

THE GUIDES' MAIL-BAG

(Continued from page 42.)

D. W. McCUAIG WRITES OF TRIP

En route from Portage La Prairie to Mexico.
To the Editor of the G.G.G.:

Dear Sir,—While on this trip to Mexico the thought struck me to write you a short account of it, which may be of interest to some of your readers.

I am in company with Peter Cameron, of Westbourne, and Mr. W. J. Bertrand, of Los Angeles, Cal. We left Winnipeg on the C.P.R. Soo train at 5.35 Monday evening, September 28th, and arrived in St. Paul the next morning. We saw nothing of the country between Winnipeg and St. Paul, as it was night time. We left St. Paul on the North-Western train for Omaha. This being a day train it has a parlor car which serves as an observation car. We noticed that there had been a frost through this part, travelling through southern Minnesota and Iowa to Omaha, Nebraska.

They had the frost Monday night, the night after we had it in Manitoba. The corn along this route was pretty well plucked and a good deal of the stalks cut and stooked. We arrived in Council Bluffs across the Missouri river from Omaha two hours late and our train for Kansas City had left. But as there were about forty-five passengers for Kansas City they fitted up a special of two coaches and took us to the regular train, which had been held for us seventeen miles out.

We arrived in Kansas City at 8 a.m., Wednesday, September 30th, and had to wait for two hours for a train on the Rock Island system. Kansas City is about the busiest, most hustling place I ever saw. We were informed it was the second largest stock centre in the world.

The crowds of people, the immense piles of baggage at the Union Station, and the street cars, busses and drays simply crowded the streets in all directions. But in walking through the city we noticed many business places vacant, so that Kansas City is suffering from the depression passing over the land.

After boarding the Rock Island train we found it a complete up-to-date train, lit up by electricity. An observation car was on for the accommodation of passengers.

After leaving Kansas City corn and vines showed a touch of frost. We passed a number of orchards which had a sprinkling of apples. On this train we passed through part of Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona. A good part of it is what is termed the Great Lone Land, and it is well named, as considerable of it is an arid stretch of land partly covered with cactus and sage bush. Nearing El Paso, Texas, some scrub is to be seen.

At one point the railway company has to haul the water fifty miles after bringing it seventy-five miles to the railroad by gravitation. At another point, Alamo-gorde, water is brought from the mountains and they have a veritable oasis in a desert. Trees, plants and grass show a luxuriant growth, and makes a beautiful spot around the station, showing what the land and climate could do if it had a supply of water.

We arrived at El Paso on the evening of October 1st. This is a city of thirty-five or forty thousand inhabitants. It is a great railway centre, having six or seven roads running in and out, and is surrounded by a great mining region.

The United States Government are building a dam on the Rio Grande River directly north of El Paso, costing about nine million dollars, to irrigate about two hundred thousand acres of this arid valley, which will not be

completed for six or seven years, but will be able to irrigate some of the land in two years' time.

Arrived in Benson, Arizona, at 1.30 this morning and will leave for the south at 4.45 p.m.

In all our travel, we have not seen anything to compare to the Portage Plains. The weather so far has been very pleasant. More later.

Yours truly,

D. W. McCUAIG.

Benson, Arizona, October 2nd, 1908.

En route from Portage la Prairie to Mexico and return.

Editor of The G.G.G.

Dear Sir,—My last letter was from Benson, Arizona. From this point we boarded a train on the Southern Pacific railway to Guaymas, a city on the Gulf of California. We left Benson at 5.50 p.m., Oct. 2nd, and arrived in Nogales, a town on the border of Mexico, half in Mexico and half in Arizona, at 9.30.

This is a genuine Mexican town. We stopped here all night. A representative of the Mexican government went through our grips and placed his stamp of authority on them. Leaving here, we travelled south through a narrow valley, part of which is irrigated from the river running through, and many beautiful orchards with oranges, lemons and many other fruit trees loaded with fruit.

We stopped at Carbo for dinner and asked the Chinaman at the door the charge. He said one dollar Mex. On handing him an American dollar he handed back one dollar in Mexico silver, so that a man's wealth doubles on entering Mexico. On asking the reason for this we were told that the Mexican dollar had as much silver in as the American dollar, but the American dollar has a gold standard behind it and the Mexican dollar has not.

Passing a town called Hermosillo, there are a number of orange groves, and we were informed that the first oranges shipped to the east are shipped from here. We soon after passed through Tarres, a station noted for the shipping of ore, mined in the mountains east from here, some of them 160 miles east. A prominent miner of twenty years' experience informed us that fifty million dollars' worth has been shipped from here.

We arrived at Guaymas at nine o'clock and had a Mexican dinner, and left there on a branch line of the same road, to the southeast to Esperanza, where we left the train late Saturday night and rested over Sunday.

Monday morning we, in company with two men from California and Mr. Adam, a civil engineer, secured a four-mule team and covered democrat, with a Mexican driver, and started out to drive over the Yaqui river valley. We drove Monday and Tuesday, returning to our starting point Tuesday evening. The valley is level, sloping gently to the southwest at an average fall of three and a half feet to the mile. The soil is a rich silt soil, the deposit of ages, covered in some places by a light bush like our willow, and called the mesquite, and which is a very hard wood. This valley is to be irrigated by a canal taking water out of the river fifty miles up, where the head gates are cut in solid rock. A company of New York capitalists began work on this canal sixteen years ago to irrigate this valley, but after building the head gates and digging twenty-five miles of the canal their finances ran out and the work was suspended until two years ago, when a company of Los Angeles men was formed, who are now pushing the work to completion. The few farms that are supplied with water now shows the productiveness of the soil. Two crops are raised in the year and all tropical fruit is growing on these farms.

The valley being so near to the Pacific ocean the cli-