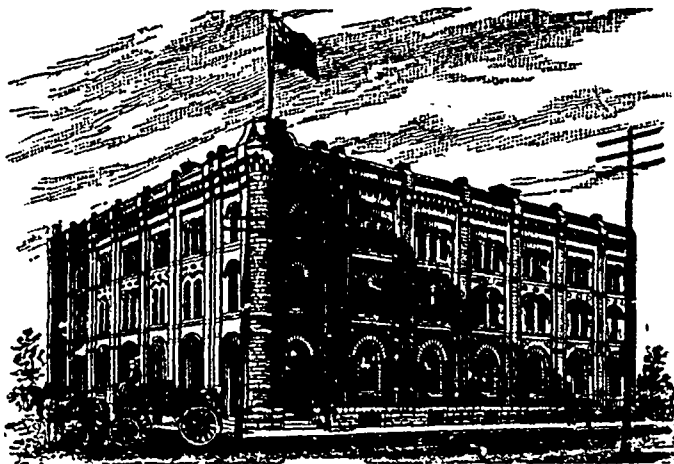


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Looking Lovely.

A representative of THE COMMERCIAL, who made a trip over the Canadian Pacific early last week, found the prairie country between Winnipeg and the mountains looking just lovely. Seldom, if ever, has the prairie region presented a more enchanting appearance. Everywhere the country is fresh and green, and all nature seems to smile. The prairie flowers seem more beautiful than in past years, the bluffs of trees have apparently taken on a deeper green, the grass is making a good growth, and most important of all, the crops everywhere promise an abundant yield. Not since 1882 at least has the country presented a more inviting appearance; and the writer makes this statement from knowledge gained by a trip through the country about every year since the date named.

This favorable condition is of course due to the timely showers which the country has this year enjoyed. In the territories heavy rains had fallen all along the line at intervals during the two or three weeks previous, and pools of water were observed in the depressions in the prairie and the ditch along the railway. At Moose Jaw there were ponds of water in the streets. In the Medicine Hat district the ground has received a thorough soaking. The district about Swift Current and Maple Creek appeared to be the least favored as to the rainfall. In some sections of the Territories the rains came too late to ensure a heavy yield, but some good fields of grain were observed, and splendid samples of vegetables were shown. At Medicine Hat samples of wheat and barley fully headed out and of fairly good length of straw were shown.

In Manitoba everywhere, with the exception of a strip extending eastward from Portage la Prairie, the country looked fine. The rains have not been heavy enough to fill the sloughs, but there has been ample for the crops. After the series of dry years experienced of late, it will probably take several wet seasons to restore the lakes and ponds to their former condition. However, the ditches and depressions in the prairie show considerable surface water in places. Exception, as noted above, is made of a strip of country, commencing at Portage la Prairie and extending eastward some miles.

The recent rains appear to have passed over this district, and the country has rather a dry appearance. There are some good fields of grain, but others show the effect of drought. It is understood that later in the week this district was visited by rain.

The grass has made good progress, and though it will not be a heavy crop, it will be considerably better than last year. The grass will require another fairly wet year to recover its former luxuriant growth, as the root has apparently been impaired by the dry seasons of the immediate past. The stand is thin, and a large area will have to be gone over to get the required quantity of hay. Even then it is likely that some farmers will have to use straw to some extent for feed. At any rate, the lesson of last winter will no doubt teach farmers to hold over their straw, instead of burning it immediately after threshing, as has been the improvident custom in the past.

Along the road settlers were busy breaking new land, and a considerable area of prairie has already been plowed up. The rains have kept the land in good shape for breaking. In a few instances it was noted that farmers had commenced cutting hay.

Medicine Hat.

Medicine Hat the principal town of western Assiniboia, has improved slowly but steadily during the last few years. The number of business places has not been materially increased, but a change is noticeable in the better class of buildings which are gradually replacing the hastily constructed stores and dwellings which have done duty since the establishment of the town. The business men of Medicine Hat are of a friendly and progressive disposition, and they work together for the general good. As a community they are always putting forth efforts for the advancement of the place, and if the Hat does not become a great city, it will not be the fault of the residents, who are certainly doing everything in their power to secure the prosperity of their town and district. The situation of the town, at the crossing by the Canadian Pacific of the South Saskatchewan river, gives it advantages not possessed by many growing western communities. It is also an important division town of the C. P. R., and

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has railway machine shops, round house, etc.

In the district stock-raising is carried on to a considerable extent, and the industry is expanding. This year there has been plenty of rain, and the crop outlook is good. The railway people, under the direction of Mr. Niblock, divisional superintendent, have surrounded the depot building with a beautiful flower and vegetable garden, which is the admiration of passengers going through on the railway. A large variety of plants and shrubs are growing luxuriantly in the garden, giving an inviting aspect to the surroundings. A fine new hospital building was completed and occupied last spring, a work which was also undertaken largely through the efforts of Mr. Niblock.

In matters of business there has not been much change of late. H. S. Scatterd, hardware, sold out recently to F. H. Dowding, who recently arrived from Ontario, and decided to locate at the Hat. S. S. Lloyd, shoemaker, formerly of Canmore, has also recently located here and has opened a shop in his line. He contemplates putting in a stock of boots and shoes, in addition to doing custom work.

The American Hotel is about to change hands, Mr. Cowles, the present lessee, being about to retire. The hotel is being overhauled from cellar to garret. New floors are being laid, new plastering throughout, new furniture will be put in, and two large sample rooms are being prepared. When the hotel comes under new management, as it will shortly, it will be in first-class shape.

A writer in the *Dry Goods Bulletin* says of the present fur trade situation: "The early opening of a manufacturing fur season has not within our recollection shown greater promise than is noticed in this branch of trade at present. The demand for shoulder capes last year and the belief in an increased sale the coming season have made this little garment a most important one to manufacturing furriers. Seal skin makers are likewise busy on jackets, wraps, and other small garments, the outlook for the sale of which is excellent. There have been many new styles introduced. The men are out on the road and doing well. The fur trade has cause for congratulation over the outlook."