

MEMOIR
ON THE
EDMONTON COAL FIELD

BY
D. B. Dowling.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the opening out of the northwest to civilization, some of the settlements soon developed into thickly populated communities; due to various causes. Among these may be mentioned, (1) advantageous situations as regards transportation; (2) importance of the location agriculturally, or as a mining centre; and (3) strategic position for a capital city. Each of the foregoing causes may be contributory factors in the growth of a town.

Edmonton is a typical instance of natural selection; for it is situated on the banks of a navigable river, at a point where goods for trading with the fur hunters could be expeditiously brought. Other trading posts were established on the banks of the Saskatchewan, but Edmonton has progressed more rapidly than any; doubtless in accordance with the law of the survival of the fittest.

But in time the fur trade was eclipsed by agricultural development in the district; and railway communication greatly accelerated the progress of the settlement. Its transformation, however, from a town into the capital city of the Province; together with the advent of competing railways, have been the most important factors in making for its recent phenomenal growth.

In addition to the advantages cited, Edmonton now promises to be the centre of a flourishing coal mining industry; for in the vicinage coal seams have been discovered capable of being worked economically, and on a commercial scale, and are now being exploited.