the Mennonite settlements in Manitoba.

In November, 1872, Mr. Shantz, associated with a German delegate from Southern Russia, Valentine Warkentine, at the request of the Dominion government, made a visit to Manitoba, which at that time contained but few settlers besides some halfbreeds, to find if it were suitable for a large immigration of German Russians who professed the Mennonite religion. After a thorough examination they concluded it was just what was wanted. Mr. Shantz at once commenced communications with those people in Russia, and the result was that in 1873 a delegation of 17 came over from different localities of that country, and again accompanied Mr. Shantz to Manitoba to see for themselves the promised land. Some of them decided at once in favor of our country, while others preferred locating further south, in Kansas, Nebraska, etc., but all the latter lived to regret that they did not also go to Manitoba. The following year, 1874, 390 families, 1,920 souls, landed on a location or landing place on the banks of the Red river, selected by Mr. Shantz, six miles from which—on the reserve—he had erected four immigration sheds, 20x100 each, where they could stay till they had selected their homesteads. In 1875, 593 families, 2,838 souls, followed and were also in due time located by the energy of our excellent fellow-citizen, who seemed to have a pretty free hand from the government to do what he thought best. These people kept coming as follows: In 1876, 346 families, 1,916 souls; in 1877, 18 families, 183 souls; in 1878, 56 families, 318 souls; in 1879, 33 families, 203 people; in 1880, 13 families, 59 people, making a total up to that date of 1,336 families and 7,442 souls. After this the law in Russia was so changed that others could not leave. They realized but little for their land and effects in that far country. Being therefore, poor, and everything dear in Manitoba, they got assistance by the way of a loan of \$91,200, secured by the Mennonites of Ontario, mostly in Waterloo county, and another \$34,000 from our people here, making a total of \$125,200. About 100 years ago these people had left Germany and gone to Russia, having been guaranteed freedom of religious worship and immunity from bearing arms. This guarantee was afterwards withdrawn by the government after notice, and which was the occasion of their looking towards America. J. Y. Shantz virtually had charge of the entire disposal and disposition of this large sum of money, and there was never a whisper that one cent was wrongly placed or appropriated. He also helped these people in collecting and paying back with interest all that had thus been loaned. There could be no better proof of the excellency and value of Manitoba for settlement. The great success of the Mennonite settlements gave an immense boom to that country and immigrants from other countries as well as from the older provinces of the Dominion rapidly followed, filling up gradually the free grant lands of the prairie province. He says, from years of observation and many visits there, that all industrious and economical settlers are doing well. During the last four years Mr. S. has seen a great deal of the Saskatchewan and Alberta districts, and thinks them equally good with Manitoba, especially those on the Calgary and Edmonton railway. He and a number of others, including members of his own family, have made their choice at Didsbury station, 46 miles north of Calgary, to start a colony, and for the convenience of settlers there has been built an immigration shed 20x100, wherein settlers can lodge while selecting their homesteads

around that station. The Waterloo colony are doing remarkably well and are thoroughly contented and happy. Settlements all along the Edmonton road are very rapid, special trains with immigrants going in all summer and several times a week. These new settlements, mostly from the States, have already extended 30 and 40 miles east and west of Edmonton. Many of them are Germans, and they are arranging to send for their friends and families in the old land as soon as they are able to do so. Very successful agricultural exhibitions have been held this year in different parts of Alberta. Mr. Shantz has very little doubt but that the country north of Calgary for several hundred miles will not be many years in being as good and nearly as well settled as any part of this great Dominion.

In connection with the above facts it may not be uninteresting to again go back to the first visit of J. Y. Shantz to that country. Winnipeg, or Fort Garry, was then a straggling village (of about 70) people, houses mostly of logs. He there met Dr. Schultz, Mr. Norquay and others, who assisted in every way with carriage, etc., to see the country. They travelled north for 20 miles without seeing a settler. They then went west to Poplar Point, Portage la Prairie, High Bluff, etc., some 50 miles. These were only small settlements. They also visited the places of Kenneth Mackenzie and Mr. Grant, settled on by a few years, and found enormous products, indicating a marvellous richness of soil. While making this trip the thermometer fell to 29 below zero, and yet they saw herds of cattle on the prairie, and they drove 16 miles in an open carriage without stopping to warm, all of which convinced them that the air is dry and cold, not so much felt as in Ontario, when 20 degrees higher. This was in Nov. 1872.

What a contrast now from that date. Winnipeg has grown to a city of 40,000 inhabitants, one of the finest on the continent. Everything modern is found there and a degree of prosperity hardly seen anywhere else. A fuller description is interesting, but our time is up.

Insurance Statistics.

All the principal insurance companies doing business in Canada under Dominion license are fully represented in Western Canada. The chief offices of most of these companies for Manitoba, the territories and British Columbia are located in Winnipeg. To give an idea of the magnitude of the insurance business of the West the following statistics have been published. There are some thirty-two fire insurance companies doing business in Manitoba with assets in Canada of \$15,216,676 and liabilities of \$7,398,318; some twenty-seven life insurance companies with assets of \$17,301,040 and liabilities of \$11,900,150; six inland marine insurance companies with assets of \$3,595,141 and liabilities of \$2,159,704; seven accident insurance companies with assets of \$1,687,716 and liabilities of \$1,310,763; four Plate Glass insurance companies, with assets of \$151,638 and liabilities of \$2,871; three Guarantee insurance companies, with assets of \$916,829 and liabilities of \$543,856; two Boiler insurance companies, with assets of \$113,391 and liabilities of \$20,459; and, lastly, the Dominion Burglary Guarantee company, with assets of \$28,000.

There are altogether eighty-three insurance companies having their head offices in Winnipeg for the whole of Western Canada with combined assets in Canada of over \$72,013,491 and liabilities of over \$51,116,256. The above figures only refer to assets and liabilities in Canada and in no way refer to the capital of the many large foreign companies doing business in this country.

Mr. Bentley, of Lothbridge, Alberta, went east last week with a shipment of forty-one thoroughbred range horses.

A terrific storm raged east and south of Manitoba, on Tuesday last. Two feet of snow on the level was reported from some sections of southern Minnesota and Wisconsin, and drifts many feet high were made by the furious wind, blocking railway and street traffic at St. Paul, Minneapolis, Duluth and other points. The storm was not felt in Manitoba, though the temperature fell here to pretty cold weather for the first of April, due no doubt to the influence of the storm south.

J. Y. Griffin & Co., Winnipeg, are sending out the following advices: The market for hogs is weaker than when we last wrote you. However, we are still paying \$3.75 per 100 lbs. off cars, Winnipeg, for choice quality, weighing 150 to 300 lbs. each. Farmers are evidently holding back on account of price. They may make their hogs too heavy for pork packers requirements. If so, they may reasonably expect to take reduced prices on those too fat.

The conclusion reached by the weights and measures committee of the United States house of representatives is that the metric system of weights and measures should be adopted by the various departments of the government, although not deeming it wise to change the methods of surveying public lands. They recommend, therefore, that its adoption by the departments be fixed for July 1, 1893, and by the nation at large, coincident with the dawn of the twentieth century, January 1, 1901.

The General of the army, the general commanding the United States corps of engineers, Vice-President Webb of the New York Central, and John Jacob Astor, compose The Cosmopolitan Magazine's board of judges to decide the merits of the horseless carriages which will be entered in the May trials, for which The Cosmopolitan offers \$3,000 in prizes. The interest which these gentlemen have taken as shown in accepting places upon the committee is indicative of the importance of the subject, and that the contest itself will be watched with marked interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

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