

GRAND FORKS, B. C.,

THE GATEWAY CITY OF THE BOUNDARY.

BY W. A. HARKIN.

Grand Forks, the mining, smelting and commercial centre of the Boundary, is situated in a fertile and picturesque valley at the confluence of the West and North fork of Kettle river. Seven years ago it was a nameless ford on the Dewdney trail; today it possesses an energetic and enterprising population exceeding 2,500. The growth of the city has been synchronous with the development of the tributary mineral and agricultural resources. Prosperity here has no halting stages. It is a living dominant fact. Many a pioneer must have gazed on the un-ending mountains and reverently wondered what purpose they were expected to serve in the economy of nature. To be sure some of them are heavily timbered and it was conceivable that a portion of this wealth might one day be availed of. An occasional reference to the scenery could scarcely be gainsaid, for in this respect it was a colossal picture gallery, with forms and colors laid on by the painter.

"Who dips
His brush in earthquake and eclipse."

As a diversion it is alright, and these valleys and peaks with their shifting shades of light and shadow will always attract those who have a sentiment in their souls for the wonderful revelations on the earth and in the sky that this region affords. The humble and often hunger bitten prospector with a pack on his shoulders, a stone-bruise on his heel and rocks in his saddle-bags, is the hero, or at least the walking gentlemen of this drama. Grand Forks is one of the emanations of his divinations. To his dauntless and intrepid spirit is due the rapid growth of flourishing towns and cities among the secluded mountains of British Columbia.

John A. Manly was the founder of Grand Forks. He owned the ranch upon a portion of which miles of graded streets are now laid out. Shortly after the discovery of mineral in the district he established a store. From this small nucleus the city has grown to its present size. At the epoch referred to other ranchers had already drifted into the valley and were engaged principally in cattle raising; and Rossland was yet un-heard of. Mr. Manly displayed true prescience, and the faith he displayed in the little hamlet of ten years ago and the district generally has grown in volume with the lengthening years. His fellow pioneers of those days included R. R. Gilpin, S. R. Almond, E. Spraggett, W. H. Covert, Scott Macrae, Lloyd A. Manly, R. A. Brown and Dr. G. W. Averill. After its incorporation Mr. Manly had the honor of being its first mayor. No better idea of the strides made by the city can be formed than by presenting the assessment covering a period of years, as follows: 1838, \$275.143; 1899, \$506,667; 1900, \$964,645; 1901, \$1,003,900; 1902, \$1,077,960.

No other town in British Columbia offers superior advantages for business men, real estate investments or as a place of residence. The stage of solidity and permanency has long since been reached. Well-stocked wholesale and retail stores are equal to any in the interior of the province, and besides catering to local requirements do a flourishing business with the district towns and adjacent mining camps. There are a great many possibilities for the wholesale trade owing to the growing importance of Grand Forks as a distributing centre. In view of the configuration of the surrounding country, it has been aptly named the "Gateway City."

Situated as it is amidst a natural amphitheatre of mountains, the new comer as well as railway trains, cannot enter the portals of the Boundary without passing through Grand Forks. From an economic standpoint it is a veritable toll-gate. Grand Forks is also famed for its handsome dwellings. It has been designated as a "city of homes." During the present year nearly one hundred houses have been built or are in course of construction. Real estate values are not inflated as the city has never experienced a boom but on the contrary its growth has been cumulative. Lots vary in price from \$100 to \$5,000, according to location. The city has four saw and planing mills, a foundry and machine shop, opera house, fourteen hotels, bottling works, steam laundry, etc. Banking facilities are exceptionally good. The Royal Bank of Canada, and the Eastern Townships bank have flourishing agencies here, and a new and successful factor in the local financial field is the Grand Forks Investment & Trust Co., organized last year by leading citizens.

House rents are moderate. They average about \$20 per month. Rental of stores vary with size, ranging from \$30 to \$100 per month. Here are located the district court house, custom house and mining recorder's office. The maximum revenue from imports amounted one month to \$18,000.

The city owns its own electric light and water works systems. They are justly the pride of the inhabitants, and for efficiency are not surpassed on the continent. The motive power for both plants is supplied by the Granby company. A fire brigade, equipped with a steam fire engine, reels, ladders, etc., and a police force are maintained. The present incumbent of the civic chair, Mr. Tracy W. Holland has carried out a progressive municipal policy since his inauguration. Through his efforts, it is likely that a modern sewerage system will be installed within a twelvemonth.

Grand Forks is also becoming the educational centre for southern British Columbia. A new school building, of stone and brick, was recently completed at a cost of \$18,000. The attendance averages about 200. The introduction of a system of manual training, and the establishment of a high school in the near future are contemplated. The city is well provided with churches. No description of the city would be complete without mention of the excellent hotel accommodation that exists. The Yale hotel, overlooking the North Fork, was built and furnished at a cost of \$50,000. A net work of roads and trails leading from the various camps converge here.

The Gateway City offers unsurpassed inducements to the settler in search of a farm, the stockman seeking a ranch, the fruit grower in want of an orchard, the prospector in search of mineral wealth, the lumberman, the business man, or the capitalist, whether large or small, who seeks investment for his money.