

THE COMMERCIAL

The recognized authority on all matters pertaining to trade and progress in Western Canada, including that part of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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Advertisements purporting to be news matter, or which profess to express the opinion of this Journal, will not be inserted.

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D. W. BUCHANAN,
Publisher.

The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much larger circulation among the business community of the vast region lying between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast than any other paper in Canada, daily or weekly. The Commercial also reaches the leading wholesale, commission, manufacturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, DECEMBER 15.

Conditions in the North-Western Districts of Manitoba.

During the last year the Manitoba & North Western Railway, extending from Portage la Prairie to Yorkton, a distance of 223 miles, has been taken over by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, who now run it as a branch line. The farmers who took up land along this line went more into mixed farming than is customary in most other parts, which includes cultivation of grain, and the raising of stock. As the land became better cultivated and drained it was found that grain could be grown with satisfactory results and now large quantities of wheat and oats are each year shipped off this line, besides many car loads of cattle and hogs. Of course it took time for a man starting on a small capital to collect a herd of cattle, but the condition of many of these men at the present day exemplifies the claim that mixed farming is the surest, though possibly in some cases not the quickest, way of attaining independence. In the neighborhood of Arden and Neepawa is some of the best wheat land in Manitoba, but taken as a whole, this section is particularly well adapted to mixed farming, being covered with bluffs of trees and cut up by hills and valleys which serve as a great protection to stock in winter, while the low lands give excellent pasturage. The first station reached, after leaving Portage la Prairie, is Macdonald. This is on the Portage Plains and is, therefore, an important wheat market, there being three large elevators here. During the last few years a town has sprung up in which there are now two general stores, a flour and feed store, confectionery store, implement warehouses, etc. Westbourne, the next town, is situated on the banks of the White Mud river, close to a very fine grove of trees, which has been for many years a favorite picnicking ground, excursions being run even from Winnipeg. The crops in this district were very good for this year, averaging about 100 bushels to the acre, and as the farmers will also have some stock to dispose of it is expected by the local merchants that a very fair business will be done. There are two general stores at this point. Davey Bros. and A. E. Smalley, a butcher shop, harness shop, etc. The only business change for the year is in the harness shop of S. Solvason, which is now owned by A. McMillan.

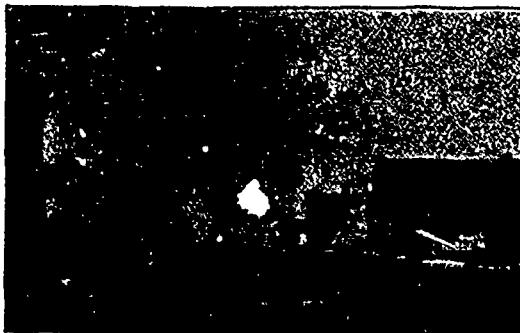
Few if any of the older towns of Manitoba can show as great a growth during the last few years as Gladstone. This growth is no doubt partly due to the Canadian Northern Railway having started their road from this point but it is also traceable to the fact that the report which had been circulated that the land tributary to this town was low and swampy and unfit for farming, has now been proved to be incorrect and a large number of settlers have taken up farms of late years. On entering Gladstone the attention is at once attracted to the number of large brick buildings, which number is being added to each year.

Since our last visit of a year ago F. C. Gabriel has built a two storey solid brick block which is occupied by W. C. Bond, hardware merchant. This store is well lighted and finished, and is one of the best stands in town. Knox Bros. have added to their furniture warehouse an addition 20x24 feet, extending along a side street, and to this A. E. Miller has built a further extension of 20x24 feet, which he is using as a tailor shop. This is a two storey brick building and is now 90x24 feet. H. J. Bickle, harness maker, built a one storey brick block, part of which he occupies, the balance being rented by

Neepawa is the most important town on this line and it ranks near the top as regards size and business importance among the towns of Manitoba. It has a population of 1,500 to 2,000 and is one of the few places in the west that are supplied with electric lights and telephones. These systems, which are owned by the town, have not been in operation a year yet, the electric light having been turned on for the first time on the 1st of January, 1900, and the telephone system was not completed until last spring, but from the following extract from the Neepawa Register it would seem that these ventures on the part

dollar, of which 11 mills is for school maintenance. On account of the poor crop prospects the building operations were not nearly so extensive this year as they would have been under ordinary circumstances. The Massey-Harris Co., Ltd., built a one-storey brick warehouse and Wm. Wigmore built a two-storey brick implement warehouse. F. Davidson, blacksmith, erected a new brick veneer building, the Union Bank completed their handsome red brick building, which they are now occupying, and several dwelling houses were also built. There are so many stores here that it would be wearisome to enumerate them. Many of the merchants carry very large stocks of goods, particularly in the general and hardware lines. In regard to business changes during the last year one of the most important is in the general store business formerly carried on by W. W. Stevenson, which is now owned by the Neepawa Trading Co., Cummings & Co., lumber dealers, have sold out and moved to Grand View, a new town on the Gilbert Plains extension of the Canadian Northern Railway. Their stock of lumber at this point was bought by Thos. Harrison and W. S. Burley, who now control this business here. The Beautiful Plains Milling Co. has been re-adjusted and is now known as the Manitoba Milling Co. This company has a flour mill of 400 bbls. daily capacity, as well as grain elevators at Minnedosa, Franklin, Neepawa, and Arden, giving total storage room for 250,000 bushels. In the new businesses, Campbell & Smith opened out this spring with a well selected stock of clothing and men's furnishings, and J. A. Calhoun has started a grocery store. The wheat yield in the country tributary to this town will not exceed an average of ten bushels to the acre and it is quite possible that it will not be even as much as that, but it is difficult to obtain as yet definite figures regarding the yield.

Franklin, the next station, is also an important grain centre, as it is situated between the large towns of Neepawa and Minnedosa it has not grown



Arden, Man.

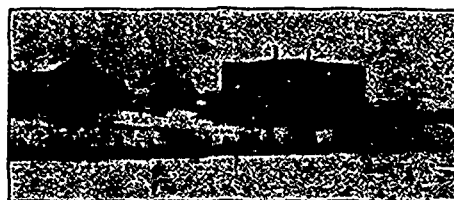
W. Huggins, butcher. One of the great drawbacks to this town has been the lack of good hotel accommodation but this year Jos. McAlpin has built a brick hotel, which will be opened very shortly and will, no doubt, meet the requirements of the travelling public. A brick school building was erected this year which will accommodate five or six classes. The Baptist congregation has built a brick church and a number of dwelling houses have also been erected so that the building operations for the season have been very extensive. Some business changes have also taken place. The hardware business of Crouter & McLean is now owned by E. Crouter. M. Hamilton, baker and confectioner, sold out to Lunn & Co., and the Merchants Bank has opened a branch here. At this point there are now three general and three hardware stores, a furniture store, two butcher shops, bakers, two harness shops, a planing mill, flour mill, lumber yards, implement warehouses, a chartered bank, private bank and a local newspaper, The Age. We are indebted to the proprietor of the Age for some of the cuts we are running in this issue.

Keys is the next station. This station until recently bore the name of Midway, but as there is a town in British Columbia of the same name freight was frequently sent to the wrong place and a change was considered advisable. It now bears the name of one of the most prominent families of the district.

At Arden we enter one of the best wheat districts of Manitoba. There are here five grain elevators and a flour mill. The mill, which is owned by Wilson & Co., is of 125 barrels daily capacity, adjoining which is their elevator of about 25,000 bushels

operating receipts show a balance over expenditure. The figures are:

Operating expenses for the nine months ending Oct. 1st . . . \$4,378
Receipts during same time . . . 4,455
The total cost of the two plants, which are the finest procurable, at their completion, June 15, 1900, was:
Boilers and engines . . . \$8,123.69
Dynamoes and plant . . . 6,388.38
Power house . . . 1,732.80
Street and inside system . . . 0,060.34
and material . . . 4,891.46
Telephone system . . . 4,891.46
\$25,202.67



Binscarth, Man.

as rapidly as might be expected from the fine country surrounding it, but still it has a number of good stores which manage to secure a good share of the business.

Minnedosa is prettily situated in the valley of the Little Saskatchewan river, which stream flows through the centre of the town. At this point we once more enter the mixed farming district which extends along the balance of the line. This is a railway divisional point, and the money circulated by the trainmen, as well as that received by the farmers from the sale of stock, gives to the merchants a fair amount of cash business so that they are not entirely dependent upon the fall payments, as is the case in so many parts of this country. The population of this town is about 1,200 and the business places include four general and three hardware stores, two groceries, three confectionery stores, two of which are also bake shops, two drug stores, one stationery and musical goods, two butchers, two harness shops, two jewellers, furniture warehouse, two lumber yards, several implement warehouses, a grist mill, newspaper, private bank and a branch of the Union bank.

At Newdale there are three general stores, owned by G. W. Ray, A. E. Walkey and T. N. Peter, a hardware and furniture owned by A. R. Fanning, a lumber yard kept by Wm. Irwin, harness and a butcher shop, drug store, etc. There are two elevators and a grain warehouse here through which large quantities of oats are handled as well as some wheat, although the cultivation of wheat has not proved to be so profitable as that of oats. The Newdale Creamery Association's factory, which was started in 1895, turned out this year about 4,000 lbs of butter. The only business change since our last visit is in the



Photo by Walter Barré.

Strathclair, Man.

capacity. The farmers marketing their grain gives this town a very busy appearance at this season of the year. There are two general stores kept by Wm. Paterson and McCamis & Boughton, two hardware stores, B. Van Blaricom and J. A. Gillhuly, implement warehouse, D. McRae, a furniture warehouse, lumber yard, butcher shop, harness shop and a drug store.

There are now 1,100 lights and 120 telephones in operation, which number, it is expected, will be considerably increased before the end of the year. The rate for the telephones is \$20 a year commercial and \$10 residential, and the electric light schedule is also very low. The rate of taxation was slightly increased this year, bringing it up to 25 mills on the