

## THE DOMINION'S PROGRESS AND EXPANSION

### Much Publicity and Comment as to Canada's Growth —Critics Who Have Not Seen the Country —The Situation at Saskatoon

BY A. E. BOYLE.

Canada's progress, prosperity, and expansion has been the subject of much publicity and comment.

Criticisms have been made, only to be refuted, or to die naturally. Such having been proved to be made in ignorance, or for a personal motive, or with malice intent.

Half truths though worst of all, have also been successfully combated.

Western Canada has been maligned repeatedly by those who have judged the conditions in this new land by old world standards, and by those whose attacks have been called forth by the subdivision craze, which has been a black spot. But Canada's business and financial interests, its banks and indeed all who have its interest at heart have issued repeated warnings regarding it to all and sundry. And this has been offset by resources, advantages and solid growth and other points too numerous to mention. So that the attacks aforesaid were altogether uncalled for and unnecessary.

#### Saskatoon is a Thriving City.

I have just concluded a careful investigation of actual conditions in Saskatoon, and am presenting the information for the purpose of setting at rest any misleading rumors that have gone abroad respecting this city. This is furnished without argument and without any desire to make out a case. The information can be verified by anyone who chooses to visit Saskatoon or by correspondence with any reliable institution or business man there.

I would begin by insisting that Saskatoon is a thriving city, and make no apologies for employing that term. Evidences of thrift are to be seen, in spite of the exploitation of resources reflected in real estate operations. The city has been satisfied to make progress every year, without attempting to become a metropolis over night. It has been able to recount a series of good years since its growth began ten years ago. It is still making progress.

There is no boom at the present time, and it is unlikely that there will be one in the near future. The men who are furthering the best interests of the city discourage booms to the extent of their influence. They rely on the steady and regular upbuilding which constitutes the real strength of any community.

#### Banking and Lending Condition.

But if any man imagines that general business is bad in Saskatoon, he is due to receive an awakening. The ordinary transactions which go to make up the round of trade from month to month, and which furnish the best criterion of a city's progress, are being carried on now with as much vim and confidence as at any time in the past. In some lines there is a keener activity, but in order to be moderate it may suffice to declare that as far as the current movement of merchandise is concerned there is no sign of a reaction. The supply of money is the next item of importance, and it is a big factor in a community which can absorb as much money as Saskatoon has received during the past few years.

Bankers told me that they were furnishing all the money that was required for the purpose of assisting or encouraging sound business propositions. What more could be expected? Loan company managers remarked that collections on city mortgages were as good as at any time in the past, and were slightly more encouraging at the moment than those on farm loans.

One well-posted official said that his company's receipts on collections during March showed an increase of more than 100 per cent. as compared with the same month last year. He was ready to put out more funds, because it was the policy of the company to encourage home-building. The volume of his business was showing a steady and encouraging increase.

#### Maintenance of Production.

The maintenance of a large volume of production in and around the city is a weighty consideration, for Saskatoon depends upon it for her future prosperity. Any man who has the proper proportion of red blood in his veins must admit that Saskatoon has nothing to fear in this connection. The territory adjacent or tributary to Saskatoon is as fair a land as was ever touched by a plough, and its fertility is bringing forth greater revenues every year. Such facts need only to be stated, in order to carry conviction. But if detailed confirmation be required, a study of the official figures of agricultural production as furnished by the government of Saskatchewan at the close of each season will give it. I was keenly interested during my recent visit, in the crowds of settlers and other newcomers who made pedestrianism on the station platforms a difficult operation. A passenger agent of one of the railways

told me that these Canadian fledglings were bound for one or other of the small towns which surround the city in every direction to take up land and increase agricultural production. Every day there was an additional squad, and only one infatuation was possible. Until such time as that stream of population ceased to flow, there was plenty of foundation for Saskatoon's confidence.

#### Municipal Financing and Developments.

The position occupied by the municipality in its relation to the purse of the world is worthy of notice. Saskatoon has been faced with a tremendous task in finding the facilities and conveniences demanded by the people of a new big city. When the population insists on doubling within a year there is apt to be a problem in municipal government for the men who have sought the support of the electorate. The expenditures have grown at an enormous rate, but they have not kept pace with the benefits conferred through the outlays thus made. And they have not caused financial appendicitis at the civic headquarters. The mayor of the city has just returned from a conference with the management of the Bank of Montreal at the head office of that institution, and he brings the assurance of funds for the city's spending operations during the current year. The municipality has arranged to expend \$1,500,000 on public works during the season, in the form of capital outlays, besides carrying on the numerous regular activities which now form the business of municipal administration. If to any weak spots in the general situation at Saskatoon, the Bank of Montreal could be trusted to take notice of them, and the assurances from that institution have been received with gratification on the part of all those who are determined to maintain the reputation of this city.

### SASKATOON'S COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS ARE HEALTHY

Now that spring is actually here there is greater business activity, and while no doubt the lack of ready money is having its effect, commercial conditions, I regard as being in a healthy state. During this month a certain amount of liquidation should result from the money brought into the country through immigration, the movement of grain with the opening of navigation and the release of a large amount of money by the sale of debentures by the municipalities and provinces which have been borrowing from the banks, is how Mr. W. P. Kirkpatrick, of Bank of Commerce, Saskatoon, sums up conditions.

The bank clearings for the three months show an increase over 1912. In view of the fact, too, that in February and March last year real estate activity was at its height, while this year one may safely state the clearing figures represent solely the commercial expansion.

The building trades should prosper this year as a large number of buildings commenced last year will not be completed before midsummer, and the anticipated buildings for this year will run pretty close to the figures of last year, there is, of course, the possibility that some of this proposed building will be delayed because of the difficulty of obtaining funds on mortgage loans.

There is considerable grain in the country elevators, and farmers' hands, in this district yet to be shipped.

There is every evidence that the scarcity of money will make more producers this year, parties who had left their farms returning to them, and farmers adjacent to the city are purchasing cattle, therefore, mixed farming is getting a start.

Wholesalers report improved collections, and the local merchants report trade up to expectations.

Seeding will commence about the fifteenth which is late, but I am of the opinion that conditions will be ideal because there will be sufficient moisture in the ground to carry the crop to the June rains, and the growth will be very rapid.

### PRICES ARE STEADY AND FIRM

Wholesale prices in Canada in March were on the same general level as in February, and only a little higher than in March last year. The department of labor's index number stood at 135.5 for March, compared with 135.4 in February, and 134.8 in March, 1912. These numbers are percentages of the average price level of 272 commodities during the decade 1890-1899. A considerable decline in coke was offset by advances in furniture and earthenware. Important increases also occurred in animals and meats, boots and shoes, iron and lumber. Decreases were reported in grains and fodders, dairy products, fresh vegetables, brass, copper, silver and zinc, linseed oil and rubber. The feature of the month in retail prices was the general decline in eggs, and numerous advances in meats in eastern Canada.