

one of the solidest men of the place. There is now a third general store, A. E. Pineo, formerly of Pineo & Merrick, proprietor. The firm opened at Griswold this year, and have since dissolved. Mr. Merrick continuing in Virden and Mr. Pineo here. Mr. G. McEwen is the local hardware man. He has been here a number of years and is now building a new store 24x45 for his increasing trade. He also deals in furniture, the upper floor of his now premises being intended for that stock. J. E. Humphrey opened out last spring with a good stock of furniture which he has recently replenished. He buys largely and imports direct from the east. He is also agent for the Deering harvesting machinery. W. J. McComb is agent for the McCormick and other firms. A. D. Chisholm handles lumber for the Assiniboine Lumber Co. of Brandon, and also buys grain. David Black is landlord of the Spliers hotel, a very fine building, and at this season full of business. Dr. Hicks' drug store is also in this block. A handsome new school has just been completed at Griswold at a cost of over \$3,000. It is heated by hot air, has basement full size and is a most complete and up-to-date educational institution. Some of the wealthiest farmers in Manitoba are residents of the Griswold district, and most of them made their money right here on their farms. It is not wise, even if it were within the scope of this letter, to give figures showing what many farms in Western Manitoba will net in cash from this year's crop alone. But it is not exaggeration to say that men have returned from the Klondyke with no more thousands. It is also well to remember that these farmers were already well fixed, and this year's profits do not go to wipe out any old scores. But that is "by the way."

OAK LAKE.

It has been jokingly said that this town is so-called, because it has no oaks and there is no lake within eight or ten miles. It is however, a pretty spot admirably situated for shelter and for charm of surroundings on slightly rolling land with clumps of poplar scattered all round, and while the sand hills may run unpleasantly close, they have prevented the destruction of much of the small trees in the little bluffs which dot the ground, as it has not been cleared away for farming purposes. Oak Lake is always a bright little town, whether from its sunny situation, the nature of its business men or both. It has improved rapidly in the last few years and is as good a town as there is in the west for its size. There are three elevators here and last year the total grain handled here and at Routledge, where Letch Bros. buy wheat, was 160,000 bushels. This

year the hail storm knocked out fully 4,000 acres, causing a loss of 70,000 or 80,000 bushels of wheat. The yield is less also, not being a greater average than 12 or 13 bushels. The total tributary to Oak Lake is not expected to exceed 300,000, of which, probably, 25,000 to 30,000 will be delivered at Routledge. Over half of the wheat is now in. This market is always a particularly strong one and an important factor is Letch Bros.' large mill of 250 barrels capacity, which requires 1,100 bushels every twenty-four hours to keep it going. This enterprising firm has built up a large business and established a high reputation for the flour they manufacture. They find a market both east and west but ship mostly to Ontario and Quebec. There are four general stores in Oak Lake. Wm. Thompson, one of the pioneers, has

is a good stock country south of the Lake.

VIRDEN.

This western town has become a business centre of no mean proportion, in the past few years and holds its trade well though railway building has of late years cut off tributary territory, and some of the best of it too, both north and south. The many handsome stone and brick blocks and residences give an air of solidity to the town that impresses a visitor well. Most of the stores have plate glass fronts, adding considerably to their attractiveness. There have been considerable improvements and additions to residential properties this year and the dealers say that there have been immense quantities of lumber and building materials sold to the farmers during the season. There has not been much extension of busi-



ROW OF GRAIN ELEVATORS

This is a familiar scene in Manitoba. The cut shows the row of Grain Elevators at Plum Coulee station and is an indication of what may be seen at almost every railway point in Manitoba.

been out of the hotel business for some time and carries a good general stock. Arthur Thompson & Co. have a store crammed full of goods and are doing a rushing trade. A. Cameron & Co., have also a large stock and John White makes up the fourth. The latter talks of selling out. R. Hood carries a stock of groceries and crockery, etc., and keeps the postoffice. C. E. Anderson & Co. have a good hardware stock. There is also a harness maker, jeweler, tailor, and several other small businesses, besides two butcher shops, two bakers, etc. The Leland hotel, a well known and popular house, is getting all the trade while the Thompson house is being remodeled and enlarged. When it is completed it will be double in size and greatly improved, no pains being spared to make it a first-class house. Considerable cattle business is done here and there

ness premises. The principal improvement has been at Frame & Miller's hardware store, which they have extended and remodeled, having put in a brick front and plate windows. This firm carries a large and varied stock of hardware, building material and lumber and having been long established, do a splendid trade. The two other hardware firms of J. A. Schoenan & Co., and Wyatt & Co., have also large stocks and are classed as solid business men. There have been some changes in general business this year in Virden. W. J. Wilcox now handles his large new store alone, Mr. Ramsay having retired. Jos. A. Merrick also continues alone, the firm of Pineo & Merrick having been dissolved, Mr. Pineo taking over the Griswold business. There are two other general stores, B. Meek, and McLennan & English, being the proprietors. Miss