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QUEBEC.

PROSPECTS.

Most Picturesque Scenery and
Finest Harbour in the World.

HER LEADING WHOLESALE MERCHANTS

AND

Manufacturing Interests.

(Visit by our Correspondents.)

We do not intend to write more than a brief introduction setting forth the object of our visit to Quebec. In commenting upon the trade representatives in the cities of Canada West, we did not deem it superfluous to deal more or less at length with the leading facts of their local histories, such as their origin, characteristic peculiarities, either political or geographical, but all this has been better done for us in the case of Quebec, whose history, as the stage of the new world's most dramatic dramas in the past, is familiar wherever the English tongue is spoken and education, even in the remotest American history, has its way. The Gibraltar of America was, in the early days of struggle for ascendancy on this continent, the coveted stronghold for which France, America and England each maneuvered with varying success, until the final Waterloo day, on the plains of Abraham, when noble, gallant Wolfe and the illustrious and chivalrous Montcalm, with some thousands of brave followers, reddened the green sward with their life's blood, and earned by their death the right to have their names inscribed on the calendar of fame forever. From then until now the Union Jack spreads its protecting folds over the lofty battlements of old *Stadacona*. In business matters western Canadians under-estimate the city of Quebec. The truth is that capitalists here, which class is neither few nor unimportant, are governed by principles of conservatism in business, the wisdom of which is probably confirmed by showing which they have made as regards sobriety during the trials of the great depression, during which not a single house which, at the outset, had been regarded as highly credit worthy, has suspended. The fact is that business is conducted here on a more healthy basis than either in Montreal or Toronto. The wholesale houses are strong advocates of keeping cool, instead of spending immense sums in paying commercial travellers, as is the case in other cities—where six, eight or ten men are sometimes employed by one house, the most venturesome of Quebec houses employ a single one. By this means they are, figuratively speaking, behind their business, pushing it instead of being away ahead pulling it after them, the first position being naturally the strong one in up-hill times like the present. By avoiding the boiling temperature of inflation your Quebec wholesale dealer frees himself from many of the worries and fretful causes of anxiety of which the break-neck pace of business firms in over-competent centres is sure to be fruitful. Fewer haggard and careworn faces, and brows deeply furrowed with anxiety for the maturing obligations that cannot be paid, are met with here. On the contrary, a fine,

joyful, pleasant and uniform tempered set of gentlemen are the recognized leading merchants of Quebec, who do business and sell goods when a paying profit can be realized, and are equally ready to retire from the contest when ruinous competition from other points invades their territory and will do business at any cost. These remarks apply to the old standing wholesale houses of Quebec, and we think them a faithful index of their general policy in business. There are exceptions to every rule, but these characteristics are well-defined in houses dealing in every staple of trade. As to the architectural appearance of the city, we cannot find anything to admire; queer little streets, lanes and sudden curves, long vistas of uneven buildings, varying from one to four stories on the same thoroughfare, seem to be the rule. The new parliament buildings deserve to rank among the finest public buildings in the Dominion: they are the largest in size, and most beautiful and commanding in location. Facing this imposing pile, on St. Louis street, the visitor beholds other evidences of awakening good taste in a fine terrace of cut-stone buildings recently built by leading merchants as private residences. However, any reflections that may be made on the score of irregular streets and buildings dwindle into insignificance when they are offset by the drives and walls and scenery which may be enjoyed in and within a short distance of the city. The *Chapelin* terrace which is a *park* *promenade* nearly a mile long, its yards wide, the cliff at a height of 100 feet, the *St. Lawrence*, affords one of the finest "cup deils" of river and mountain scenery on the continent. Then we have the Falls of Montmorency, the Falls of Lorette, surrounded by its picturesque Indian settlement, where dwell the remnant of the once warlike Huron nation, then the drive around Cape Rouge and the upper and lower St. Foye and Belvidere roads; in fact, when we broach this feature of the city the field for mention is inexhaustible; but the inevitable dictum—space forbids—must be our apology. The important public works, the Princess Louise harbor improvements, will shortly prove of great advantage to this city as a port. The completion of the North Shore railway and the contemplation of another railroad to the fine fertile agricultural districts bordering on Lake St. John, all justify the conclusion that the old city is commencing to wake up and enter upon a decade of growth unprecedented in her history, and one which shall henceforward entitle it to a greater share of attention and weight in considering the general questions affecting the future destiny of Lower Canada.

One of the Large Wholesale Importing and Manufacturing Hardware Firms of Lower Canada.

A VARIED AND IMPORTANT LIST OF MANUFACTURING AND MERCANTILE INTERESTS CONTROLLED BY THEM.

Any comments upon the wholesale interests of Quebec would be incomplete did we fail to give a prominent place to the hardware trade, which is represented by the time-honored firm of *Chinic, Beaudet & Co.*, first carried on under the style of *Methot & Chinic*, which house has now been before the trade for some sixty-four years, and has from a small beginning crept up to be one of the most influential houses in Lower Canada. An inspection of the exterior and interior of this old warehouse, known as *Methot's buildings*, fronting at 55 and 57 St. Peter street, fully attests the amount of traf-

fic and wear and tear which each department has seen since the outset, for the building is one of the oldest both in reality and in appearance on that busy street. It was originally fitted out as a retail store, and in its early days was no doubt regarded as palatial when compared with the stores then in vogue. This department is still continued, and enjoys probably a larger patronage to-day than ever before in the history of the firm. The wholesale trade of the house was an after-growth, and the advantage of still retaining the above department is that dealers in small communities can come here and obtain different lines of hardware, etc., just in such quantities as best suits their trade, it being no inconvenience to the firm to divide up packages, as the remnants are always in demand. There are three floors and basement in this building, which are all taxed to the utmost with stocks of small shelf hardware, cutlery in great variety, saddlers' and coachmakers' furnishing, carpenters' edge tools of the best imported makes, also contractors', builders' furniture, manufacturers', machinists' and other grades of hardware, the entire of which makes a seemingly endless display. The fact is that we have seldom seen a better assorted stock of general hardware that meets the eye on the different floors of this house. The hardware sundry department is also very complete, containing just such goods as are in constant demand by the general country storekeeper. Whilst the building and fixtures are old, it is but just to state that every package on the shelves appears fresh and new, showing that an even demand enables the house to be constantly importing and replacing old packages by a new pattern or grade, if it be in the market. This feature of the merchandise, offered by Messrs. *Chinic, Beaudet & Co.*, is in very desirable contrast, as far as the retail merchant is concerned, with the shelf-worn condition of the goods, which is too often the drawback in the younger hardware establishments of now-a-days, admired for their imposing architectural appearance. Among a numerous list of foreign and domestic manufactures, for whom the house acts as agents, we may mention the world-famed *Fairbanks' scales*, for which they take orders for every size known to the trade, and either deliver from stock or direct from the factory in Vermont; also the *Windsor Powder Company*, whose brands of blasting and other powders are said to be the best made in the Dominion. The firm are proprietors of the following lists of manufacturing industries: An extensive nail works, located at *Beauport* near Quebec, which is one of the best equipped in point of machinery and plant, as well as being on one of the most beautiful locations in the Dominion: The grades of *iron nails* here turned out are said to surpass in quality, both in temper, smooth finish, penetrating qualities, and uniformity of shape, those produced at any other works in the Dominion. The best Norway and scrap iron is used, and all the most approved American patterns are duplicated in both wrought and cut nails—from a flour-barrel nail up to an eight-inch spike. They also own three other factories, carried on in the suburbs of *St. Rochs*,—one for the manufacture of mill stones, one for making edge tools, including small hand tools of every description, which are pronounced by mechanics to be of a very superior temper and durable well-finished quality; and, finally, a factory for the manufacture of putty. In these several works some sixty skilled workmen receive permanent employment, the products being all disposed of to the regular customers of the house, both among the wholesale and retail hardware dealers all over the province. Incidental to these fine branches of manufacture originated by this

firm we must mention the heavy hardware department which aggregates by far the greater bulk of their wholesale trade. This business is carried on in a fine brick warehouse four storeys in height and over 150 x 100 feet square, which the firm erected some five years ago on the *Richelieu Co.'s* and *Alford's* wharves, and which is one of the best adapted, both in its location and interior fitting, to the handling of this class of merchandise of any warehouse we have visited for the purpose. Telephonic communication has been introduced between here and the *shops* and offices, which not only saves time and trouble, but greatly facilitates the prompt despatch of orders. There are carried very large reserve stocks of hoop, bar and rod iron and steel in every known size; chains, anchors, glass, paints, putty, varnishes, ship spikes, bolts, nuts, and in fact all the supplies of raw materials in demand by iron workers, contractors, or for ships' use. These goods are unloaded from the vessels, which are moored immediately alongside of the receiving entrance during shipping season, when the tallying of whole and part cargoes arriving from the European and American manufacturers and rolling mills, to the order and for account of this house, creates a din which scarcely ceases during the entire summer. The large scale upon which they conduct operations, and the possession of immense capital, has enabled them to draw to their house a large and desirable class of customers, and to supply them in a *factory* manner that outside competition meets with less success in Eastern Canada, as far as selling hardware goods of every description concerned, than any other class of houses. The individual members of this firm consists of the *Hon. Eugene Chinic*, senator, who is the senior partner, and is well-known to many of our western readers as one of our public men whose name has been intimately identified as an advocate for every measure that affected the commercial and social advancement of this province. Also *M. Elisee Beaudet*, a well-known capitalist, who, in addition to his connection with this firm, is a partner in the lumbering firm of *Girouard & Beaudet*, whose head-quarters are at *Betsiamites*, in the lumbering district of *Saguenay*. An idea of the extent of this firm's operations may be conceived from the fact that their estimate of shipments of lumber to the English market during the coming summer aggregates 450,000 standard spruce and pine deals, which will give full cargo to from 25 to 30 vessels. This firm employ from 250 to 300 men. The third or junior partner of the house is *Mr. Eugene N. Chinic*, whose entire business experience has been acquired in the management of the business in which he may be said to have grown up. Each and every one of these gentlemen give their constant active superintendence to every department of the work, and are constantly to be found busily engaged in the offices and warehouse, or at one or another of their factories. Their joint knowledge of commercial affairs, and the special experience in this line, are well proven by the success they have achieved, and should be the means of continuing to them the prosperous business which they have built up. They have, whilst promoting their own success, materially helped to advance the prosperity of Quebec, a fact which is duly admitted by the esteem in which each of the partners is held in the highest business circles, and their house pointed to as an instance of what fair dealing will accomplish when persistently directed in one channel, aspiring as they do to serve their customers with that far-sighted policy which not only guarantees their permanent patronage, but cannot fail to win their friendly recommendation to all with whom they come into contact.