

Some improvements have been made in the flour mill owned by B. Friel, new machinery having been added and the plant improved in other ways.

Forty miles west of Regina is Moose Jaw, which is a railway divisional point. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company have large shops here and in 1897 they completed at a cost of about \$45,000 a large and handsome depot, the largest of any we have yet touched west of Winnipeg. It is constructed of red brick on a stone foundation, and is divided by an archway, the western portion containing the offices of the superintendent, dispatcher, ticket office, etc., the remainder being used as an hotel. The fact of this being a divisional point means a great deal to the merchants as the railway company's monthly payroll amounts to \$16,000. A great amount of business is also received from the large area of farming and ranching country for which it is the market town. There are elevators at

are now about completed for the erection of a flour mill which has been badly needed here. D. McLean, representing a strong company, contemplates erecting a 200-bbl. mill and a 50,000 bushel elevator. It is the intention to equip this with the very latest and best machinery which will turn out a high grade flour.

About twenty miles west of this station we leave behind the grain belt and enter upon a stretch of ranching country extending to Calgary, a distance of over 100 miles. In this distance there are as yet, only three towns, the first of which is Swift Current with two or three stores and a few residences.

Maple Creek, 200 miles west of Moose Jaw is a town of considerable importance, as it is the centre of a large ranching district from which it receives a large amount of business. Dixon Bros., I. A. Palmer, T. Colle, and J. Claustre carry extensive stocks of groceries, dry goods, etc. W. H. Lawrence has a lumber yard and reports last season as having been a good one in his line, a considerable amount of building having been done. There are also a number of other businesses here including King & Co.'s butcher shop and J. O. Deesley, confectioner, etc. There is a good opening here for a first class hotel.

Another move, this time of sixty miles, brings us to Medicine Hat, which is a town of about 1,500 inhabitants. Its situation besides being rather pretty, is a very fortunate one as it is in the valley of the Saskatchewan River and right in the line of the chinook winds, so that its climate during the winter is not nearly so severe as in most of our prairie towns. It is a divisional point on the C. P. R. and the base of supplies for a large ranching district, thus making it a very lively business point. It did not attain to its present size with a rush, but has had a gradual growth each year adding to its size. Natural gas has been found at several points in this region and there are three wells here, but as yet very little use has been made of this valuable discovery. Coal deposits are also known to exist, but it has not yet been ascertained to what extent. A few figures copied from the Medicine Hat Times will give an idea of the amount of stock handled at this station. Last season the total amount of exports were: Cattle 5,458, horses 508, sheep 5,054 and 116,300 pounds of wool, and imports: Cattle 6,221, horses 391, sheep 112. Last summer, besides a number of residences being erected there were several business blocks built, among them that of the Medicine Hat Trading Co., which is a two story brick building, 32x75 feet. This company started business three years ago carrying a general stock and their business has increased to such an extent that they found it advisable to erect this stand. They occupy the entire building and employ from 12 to 15 hands. Mrs. Muir also built a brick block, which is occupied by Black's drug store, millinery, store, etc. The Bank of Montreal quarters are in a large brick block built last season by Hargrave & Sissons. A new court house and police barracks were also erected last season.

From Medicine Hat we will take a jump westward to Calgary, which latter place will be described in another letter.

The Ontario government has a surplus of revenue over expenditure according to the recent budget speech and as this is likely to be the case

every year hereafter according to the predictions of its financial advisers it is proposed to spend a portion of the surplus, probably about \$100,000 per year, in improving the country roads of the province.

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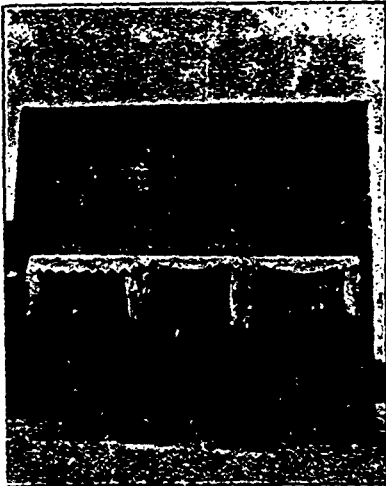
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I will call on the trade on C. P. R. in Manitoba, also in N. W. T., and B. C., and branch lines in good time for fall trade. Mr. D. Cameron will do the branch lines in Manitoba.

J. RANTON,

Agent, P.O. Box 628.

Sample Rooms, 502 McIntyre Bldg., Winnipeg.



Medicine Hat Trading Co.'s Store -
Medicine Hat, Assa.

Behar, Caron, Belle Plaine, and Pense, which are in the Moose Jaw district. It is estimated that there were 1,000,000 bushels of grain grown in this district last year. These figures were arrived at by taking the amount of binder twine used to bind this crop and allowing that each pound would bind 10 bushels of wheat and a little more than that of oats. Tributary to this point also are the ranching districts of Willow Branch, Yellow Grass, the Qu'Appelle valley, Chaplin, etc. Moose Jaw was enlarged last year by the erection of over thirty buildings, including a \$20,000 hotel and a brick block, the latter being occupied by J. M. Simington, the baker. The hotel bearing the patriotic name of "The Maple Leaf," is of three stories and basement, constructed of brick on stone foundation, it is fitted up in first class style, its equipment including acetylene gas, steam heating, hot and cold baths, etc. The proprietor, E. C. Matthews, comes from Regina where he formerly ran the Windsor hotel. Some new businesses were also opened since our last visit of a year ago. S. B. Sanders started a flour and feed store. McKenzie Bros. have started a grocery, four and feed store business, and also bought the butcher shop of J. H. Smith, and the business of J. A. Healy & Co., was bought by B. Carey. Arrangements