

PEOPLE AND PLACES

LITTLE STORIES BY LAND AND SEA, CONCERNING THE FOLK WHO MOVE HITHER AND THITHER ACROSS THE FACE OF A BIG LAND.

THE THIN RED LINE ON THE PRAIRIE.

A DOCUMENT was read in the House of Commons the other day that had one of the most comprehensive introductions ever penned for the benefit of Parliament. This document was written by Commissioner Perry of the Northwest Mounted Police; his annual report on the status and condition of the thin red line that girdles and criss-crosses an empire in the West. The first paragraph says:—

"Our farthest outposts are found on the shores of Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean, and scattered over the vast northland along the lines of communication. They are found along the international boundary for 600 miles, and dotted over the settled districts of the two provinces."

No doubt about it, the aggregate efficiency, if not the personnel of the greatest police force in the world is on the down grade. The unique glory of the great force has departed. That is inevitable. The number of men in the force to-day is less than it was ten years ago when the area to police was about half what it now is. The duties of the force have largely changed. Much of the old heroic glamour has gone. Horse stealing is now about the only picturesque thing left in the country—aside from some of the lonely patrols up among the whalers and the casual expeditions of pioneer road-making forces that do 'stunts' equal to the biggest things ever done in the days of old. The local constable has encroached somewhat on the work of the force. In Edmonton for instance there are nearly twenty local police and but half a dozen mounted. Most of the small new towns have local constables; some of them have mounted men. Besides many of the men are either waiting for their time to expire in order to go farming or buying real estate, or else they are buying themselves out. Mere routine will not hold these men. Drill will not keep them. The morale of the great force in the olden time was conditioned upon smuggled whisky and fighting Indians. As the country settles and gets down to peaceful agriculture and modern trade the pomp and circumstance and the splendid isolation of the mounted policeman grows less and less. Here and there you will find real enthusiasm for the force. Everywhere the force is respected. But the big days are done and no amount of money or modern improvements will ever bring them back.

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CORNERING THE WORLD'S ASBESTOS.

IN one thing at least the Province of Quebec has next to a world monopoly; that is asbestos. About ninety per cent. of the world's asbestos comes from Quebec. Asbestos is the most important mineral in Quebec. It is to Quebec what silver is to New Ontario and gold to the Yukon. It is only thirty years since the first asbestos was mined anywhere. In that time the value of asbestos produced has been nearly twenty million dollars. The demand for asbestos is increasing almost as fast as the demand for rubber. Most of the Quebec product comes from the counties of Megantic and Richmond.

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ANOTHER CANADA FAKER.

THE Winnipeg Post is into a meritorious funk over an article by Mr. Charles Harvey in the Atlantic Monthly, in which the uninformed scribe credits Winnipeg with a population of seventy-five thousand. This of course is about forty thousand shy of the truth. They are long on the census in Winnipeg and any scribe who sets out to tell American readers that the Wheat City is under the hundred thousand mark may expect some such literary black eye as the Post hands Mr. Harvey in the following emphatic and convincing paragraph:—

"Even as a guess, Mr. Harvey's rating of Winnipeg is a poor one. He says he was in Winnipeg and I, for one, wonder what sort of eyes Mr. Harvey has that his observation led him to place Winnipeg in the seventy-five thousand class. The Atlantic Monthly is published in Boston, and perhaps it is not straining supposition too harshly to take the Massachusetts capital—that he knows the country thereabouts. Let Mr. Harvey think of any of the cities about Boston that have a population of about 75,000—say Lynn, Lawrence or Lowell—and consider which of them has anything like the appearance of a large city, that Winnipeg has. Put

in such cities as Fall River—with a population of 110,000—Worcester—with 125,000, and a great railroad centre in that part of New England—or even Providence, Rhode Island, a city of over 200,000 people, and I think Mr. Harvey must admit that neither of these places shows at all like Winnipeg in such big city features as broad streets, asphalted pavements, extent of boulevards along residential streets, class and number of hotels, banks, or even the size of the stores and the stocks offered in them."

As a corollary to this the comparative summing-up of the new directory by the Free Press throws an almost curious light on the progress of the city. For instance:—"It is stated by the directory people that there are fifty languages spoken in Winnipeg, which reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the city and its attraction to the whole outside world. The 1909 directory contains 250 more pages than the one issued last year. It is stated that the marvellous growth of Winnipeg has only been exceeded by one other city in the world, namely Johannesburg, S. A., the population of which was attracted by the development of the gold trade. The first city directory was published in 1876, and gave the population of Winnipeg at that time as about 6,000. A comparison of the directories of 1876 and 1909 shows the development along commercial lines. In the former year there were two architects, as compared with 34 at present; and other comparisons are: Banks,



The famous pacer, "The Eel," owned by Mr. F. W. Entricken of Tavistock, Ontario, which made a record of 2.11 1/2 on the Ice at Ottawa this winter.

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2-43; barristers, 10-100; boot and shoe merchants, 3-94; dry goods, 6-52; grain dealers, 12-73; grocers, 11-277; hotels, 9-80; newspapers and periodicals, 4-51 (the Free Press was being published in the former year); physicians, 5-150, and real estate agents, 6-352."

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JOHN CONNELL'S MOOSE TALKS.

JOHN CONNELL from Miramichi is giving New York some moose lore. John is in charge of the New Brunswick exhibit in that city and he finds that moose stories go down as well there as bear stories used to a generation ago. The New York Telegram had an article the other day in which Mr. Connell talked very entertainingly about moose that unless you knew John to be as reliable a talker as he is a guide you would suspect him of inoculation by Thompson-Seton. The Telegram had this information concerning Moose John:—

"He has tamed a moose, with which he drives to town and utilises in many other ways, and sometimes enters him in the horse races on the ice at home, where he usually beats all comers. Speaking of the great increase of moose and caribou in the Miramichi district, he said they were no doubt being driven out of Maine into a pocket in northern New Brunswick, from which they could not escape. The moose, he observed, were getting more chary of the "call." Music has a wonderful effect on them to soothe and attract, and last season he had secured good results from a mouth organ. Standing in the

wind he would let the strains of "Clean Pea Straw" or "The Wind that Shakes the Barley" float down the breeze, and soon the crash of antlers could be heard coming through the woods. So successful had he been with a concertina in this respect that he was thinking next season of setting phonographs like fox traps in the woods during the hunting season and baiting them with sonatas and nocturnes."

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DRIVES THE GREY GHOST.

THERE is a horse owned at Tavistock, Ont., known variously as "The Eel" and "The Grey Ghost." This horse is faster on ice than John Connell's moose spoken of on this page. And the Grey Ghost has a remarkable driver, according to a Provincial newspaper, which says of him:—

"Dan McEwen and the Eel are a pair. When the greatest driver on the Canadian and American turfs settles down in his seat behind the greatest of Canadian pacers, then it is that a little chill creeps up and down the spinal columns of the drivers to the right and left. It makes all the difference in the world to have Dan McEwen on the job. For some time he has driven for Frank W. Entricken, of Tavistock, owner of the Eel. Mr. McEwen's handling of this wonderful animal has won for himself fame, and for the owner of a good deal of hard cash during the season. No one else has ever drawn a line over the Eel's back. The Grey Ghost has been broken, gaited and trained by McEwen."

Already a familiar figure—and a popular one—on the tracks of the continent, it did not take the advent of the Eel to make a name for the veteran Canadian driver. Rather it is the other way about. The whole long story of the Eel's discovery, development and remarkable successes, is simply a chapter—a glowing one, it is certain—in the career of the man who drives him. It is a tribute to his intelligence as a man, his remarkable instincts as a horseman in recognising the animal of promise, and his born ability to develop what he sees. But Dan McEwen was a widely-known man long before the Eel came along. His grey hair and moustache, and his quiet and retiring manner are far from strange to the oldest of Canadian track followers. About fifty years ago Daniel A. McEwen was born in East Williams, Middlesex County, at a distance of about four miles from the town of Ailsa Craig. He was raised on the farm, his father being one of the Scotch pioneers of the county and an elder in the Presbyterian church."

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SCHOOLS IN TWO LANGUAGES.

MANITOBA is long on bi-lingual schools. In that polyglot province where forty languages are spoken, there are 268 teachers in charge of schools where they teach two languages. One hundred and ten of these are bi-lingual French with 188 teachers; forty-two are German—mostly in the Mennonite settlements—with forty-seven teachers; thirty-three are Galician schools with thirty-three teachers.

These bi-lingual schools are nearly all in the country sections. Manitoba has about 1,000 rural schools, so that more than one-quarter of the country schools are of the bi-lingual variety—and most of them are said to be particularly weak on the language called English.

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GETTING NEIGHBOURLY.

ANOTHER bridge is being mooted across the St. John. Residents of the Maine side are anxious to get into better commercial relations with the New Brunswickers. In the Maine Legislature the other day Hon. Charles Keegan of Van Buren proposed that the House vote half of seventy-five thousand dollars for a bridge from Van Buren to St. Leonard's. Mr. Charles Cyr, who lives in that town and represents Madawaska in the New Brunswick House, was present and said he reckoned the people of New Brunswick would meet the folks from Maine just about half way across the river.

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THRIFTY GERMAN TOWN.

FRENCH and German meet in the town of Stettler, which is sixty miles east of Lacombe on the C. P. R. Stettler is a true German town. Lacombe was named after the famous Pere Lacombe missionary. No more thrifty and hopeful town is to be found in Canada than this German colony in the wheat belt. Last year the farms round and about Stettler produced a million bushels of wheat.