

# The Chatham Daily Planet.

(MAGAZINE AND EDITORIAL SECTION.)

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(PAGES NINE TO TWELVE)

## Four Years in the West

Former Kent Resident Writes an Interesting Letter to The Planet—Growth of the Great West.

Geo. H. Robinson, brother of A. E. Robinson, Clerk of Raleigh township, writes The Planet the following interesting letter from Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Mr. Robinson was born and raised on a farm on the old Middle Road, Raleigh.

To the Editor of The Planet, Chatham, Ont.:

Dear Sir,—Enclosed find one dollar as renewal of my subscription when due.

Mr. Editor, when I was leaving Chatham on April 16, 1901, you asked me to send you a few lines about the country where I would live, in the near future. Nearly four years have come and gone since then. When I landed here four years ago on the 20th inst., the surrounding country looked very wild and rough. Wetaskiwin was then a village of 800 population, and was apparently situated in a slough; the snow had just melted away, and the water was over the greater part of the low lands. On account of there being no ditches the water moved away very slowly.

The land in the immediate vicinity to the north is quite sandy, and to the east, south and west it is black sandy loam, very porous. It is dotted quite thickly with sloughs, which will in the near future be all drained and become valuable land.

The Wetaskiwin waters empty into the Pipestone Creek, which is about eight miles distant, and being over 100 feet deep below the level of its banks; then into the Battle River, two and one-half miles farther. Four years ago the farmers did very little farming, but were engaged in horse and cattle raising. The country then had very little fencing. You could drive across any farm you liked, the trails leading in all directions, but now they are fencing very fast, and one is compelled to go around by the roads, which are being graded under the supervision of the Local Improvement Districts, the Government providing the bridges at a very large cost.

The principal grains raised here are oats, barley and spring wheat. The main crop is oats, which grow very heavy and weigh 35 to 45 lbs. to the bushel. The grain ripens very slowly, which gives it time to fill.

The grain crops resemble very much the crops of Raleigh and Tilbury plains. Roots of all kinds grow very large, but the season is too short for beans or corn. Some farmers are trying rye and fall wheat, which they sow about the latter part of July or early in August, the land having been summer-fallowed.

Last year the crops, though somewhat lighter on the ground than in other years, is a much better sample and prices are a little better, the farmer thus realizing more for his crop.

Many of the farmers have large herds of cattle, which bring them a handsome sum each fall. There are a great many ranchers living out 100 and 150 miles east, which bring in

great droves of fine three and four year old steers, rolling fat, which are shipped from here by the trainload, besides car lots which are being shipped all the year round.

The horse and sheep ranching is not so prosperous; pigs are becoming more plentiful and sell at 5c. to 6c. per lb. dressed. Raising poultry is also a paying business. Last Christmas there was a ready sale for dressed chickens at 10c. per lb., ducks 12c., geese 15c. and turkeys 18c. per lb.; eggs 25c. per dozen.

The immigration of late years has been very heavy, people coming in by the trainload. The greater part of them are from the United States, and speaking English, Swedish, Norwegian and German languages; apparently well-to-do and prosperous farmers.

The homestead land has all been taken up for a distance of 60 to 70 miles east, while many have gone out over 100 miles; to the west it has been settled, though thinly, for 30 miles.

There are several lakes in the Wetaskiwin district which have abundance of fish. The Pigeon Lake, which is about 30 miles west, abounds with white fish. The Indians catch them and bring them in by the sleighload of 1,000 to 1,200 per load, selling them to the merchants at 7c. to 8c. each, who ship them by the car lots.

The Indians also bring in muskrat hides by the load, for which they receive from six to ten cents per hide. They are also caught by the white man. Several hundred thousand rat hides have been shipped from here this winter, besides black bear, wolf, red and silver fox, coyotes, mink and others. One Indian sold a load this winter which brought him a little over \$500.

As I said before, when I landed here Wetaskiwin's population was 660; now it is about 2,000. It has grown rapidly. Situated 151 miles north of Calgary on the Calgary and Edmonton R. R., which is operated by the C. P. R.

Wetaskiwin is well supplied with many stores, shops, hotels, etc., also with four elevators with a capacity of over 200,000 bushels of grain; also a flour mill which is run day and night.

A year ago last June fire broke out which consumed about \$200,000 worth of property, which has been replaced by more up-to-date and substantial buildings. Since then the town council has secured a first class fire engine and equipments, at an expense of some \$14,000. The fire brigade has only been called out to two small buildings worth about \$20 and \$25.

Wetaskiwin has also a municipal electric light plant which cost about \$25,000, which was installed some few months ago.

There is also under construction a new solid brick school house on stone foundation, which, when com-

pleted, will cost \$35,000. The building has all the latest appliances and is up-to-date in every way, built after the plan of the Winnipeg Alexandra school, being 77 feet square, having a 14 foot basement and ten rooms, giving Wetaskiwin an educational standing second to none in the territories.

The municipal assessment of 1904 was about \$650,000 and the school assessment was nearly \$800,000. The town council has granted the Northwest Gas & Oil Company a franchise to bore for gas, they to commence operations in a few weeks. If successful Wetaskiwin will be able to boast of cheap fuel—plenty of wood 12 miles west and a coal mine 13 miles east.

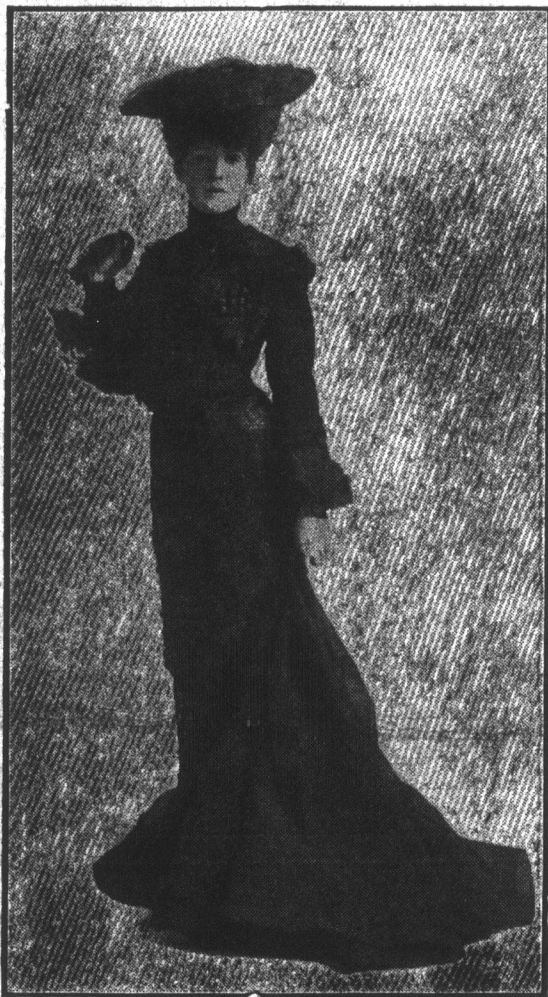
Wetaskiwin may some day become an important railway centre. The C. P. R. is constructing a line east; 27 miles of the grade is now nearly ready for the steel, which will be laid in the early spring. The material is, all on the ground, includ-

ing an 80 foot steel bridge, which is to cross the Pipestone Creek. There is strong talk of extending the line westward to the mountains. If that is done it will open up a large tract of timbered country. Eastern capitalists have been scouring the country to the west of here with the intention of purchasing a large tract of timber land. If successful they are likely to establish a saw and pulp mill in the Pigeon Lake vicinity.

The weather for the past year has been excellent, just enough of rain for the crops and about eight inches of snow during the winter, and no wind to drift. With the exception of three weeks a man could work in his shirt sleeves in comfort. For the past eight or ten days it is hardly freezing at night.

Hoping I have not taken up too much of your valuable space, I remain,

Yours respectfully,  
GEO. H. ROBINSON.



Mourning gowns this year are provided with all the detail and extravagance of other modes. To-day's illustration shows a dress in English crepe embroidered with roses in dull black silk. The embroidery extends up the sides of the skirt and around the bottom, and is used as an applique on the black gauze yoke. Undercuffs of the gauze are also embellished with the embroidered trimming.

## From the Far West

Another Letter to Planet Readers from Mr. Tobey  
—Many are Arriving There Daily.

Meata, Feb. 27, 1905.  
The Planet, Chatham, Ont.

Dear Friends and Enemies,—By the number of letters I received the last two mails it is quite evident that the readers of The Planet are quite interested in the West despite the change in the Ontario Government and the startling disclosures of Thos. Lawson. Yes, gentle readers, the interest in the West has come to stay this time, and grow it must just as the West is developing. Quite a number of the enquiries were for homesteads and a goodly number as to the advisability of buying land on speculation.

As to the possibility of getting homesteads I may say this: There are thousands of good homesteads in the Battleford district yet to be taken, but few at Jack Fish Lake, none. In fact so far as I know there are none. The only way a person could get one is by cancellation and by that means I am endeavoring to locate two from Kent County now. "Do you think it would be wise for me to buy land there on spec?" That is a question I was asked in several letters from prominent men. Now I'll not answer that directly but state a few facts, relate a few experiences and let you deduce the answer. I found time to answer two letters personally, the rest I refer to The Planet for an answer.

When we came here a year ago last May but one white man was

settled here. If all the houses—between here and Battleford in every direction for 50 miles on each side of the train, which is 24 miles long—were put at regular intervals there would not be a house every mile. Do the same thing now and the houses would be within speaking distance of one another. Now do you suppose for one minute that these hundreds of intelligent, thrifty and industrious settlers dream that the price of land is going to remain the same or get less. If they did why then is every one of them who could afford it buying the adjacent quarter section, half section or section? Because the price of C. P. R. land rose from \$1 an acre to \$6 in the last few years are we to suppose that with the steady influx of new settlers the price is not going higher? Does it seem likely that land companies would buy millions of acres at the present prices if they thought the interest in the Canadian West was going to flag? No, gentlemen, the West is moving and nothing will stop the onward, upward movement except the scarcity of homesteads. What was this land considered to be worth when the C. P. R. went through? Little or nothing. What is it worth now along the main line of the C. P. R.? But you'll say, "That's a good many years." "What about an endowment policy?" How many years of that time did the

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## The Days of Auld Lang Syne

Interesting Events of Ye Olden Times Gathered from The Planet's Issues of Half a Century Ago.

From The Planet files from July 25, 1861, to Aug. 1, 1861.

Elizabeth Barret Browning, the poetess, died in Florence on the 29th of June.

A woollen mill is projected to be established in Brantford by some enterprising citizens.

Mr. James Birch was, by the Board of Education, granted a first class certificate for twelve years.

Windsor holds a big emancipation day celebration. About 200 from Chatham attended, going to Windsor via the "Canadian."

Mr. Webb has presented us with a new variety of new potatoes raised from the seed. They are white and peculiarly smooth and cook to a charm. Mr. Webb is an old and experienced gardener and we are pleased thus to note his enterprise.

We are exceedingly gratified to learn from all quarters of this county (Kent) that the harvest of wheat is turning out splendidly. In some sections it is possible not quite as heavy as it was last year but everywhere the sample of grain is far handsomer. In other quarters, however, the yield is said to be unprecedented both in quality and quantity. With high or even fair prices the "good times" long sighed for all have come again. So mote it be.

School No. 16, Harwich, taught by Mrs. McQueen, was publicly examined on Saturday, the 20th inst. There were about 50 pupils in attendance, who were very thoroughly examined in the various branches taught in the school and acquitted themselves in a manner creditable both to themselves and their teacher and highly satisfactory to their parents and trustees. Mrs. McQueen seems to have bestowed much care and attention upon those placed under her charge and the progress of the school has made during her incumbency is very manifest. The trustees and a goodly number of the parents of the children were present, and at the close of the examination were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction at the efficient manner in which their school is conducted.

In the report of the meeting of the Town Council appears the following:

Mr. Northwood presented a petition from Geo. Ramsay and others for a sidewalk on Princess from King to Colborne streets.

An account from James Kirby for watching the town three nights as a policeman was ordered paid.

Mr. Higgins's by-law to appropriate \$50 to be expended on the road between the Township of Harwich and the Town of Chatham was read.

Dr. Askin gave notice that he would bring in a by-law for licensing shows and regulating them.

It was moved by Mr. Evans that the town purchase a plow and scraper for the use of the town.

There were present at the meeting the Mayor and Councillors R. O. Smith, Evans, Dr. Askin, Duff, Northwood, Heggins and Holmes.

### NEW EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

This fine edifice is rapidly being pushed on by the Messrs. Baxters to completion. The pews are all up and nearly finished. The gallery is quite done. The windows are all in and some of the painting done. This morning a new organ marionette from Boston, Mass., was placed in the gallery. This is said to be a very superior instrument and its cost will be about \$400. The church will be ready for occupation by the congregation in two or three weeks more.

### THE END OF THE WORLD.

Last evening Rev. M. Baxter, of the Church of England, gave an introductory discourse in the Town Hall on the coming of Christ about 1863-68. The Hall was well filled. The reverend lecturer commenced by stating that it was the object to adduce evidence from prophecy to show that in all probability within about seven years nearly every one then present would be either in heaven or hell. Although at the commencement of the Millennium in 1868 some few persons would be left on the earth, who should be spared on the approaching judgments, yet the state of the earth at that time was described in the words of the prophet, "the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men left." The conflagration of the entire globe was not expected to take place until the end of a thousand years subsequent to 1868. The three and half years great tribulation which would fill the earth with violence and wickedness and make it to be a hell, was held to be from 1864 to 1868. The advent of Christ in the air to raise the dead saints and translate some of the living saints was expected about 1863-64 and his descent on the Mount of Olives at the battle of Armageddon appeared to be about 1868, when all the ungodly and incorrigible would be slain.

To sneer at success is the prerogative of failure.

The man who has a commendable bad rarely appreciates it.

Men allow themselves to be bossed at home because it is too much bother to fight.

Many a man has lost his reputation by holding it up too much to public view.



Above is a blue linen gown trimmed with novelty braid in blue and white. Simplicity and attractiveness are here combined and insure this to be a favorite model.



Waterproof taffeta makes serviceable coats for children as well as bathing suits for their elders, and is one of the smartest of seashore materials. The plain little coat illustrated here is designed of the material, trimmed only with several rows of stitching. An open braid hat laced with ribbon is also worn.