

ANOTHER INTERESTING LETTER FROM THE NORTH WEST

John W. Young, of The Planet Staff, Tells of Some of his Experiences While Travelling Through Edmonton and Vicinity.

Concluded from Yesterday.

The return journey was worse than the going. The rain had made the road very slippery and the horses in miniature had some difficulty in keeping their feet. By 8:30 p. m. and darkness, I had only gone about two miles so I, feeling that after such a gallant effort my poor horse must really be tired, went to the abode of Cranston brothers, which was out of my way, but promised a good supper for myself. I got my supper. After supper Mr. Cranston accompanied me part of the way home and as my horse wouldn't go as fast as his he fastened the halter of my animal to the pomel of his saddle and towed me and my horse behind. I have no doubt we made a peculiar picture in the moonlight. Soon after I had left Mr. Cranston, it began to pour rain, and if any Chathamite wants really to feel comfortable and at home let him take a ride at midnight along a long western trail with the rain-pouring down, the pathway revealed only by the lightning, woods on either side of the trail and no fences, and in fact no houses within two miles; add to this the occasional tinkling of a cowbell from the woods and the swish of the wind and rain in trees, then I can guarantee that the rider will feel all the comforts of home—as lost to him forever.

I had only been over the trail once before and was not too sure of it, but I had one solace in the remembrance that in the West they never lock their doors. Well, I did reach the residence of George Gould about 2 a. m. and I had no sooner neared the house than the dog barked. The owner came out and informed me that a young lady, overtaken by the storm, occupied my bed, and I had to sleep with the hired man. After putting the horse away I did so and slept soundly. I only told this story to one westerner. His only comment was to ask if I had killed the dog. To tell the truth, I rather enjoyed that ride. It was a new experience for me. The only thing that was missing to have made a horrible tale was wolves to howl on my trail and make my horse ride madly home. But there are no wolves in that country so I had to content myself with what I could get. I have a feeling that the West has illustrated me in not furnishing the orthodox wolves that I used to read about in the dime novels. Even a bear or a gorilla would have been acceptable, but neither were forthcoming.

The time for return came too soon and I set my face homeward on Sept. 9th. I again rode on the stage, but this time I had the place of honor with the driver. Of course you can deride easterners won't understand that this was indeed an honor for the stage driver is a man of importance in this country. Very few were familiar enough to call him Charlie and the majority of them called him Mr. Stewart, with emphasis on the mister. He does the errands for the whole community and has had an interesting history, and one closely associated with the history of the Northwest. He was born in the Red River settlement in Manitoba. It was his father who, in company with the explorer, Anderson, visited the North Country and, penetrating with in the Arctic circle, found pieces from the wreck of the Franklin expedition and were instrumental in solving the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the explorers in that expedition.

Mr. Stewart was only a boy at the time of the Riel rebellion in Manitoba in 1869, but he remembers his father, who was a powerful man standing over six feet, riding up to Fort Garry and kicking Donahue, Riel's partner, out of the Governor's house. Everybody said that Mr. Stewart, Sr., would pay for his hardihood, but he didn't. Mr. Stewart himself was a courier during the Riel rebellion in 1885. He was a courier riding between Frog Lake and Fort Pitt. One time he rode 118 miles in 12 hours with despatches for Gen. Middleton from Gen. Strange. Mr. Stewart, Jr., says that Gen. Strange was by far the best leader, and would have extinguished the rebellion in half the time had Gen. Middleton permitted it.

The distance from Edmonton to Fort Saskatchewan by the north bank of the river is a little over 20 miles, but by the south bank, the route Mr. Stewart was forced to take, it is nearly 40. This mail route by stage is one of the longest in the Dominion and Mr. Stewart told me that it was very hard on horses. They last only a little over a year at the work. The people in the west are all great horsemen, and have an idea that if a horse has been hitched up once it is perfectly safe for anyone to drive it. On this day Mr. Stewart was driving a horse just fresh from a ranch. It had never had a rope on it till the week before and this was the second time it had been driven. The other horse had been broken about a year, but the new horse "cut up" considerably. We, however, reached Strathcona safely, with a good deal of the life taken out of the new horse.

I stopped at the Strathcona House with J. R. Boyle, a product of Lambton county, but now a leading lawyer of Strathcona and member of the law firm of Taylor and Boyle. Mr. Taylor has charge of the Edmonton end of the business. Mr. Boyle was exceedingly kind and showed me all the sights to be seen in both towns. The rivalry between Strathcona and Edmonton has only to be seen to be realized, as both places are exceedingly jealous of each other. I met Alex. C. Rutherford, brother of Peter Rutherford, of Chatham. The former is a prosperous lawyer in Strathcona, and senior member of the firm of Rutherford & Jamieson, barristers, etc.

The coal and gold mines along the Saskatchewan river are of more than passing interest. Chas. Stewart, the stage driver, told me that at one place

he could ford the river on a coal bed. Seams of soft coal crop out on the river bank all along the Saskatchewan. The seams are from 2-12 feet to 8 feet thick, and one seam is 25 feet thick. They run into the bank a hundred yards. These seams of coal are so high above the river that the miners are not troubled by water and the drifts are easily ventilated. The coal is harder than the Pennsylvania hard coal and sells at \$2.50 per ton delivered, or \$1 per ton at the mine. The sand in the Saskatchewan river at this point is rich in gold. At Fort Saskatchewan the farmers often, after their crops are harvested, spend a month or two washing the sand. They use a grizzly for separating the gold from the sand. The grizzly is simple in construction. The sand is washed down an incline plane of fine wire. Beneath is a cloth and the gold being heavier than the sand it drops through and is caught by a funnel cloth beneath. The cloth is washed out at night and the gold dust obtained. Some farmers make as high as \$1 a day and they generally average \$2. A couple of companies are dredging the sand from the bottom of the river and are washing it. One company sold an \$800 gold brick to the bank a day or two before I reached Edmonton. This was the result of months' work. The only dredge found to work satisfactory is the bucket dredge. The suction dredge was tried, but owing to the presence of gravel it did not work very well.

Mr. Boyle kindly took me over to Edmonton and pointed out the places of interest. We crossed the river from Strathcona by the ferry which runs across just above the town. The current of the river is very swift here and it is utilized in turning the ferry. When a boat is working to windward the wind pushes on the sail and the keel or centerboard holds the boat steady. In the case of the ferry boat, the water pushes on a keel at the stern of the boat and a cable above the boat holds the ferry steady. The idea was something new to me and I observed it with interest. As we were crossing we were able to get a good view of the old Hudson Bay fort built over a hundred years ago. At this point is still standing and still used as a store house. The north bank at this point rises in two divisions forming quite a wide plateau a hundred feet above the river. On this level space half way up the hill, the old fort stands. The plateau has long since disappeared, but the buildings are still there and a hundred yards or so behind on an eminence stands a two storey house, once the home of the factor, but now the club house of the Golf Club and the Toboggan Club.

By chance, we obtained a privilege not allowed to the outside world. We had a look through the store house of the Hudson Bay Co. one of the best kept in the Northwest. The building was empty at the time, having been cleared for the reception of the fall supply of goods, and we were told that within a month, the history of the Northwest, from the time of the first settlement in Manitoba, and were instrumental in solving the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the explorers in that expedition.

The situation of this old fort is a very pretty one. Above you see the high banks of the winding Saskatchewan. Across the river lies Strathcona, its many roofs and buildings showing bright in the sunlight. All down the river can be seen the houses of straggling Edmonton, and the whole seems wrapped in a mantle of green—an effect given by the grass and trees, which even on the 10th of September were still green. Tradition has it that in the old days a Blackfoot Indian shot a Cree Indian, against whom he held a grudge. The killing occurred just back of the fort and 150 feet above the river. The Blackfoot then rode down the bare face of the cliff where a man on foot would apparently be unable to make the descent let alone a man on horseback. Yet it is said that the fearless Indian and his horse reached the bottom safely and escaped despite the target practice which seven Cree, friends of the dead man, were indulging in. The story may or may not be true, but it lends a touch of romance to an historic spot and as pretty a piece of Canadian landscape of the many beautiful places this Dominion, with a future, holds within its realm.

To tell of all the many pretty views even around Edmonton, would take too long, and as Edmonton expects to have some day a Shakespeare to tell it right, I will leave the heavier task than I care to undertake, to the unfortunate mortal who is expected some day to attempt it. I might say there is nothing which the Edmontonite doesn't expect. Edmonton is the world he looks with fine scorn and a feeling of sympathy on anyone who may happen to live beyond it. He will tell you, and all the Westerners have the same plaint, that if you only come west, you won't be able to tear yourself away from the west after a year's residence. You will go east, perhaps, as he has said, but you will be glad to return. And he tells you all this without a blush or a stammer. I suppose they ought to know, though. The Westerner has another peculiarity. He is honest. Nobody steals—at least I never heard of anyone being arrested for

DR. PITCHER'S BACKACHE KIDNEY TABLETS

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Mrs. Sarah Bevan, of Port Hope, says: "Thirteen years ago I fell and injured my back, and since then have known very little comfort with Backache or Kidney troubles. I have tried all kinds of medicine and seen many physicians, but got no help until I began the bottle of Dr. Pitcher's Backache Kidney Tablets. I got from R. Deyell, druggist. They have done me a world of good. I feel stronger; the dizziness and pain are gone, and I cannot tell you how pleased I am, and everyone else says the same thing of them. They are just what everyone wanted. I hope others will use them and get well."

Dr. Pitcher's Backache Kidney Tablets are put up in wooden bottles, with green wrapper, bearing the portrait and signature of Z. Pitcher, M. D. Each bottle contains 50 tablets; price 50 cents per bottle. Manufactured by The Dr. Zina Pitcher Co., Toronto, Ont.

theft. I remarked to a native one day, "For simplicity and honesty give me the Westerner."

"Well, youngster," said the denizen "of the land behind which the sun sets. 'Don't you play too much out of the sun.' The Westerner may be honest to the extent that if you drop your pocket book he will return it. But if he can run it up on you on a deal, he'll do it every time, and if you don't watch yourself, he will run it up on you so fast that you will only have your clothes."

There has always been an unwritten code in the west that anything a man might leave when riding, under the country should remain untouched till he could return and get it. The west residents claim that this stood until the foreign emigrants came and they soon put a stop to it. The natives claim that the emigrants were not anything handy. They have not sufficient nerve to go into a house for the purpose of stealing, but they will pick up anything lying around. It is a remarkable fact that the west crime in Canada is less than in any new country. An addition was being made to Morris Brothers' store at Fort Saskatchewan, and the whole rear of the store was open, yet nothing was stolen.

I have heard that the only time a safe was cracked was in the barracks of the Mounted Police at Calgary. There is no doubt that the Northwest Mounted Police, standing as they do throughout the west, are responsible for the splendid order, and they deserve the warm approbation of every order loving Canadian. The Mounted Police of Canada have done their duty throughout the west, and have been South African veterans, and perhaps more. Their work has been done and is being done in a cold country, and they ride long patrols in all kinds of weather. They have also subdued the many ruffians who once sought the west when the east became too hot for them, and now the west country is the quietest and contains the most law-abiding and peace-loving men to be found in the Dominion.

They like, however, to look on the wine when it is red, and they like to drink it. They speak of Walker and Seagram with a tone of tenderness. Their very voice, when they utter these words, seems to have a caress in it. Drunkenness is not looked down on here, and I heard one young lady from Calgary say,

"Let the boys go out and have their drunk and a good time. It is to be expected. The only unfortunate thing about it is, that we girls can't go and do likewise."

"Harrison C. Young, who has charge of the hardware store in Macdougall & Secord's establishment, told me that he had come into the country many years ago, and that he was the first white man married in Edmonton. He saw the last fight between the Blackfeet and the Crees. The engagement took place on the hill across the river from the fort of the Hudson Bay Co. in whose employ Mr. Young was, and was fought in the year 1869.

There was one incident of my visit to Edmonton that gave me pleasure and that was to learn the many friends that Augustus Bridle, a Kent boy, had made during a winter's sojourn in the fur market town. He was leader of the Presbyterian choir and, on his departure, left a large number of friends. I was sorry to learn, however, that Mr. Bridle was

laid up during August at Prince Albert. He had left Edmonton to take a canoe trip to Prince Albert on his way to Stratford, Ontario, to take charge of a choir there. On the trip he cut his foot and, blood poisoning setting in, he was laid up for over a month and almost died. However, when I left Edmonton I was glad to learn that he was recovering.

One of the most remarkable men of the many in Edmonton is Frank Oliver, M. P., owner and editor of the Edmonton Bulletin. Mr. Oliver went to Edmonton from Winnipeg some 20 years ago. He ran a store first and while so occupied established the Edmonton Bulletin, at first a little sheet the size of a piece of newspaper but now one of the brightest papers in the West. The Bulletin is published twice a week. Mr. Oliver is short and spare and his foot-prints throughout the riding and his remarkable skill in politics remind one of the late Robert Fergusson, M. P. for East Kent. He contests the constituency obviously as an independent but everyone knows he is a warm Liberal, yet he always manages to be elected by an overwhelming majority, although from observation I should judge that there are as many Conservatives as Liberals, if not more in Alberta. Some idea of the wonderful tact and knowledge of the people, displayed by the owner of the Bulletin, may be gained from the fact that although Mr. Oliver is essentially an Edmonton man living in Edmonton, still he is able to secure a substantial majority from the voters in Edmonton's rival, Strathcona.

In response to a remark that the Bulletin was an excellent paper and well spoken of all around the country, Mr. Oliver said: "What of that! What satisfaction is there in knowing you have a good paper if you don't make any money out of it? Of course, things aren't as bad now as they once were. There was a man who struggled to put the paper where it is. Why, man, we starved to do it, but we did it."

"Yet after all, what was the use of that struggle when you have to endure the condescending kindness of the men who because they take a little 'ad' in your paper think they own it and graciously patronize you correspondingly. In a large city, you can dodge down a side street and avoid them but you can't do that here because they would see you sooner. Here, however, it is different, but I wouldn't exchange my home in Edmonton for a home in any city in America."

Edmonton, too, has had her boom and there has been no reason under the sun for it. It was just a result of the boom in Winnipeg. Since then, however, she has recovered, and during the past ten years has had wonderful growth and she has a wonderful future in store."

Mr. Oliver has been rightly called the father of Alberta, and political friend and foe all speak well of him. I was very sorry that I could not find time for about fifteen minutes chat with Mr. Oliver, which I regretted very much, as I would have liked to learn something about Edmonton past and present, and Mr. Oliver is the man who could tell it.

Edmonton has one distinction. It is the greatest fur market in the world. About the time I left, Hya-lap and Secord were expected in with some \$25,000 worth of furs and another fur trader with \$40,000 worth. This was only the beginning and within a few months the fur brought in from the far north and sold at Edmonton, it aggregated many hundreds of thousands of dollars. As is the Chicago grain market to America so is the fur market at Edmonton to the world. Here the price of fur, you might say, is made. Nearly all the skins are shipped to London, England, and there disposed of.

J. D. Foster, real estate agent at Strathcona, is an Ontario production, who once taught school in Lambton county. He took a job with A. W. Toll, an old Kent county boy. Mr. Foster kindly furnished me with considerable information about the country. Macdougall & Secord are the leading fur traders in Edmonton. They have a large departmental store and do a large fur trade in competition with the Hudson's Bay Co., a commercial organization that has such a hold on the trade of the country that, when you realize it, you wonder how Macdougall & Secord could thrive. Mr. Macdougall began in a little store 10x20. Mr. Secord, twenty years ago, came west from Brantford, I was told, to teach in an Indian school. Later, an old resident informed me, he was appointed teacher in the Edmonton school, but got on a tear—a little thing in itself but meaning much to him for it founded his fortune. He took a job with the fur trade, north, trapping for the winter, and thus made a little money. That summer he began trading with the Indians, but the Hudson's Bay Company bought him off for a couple of thousand dollars. He then went further north and after a time appeared in Edmonton as one of the leading fur traders. Then the partnership was formed between Macdougall and Secord, and the firm now an immense business. Both parties are credited with being worth over \$100,000.

Two days are very short, and I was forced to leave Edmonton with sorrow, a bird's-eye view of this remarkable town, the farthest north business centre of Canada.

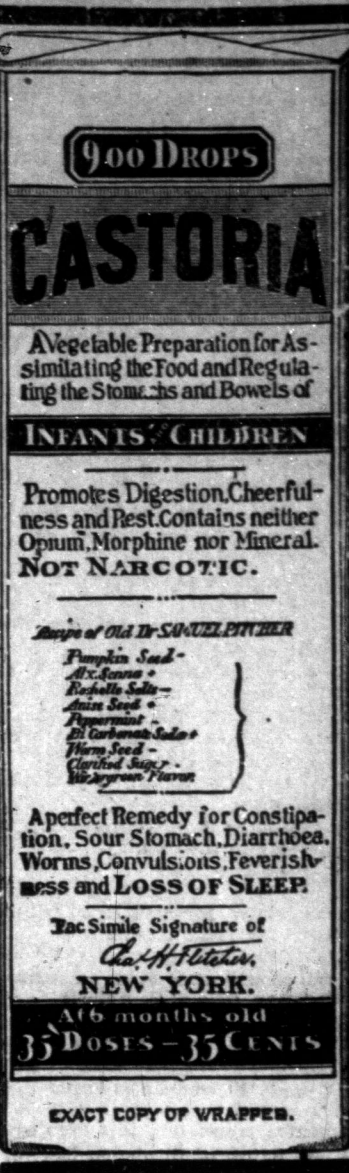
TORONTO FRUITS.

Toronto, Sept. 24.—Supplies were small and the market dull. Plums and pears are higher. We quote:—Grapes, small basket 15c to 20c; do, large 25c to 35c. Peaches, basket, for ordinary 40c and 50c; and \$1 to \$1.25 for crabs. Plums, 30c to 50c, per basket. Pears, 25c to 50c, Apples 15c to 25c, per basket, and \$2 to \$3 per bushel. Bananas 1st \$1.50 to \$1.60 per bunch. Lemons, Box \$4 to \$4.50. Pine apples case, \$32.50 to \$4.

Cucumbers, basket, 12-15 to 15c; for pickling, 40c to 60c. Tomatoes, basket, 10 to 15c. Watermelons, 10c to 15c. Melons, Muskmelons, 15c to 20c, basket, 12-15; large basket, 20 to 35c. Sweet potatoes, barrel, \$3.50.

The doctor says that there are plenty of pay stations on the road to recovery.

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