

Along the Souris Branch.

From Napinka, the point to which the readers of this journal were taken in a letter on this subject in last week's issue, the line of railway turns off to the southwest and passes through the settlements tributary to Melita, Elva, Pierson, Gainsborough, Carlevalle, Carnduff, Glen Ewen, Oxbow, Alameda, etc., to Estevan, where it joins the Soo line from St. Paul to Pasqua on the C. P. R. main line. A few miles east of Gainsborough it enters the territory of Assiniboia and at Estevan has reached a point within 12 or 14 miles of the international boundary. The soil in this part of Manitoba is distinctly different from that which is found in the Red River valley, being of a light, sandy nature, but excellently adapted for wheat farming as has been already proven. Settlement in this part of Manitoba has been somewhat retarded by the lack of railway facilities which prevailed until a few years ago, but since the extension of the C. P. R. system to these parts the growth has been steady and substantial.

Melita is one of the leading towns in this part of Manitoba. It is a good business town and is growing at a very satisfactory rate. This year has seen a number of important improvements and much money expended in new buildings and if we go back two years the period embraces a still larger number of building additions. Following is a partial list supplied from memory by one of the leading business men of the new buildings for that period: Baptist church, \$3,000, Methodist church \$4,000, English church \$1,500, Powell block \$2,500, Maycock block \$1,200, Ferguson & Bullock's elevator \$2,500, C. P. R. station (addition) \$300, Enterprise printing office \$1,400, mill water-works \$500, and sundry residential improvements \$4,500. The flour mill of Ferguson & Bullock at Melita has a capacity of 100 barrels and it is usually taxed to its utmost to fill orders. As mentioned above this firm has built a new elevator this year, completed in September—of 25,000 bushels capacity. They have also put in a system of pipes from the Souris river over a quarter of a mile from the town for carrying water to the mill. These pipes are below the frost line and are fed by means of a windmill. One of the new blocks now in course of erection at Melita is of stone and will be occupied by Sturgeon's hardware business, while the Union bank and several mercantile concerns will occupy the others. Among the business changes during the past year the most important have been the sale of H. L. Elliott's business to H. C. Hamelin & Co., and Graham's general store to T. McJannet.

West of Melita on the Souris branch there are a number of comparatively new towns, some of which have made marked progress during the past year or two, Elva is a product of the past year and has as yet only a very small population and a few stores.

Pierson is one of the older points and has a good business record to show for its five or six years of existence. This year some growth has taken place, the most notable increase in a business way being a new harness store opened by T. A. Blackwell, of Melita. The building in which this business is carried was erected specially for the purpose at a cost of \$1,000.

Gainsboro and Carlevalle are

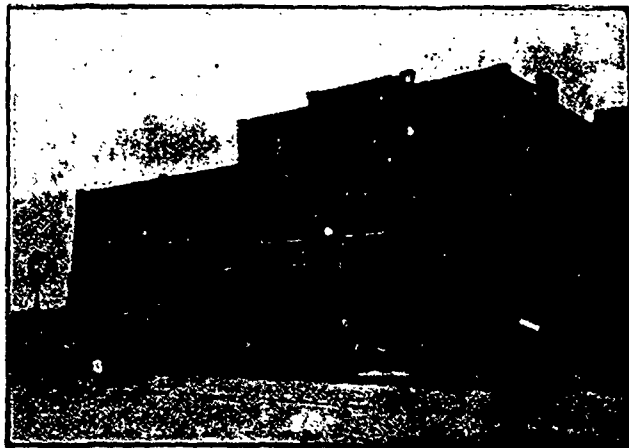
each thriving points and have experienced a good run of business this year.

Carnduff is a point which has built up considerable of a reputation as a farmers' grain market and its business men are of the type which make good pioneers. They have drawn considerable attention to their town this year by the aggressive manner in which they have taken up arms in defence of the farmer and for the securing of what they consider fair prices for wheat. A company has been formed and an elevator built at which, by the adoption of improved methods, such as cleaning the grain before weighing, etc., they have been able to pay a higher price for wheat than has heretofore prevailed. Whether the prices paid have always been justified by the ruling market prices does not seem to have been a point of first importance with the management, but the fact remains that owing to the energy of these Carnduffites or Carnduffers, whichever they may call themselves, the farmers in this locality have enjoyed a much better price for their grain than those at other points.

Glen Ewen is a new place, ten miles west of Carnduff, being now about a year old and a promising little village. It has a grain elevator, gen-

included a new elevator and several minor additions to the business and residential buildings. The changes in business firms have been few in number. Grandy & Grandy sold out their general store in April to K. L. McKay, who is now running the business on a strictly cash basis. Dr. Greer has opened a drug store at this point in connection with his medical practice. The other general traders are Walsh Bros., Pierce Bros. and H. C. Disney.

Alameda is a growing place, and has much to commend it in a business way. There is a very large tributary country, including the famous Moose Mountain and Wood Mountain districts, much of which is already yielding crops or sustaining herds of fine cattle. There is a considerable colony of Germans located near here and it is almost certain that the Russian Quakers who have recently had delegates in Western Canada looking for land, will locate in the Alameda country. This will mean an addition of three or four thousand to the population. J. W. Wilcox is the leading general merchant of the town. He has made an important addition to his store premises this year, which gives him probably the largest floor space of any concern doing business in these



BUSINESS BLOCK, SOURIS, MAN.

eral store, blacksmith's shop, boarding house and lumber yard. A photo-engraving of this teeming centre of trade and industry is given in this issue taken from a snap-shot by the Commercial man.

Oxbow is a well known town, one of the oldest business points in this part of Assiniboia, the centre of a fairly well settled and good farming country, and close to the Souris river. It derives its name from a peculiar bend in the river which occurs in this region, forming a perfect figure of an ox bow or yoke. Many farmers about here are doing well, and their prosperity is reflecting itself in the progress of the town. Opportunity is given in this locality for forming an opinion as to the desirability of the Russian Jews, who were settled on this line of railway some years ago, as settlers. These Jews originally located at Hirsch and Blenfait, two or three stations west of Oxbow, but some ten or fifteen families of them attracted by the advantages of this district moved into the country tributary to the Oxbow, and are now permanently located here. They are doing well, in most cases, and add their quota to the business of the town. The improvements this year at Oxbow have

parts. He handles furniture extensively. J. J. Heaslip, hardware merchant, keeps what many regard as a model country store, neat, clean and roomy are three terms which will apply to his place of business. Merchants in other towns would do well to take a leaf out of this gentleman's note book in the matter of care and arrangement of stock. This store also contains the town postoffice. Hopper Bros. are also engaged in the general store business at this point, and G. H. Knowling keeps a lumber yard.

West of Alameda on this line are two or three railway stations and at its terminus, the town of Estevan, where the road joins the Soo line from St. Paul to Pasqua. Estevan is well known for its coal deposits and it annually supplies Manitoba and the eastern part of the Territories with large quantities of cheap bituminous coal for household and other uses. There is a considerable business community and a population of about 250 people.

Returning to Napinka from the last named point the traveller has his choice of two routes back to Winnipeg. He may either return via the Deloraine branch, which has already been described in these letters or take the Souris and Glenboro train and