

Dowling of Souris, has established a new millinery store this year. T. & J. Jones and Eldster & Keedwell are the two firms of butchers and cattle dealers. D. Fraser is an old timer in the flour and feed business. He also carries a good stock of groceries. R. E. Trumbell still continues the wholesale liquor business. The two large brick hotels are a credit to the town. Patterson is landlord of the Balmoral, and W. Bateman of the Central. The Union bank has a branch here under the capable management of Mr. Pugh, formerly of Morden, Carberry and Souris. He is ably assisted by Mr. Geo. Michie. There are two good drug stores, Macdonald & Co., and J. W. Higginbotham.

Virden has six elevators and the mill is also running under the management of Mr. W. D. Craig. There will be a large quantity of grain marketed this year, but there is much yet to come in, so that a total is hard to get at. It is variously estimated at from 400,000 to 600,000. The yield was on a par with the rest of the province, and the quality is good. There have been about fifty cars of cattle and ten or twelve of hogs shipped from this point this season, so that the farmers are not depending altogether on grain raising. The hogs shipped from here went west to British Columbia.

ELKHORN.

This, the last town on the line within the provincial boundary is showing marked signs of improvement. Ramsey & Clingan have a large general store doing a thriving trade. Geo. T. Marsh, of Beulah, has opened up recently with a general stock. G. Silvester, formerly with Massey-Harris Co., and a well known and highly respected business man has lately bought the hardware business formerly owned by Rex Bros., and has greatly improved the stock. W. C. Van Nostrand the old timer of the town, handles lumber and building material, and sells the fuel which is principally coal. O. P. Jones is also an old timer in the hotel business, and has greatly improved, and enlarged his house this year. He has built a large wing with splendid sample rooms below and ten additional rooms above. The rebuilding of the Washakada Indian Home has kept every working man employed and will furnish work for some time to come. It will be finished next season. Meantime the work of the school, with several trades, including tailoring, carpenter work, shoemaking and printing is continued in temporary quarters. The Elkhorn Advocate is a local paper printed by the school printing office. Elkhorn has four elevators and a mill, the latter operated by D. Rowand. Some 200,000 bushels of wheat is the esti-

mated amount tributary to this point but the bulk is not yet in.

Fur Trade Prospects

A New York fur house has a letter in the Fur Trade Review in which the outlook for raw furs is considered. Furs being a luxury, this branch of trade is one of the first to feel the effects of depression, and the fur trade has been in a depressed state for some years. Now that business generally has improved, better times are looked for in the fur trade. The letter says:

Bear declined still further during the London winter and spring sales from the already low prices, which had been established in the previous year, thereby causing heavy losses to their owners, and but little benefit was derived from the improvement which black bear experienced during the last June sales, as the offering of this particular grade was at that time a limited one, and mostly bought at comparatively high figures. It is our opinion, though, that prices have about reached bottom, and we believe that prime, thin-pelted skins, particularly of the kind just referred to, will advance in value, as a better demand for them has developed, both here and on the continent. Still, the early collection of bear should be bought cautiously, because it consists principally of heavy pelted and low-furred skins, which, even in a more active market, it has always been difficult to handle advantageously.

Beaver held about their own about the first half of the year, sales in the local market being few and far between; but we noted with satisfaction that a little more attention has since been paid to this beautiful fur on our side, particularly to parcels containing a fair proportion of prime, pale-colored skins, such as we generally get from the Western and Northwestern States.

Whether this limited inquiry for beaver will continue and later on will improve, we hardly dare to predict, as we shall likely need the aid of the European market to push it again to the front, where it justly belongs; and a new basis of values may not be established until the result of the London January sales is known, at which time the largest quantity of beaver is generally closed out.

Otter could not be expected to sell well as long the price of seal rules low, because a good share of the collection has always been used in the plucked and dyed state as the finest imitation of seal, and its continued decline has, therefore, occasioned no particular surprise in well-informed circles.

Dark colored skins, suitable to be used in the natural state, of which the supply is always limited, were again in good request, here as well as in Europe, while our coat trade took a fair hold of the lower grades whenever collectors were willing to accept the situation of the market, which, as can be readily understood, was mostly in buyers' favor. The stock of otter which is carried over, consists therefore, principally of the medium grades, but is not excessively large compared with former seasons, and from late indications is likely to be still further reduced before the fresh collection reaches our market. Opening prices will consequently be about equal to the closing quotations of last spring. Skunk were not a profitable article

for the exporters to handle this year, and the recent demand for certain grades by our home trade was therefore heartily welcomed by our dealers, a good many of whom were induced by the adverse condition of the European market to carry a great many over this summer.

Real blue and good colored skins, as well as common low priced lots, sold again the best, the same as last year, and there is also still a fair demand for large mink, as they work up to best advantage into scarfs and small capes, which two articles are expected to sell well.

According to the latest advices from Europe, mink are moving but slowly over there, real large skins and those of moderate cost, which can be used by the cloak houses, having the preference, so that we are not justified in expecting a noteworthy support from that direction, and a lower range of prices must be looked for during the coming winter.

Muskrat succeeded in about holding their own on account of the fair demand for them from Europe, only the spring skins which are mostly used for plucking and dyeing, showed a decidedly weakening tendency, which is no doubt due to the fact that the increased consumption of sheared dyed conveys which article almost killed the sale of heavy furred muskrats on our side, has accomplished something similar on the Continent; and we have every reason to fear that this state of affairs will remain unchanged for some time to come as conveys are again this season strong sellers, in spite of the noteworthy advance in their price, and appear to please the public.

Fall and winter muskrat, will, therefore, be quoted at about last season's prices, and the London January sales will give us a very fair indication of what we may expect for the later catch, because at that time the largest offering of this fur is made, including a considerable share of spring skins.

Skunk may have disappointed us, but still their unsatisfactory sale cannot have caused any surprise to those well informed as to the tone of the market, and if skunk had been bought last winter, as common sense and good judgment dictated, there would surely have been less cause for regret.

It is useless to deny that, for a while at least, this fur has apparently seen its best days, and if the newly established low range of prices has during the past few months tended to create a somewhat better demand for it, we have no cause for rejoicing, because, with rare exceptions, the bulk of the collection has, after all, to be sent abroad, and as long as Europe continues to be a low bidder for skunk, which is almost certain to be the case again next winter, we cannot look for a noteworthy advance in their value.

There is a possibility, though, that if the present activity in the fur trade continues, a part of the fresh collection may be wanted for immediate use; but we would regret such a decrease very much, as it might encourage a foolish and uncalled for competition, which would prove, eventually, both to the shipper in the country and the dealer, hurtful and misleading. Raccoon bore out the expectations which we had placed on them last year, and all kinds met with a fair demand in both markets throughout the year. The lower grades, suitable for coats, sold again most readily on our side, and the opening of the Klondyke regions stimulated the inquiry for them still further as a fur coat may