

The City That Was Born Lucky

By W. B. WILLCOX

OUT in Sunny Southern Alberta, where Sol works overtime to keep the prairies and the wheatfields golden, where the winds of winter keep up a losing fight for a few weeks in their season and gradually give over the field to the all-conquering Chinook—in this mild

northern prairie there was an insignificant and unassuming town that for twenty years had suffered under the unfortunate name of "Medicine Hat." It is the only Medicine Hat under the sun, but, unlike most hats, this one is upturned upon the prairie, so that it seems to catch in its broad crown more of the glittering sun rays than any of the conventional hats of the West.

But Medicine Hat had a bad name; there is no doubt of it. When eastern people heard that name they shuddered, for they had heard of Medicine Hat, "the place where the weather comes from," and so strong was the illusion in their minds that the chill had pervaded their very systems like an

with the air softened by the warm chinook winds.

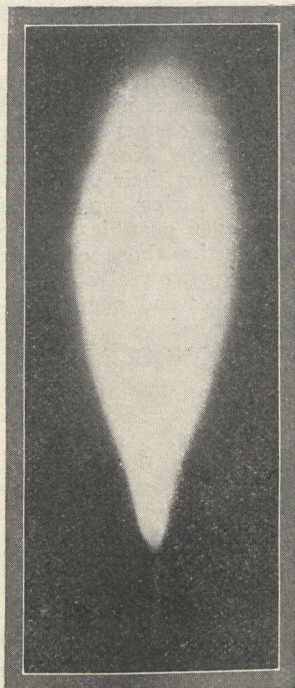
The world was slow in awakening to the importance of Medicine Hat's resources, but since the awakening there has been such remarkable industrial activity that the city has been transformed within a period of two or three short years into a maze of factories and mills. Five hundred men are busy converting the clay, which they take from the neighbouring cut-banks, into tile, brick, and pottery. Two hundred toil daily in the iron and steel mills making the products that will find their way to every part of Canada. A giant cement mill is being built, which, with its three hundred operators, will convert the ores of the earth into material for the further conquest and subjugation of the

and a dozen others are turning out their products with the power that comes unaided from the depths of the earth.

The sleepy little town which for twenty years was offered no more exciting entertainment than that afforded by the cow-punchers who came periodically to the "Hat" to buy their provisions and have their sprees, awoke with a start one day to find herself grown famous. The town, that according to Rudyard Kipling "was born lucky," was finally coming into her own; for the secret was out. Manufacturers were flocking to Medicine Hat and building their factories by the side of the gas wells, and new wells were being bored. Men and women were talking about the wonderful "Gas City," and every month brought its hundreds of arrivals to the city. In one year the population grew from five thousand to twelve thousand. The hotels were crowded to overflowing and people lived in tents and hastily constructed shacks. Builders came in by the hundred and the town spread out over the prairie with rows of houses marking out new streets in every direction.

The amount of building permits increased in one year from seven hundred thousand dollars to more than three million dollars, and yet there were not enough houses for the newcomers. A score of new business blocks were erected in the summer of 1912, modern five-story and six-story structures that transformed the prairie town into a modern city. Not since the days of the "Forty Niners" in California had there been such a remarkable exhibition of city building.

The guiding of Medicine Hat to its present position as an important manufacturing city was by some good fortune placed in the hands of conscientious and capable men who have given to the city a remarkably good administration. Their policy of giving free leases of land and free gas to manufacturers has brought to Medicine Hat many of its leading industries, while the adoption of the single-tax system at the same time encouraged improvements instead of levying a tribute upon them, as the old system does. The council have been responsible for providing the city with the best systems of water and sewerage in western Canada, and they have developed, by means of openness and fairness at all times, a most efficient police force that has made Medicine Hat one of the most orderly cities upon the continent. What is of still greater importance, they have encouraged the building of schools, churches and parks in order that the city may have its foundation and strength in the better social condition among the people.



The Natural Gas That is Making Medicine Hat.

ague. So great was the dread of that frigid place that mothers were in the habit of quieting their babes with the threat of sending them to Medicine Hat to freeze to death.

The opprobrium of the name must have arisen from the fact that the weather man stopped at the "Hat" a few years ago and decided to establish a weather station there, and as it was the most northerly point in the sphere of that tyrannical genius some of his satellites became imbued with the idea that all of the weather which he made, up in the Yukon, in Alaska, and Hudson's Bay, got their fridity from that town with the queer-sounding name. Like an epidemic the notion spread and grew, and before long Medicine Hat was doomed to Arctic loneliness—so far as they were concerned.

But fortunately for Medicine Hat there were some brave spirits who foreswore their allegiance to the weather man, left the homes of their childhood, and coming boldly north to the land of dread they were surprised and delighted with the reception which they received; for here were days and days of sunshine, and miles and miles of grassy prairie, with thousands of cattle grazing upon the thick mats of buffalo grass, or drinking from the streams and resting in the long coulees. They found also immense beds of coal on the banks of the rivers, lying in veins seven feet deep—coal that burned long and hot and kept off the chill of winter. But more wonderful still, they found that their wells gave up not only water, but also a gas that burned forever and kept their lights blazing night and day.

Thirty years have passed since gas was discovered in Medicine Hat, and for more than twenty years natural gas has been the principal source of energy, heat, and light for that city, but the flow continues with exactly the same force which it had when the first pipe pierced the cover of the earth and opened the vast cavern of ceaseless and inexhaustible energy. Never before has the world witnessed such a wonderful gift of nature. For years the street lights have been burning constantly night and day in Medicine Hat, like the fires of the Parsees, but no attendants are needed for these fires and no one thinks of turning out the lights, not even when the sun in summer travels three-fourths of the way around the horizon before passing below the sky line for a few short hours at midnight.

Winter is but a name in Medicine Hat, for although the mercury drops low in the thermometer during some of the short winter days, yet the soft chinook and the cheerful sun never give way for more than a few days of winter at any time, and even in the months of January and February, when the midland cities are held fast in the grip of the frost king, Medicine Hat and Sunny Alberta lie often for weeks radiant in the mellow sunlight and

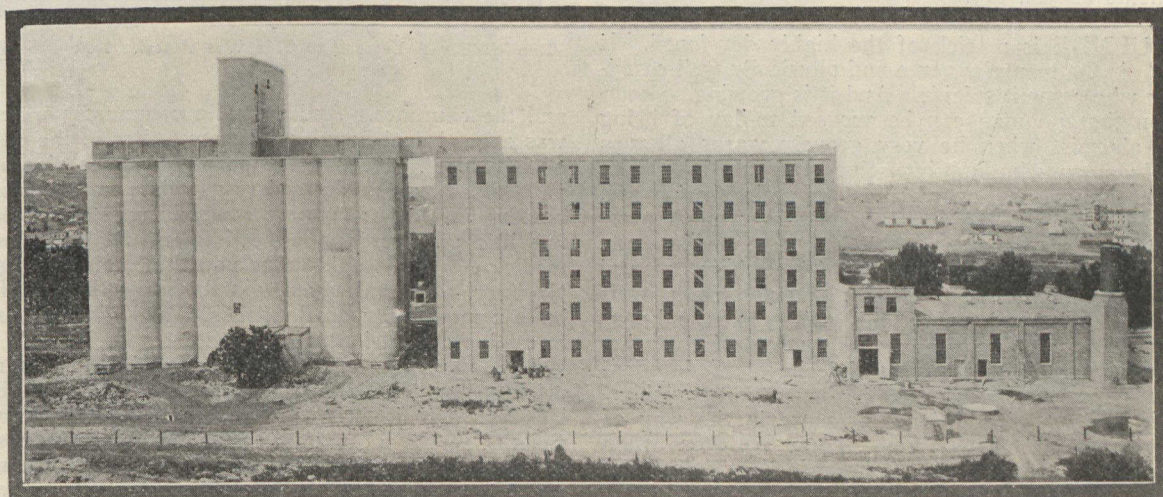


Some Houses Tell a Story of Taste and Prosperity. This Medicine Hat Residence of Hon. W. T. Finlay is of This Type.

whole West, with great concrete bridges across the rivers and colossal buildings for the cities. Four immense flour mills, with a capacity of fifteen thousand barrels daily, will be grinding the wheat from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and even from Manitoba. Glass factories, crayon factories, linseed oil mills,



A Medicine Hat Factory Which Turns Out 20 Carloads Daily of Fire-Brick and Sewer-pipe.



New Ogilvie Flour Mills at Medicine Hat. Cost, \$1,000,000. Capacity, 4,000 bbls. Daily.