

## The Pembina Mountain Branch.

(Continued from last week.)

We left the reader at Gretna last week. We will now come north to Rosenfeld, and proceed westward on the Pembina Mountain Branch, taking a glance at the rising towns along the line in our course. Rosenfeld takes its name from the Mennonite settlement in the vicinity. The place has not yet commenced to put on airs, and is simply a railway stopping place. There are no business institutions. Westward ten miles is Plum Coulee, also located in the Mennonite country. Here there are indications of a busy little town in the future. E. Penner & Co., of Gretna and Morden, have recently established a branch general store, and the Ogilvie Company have built an elevator during the past season. It is also said that Peter Cruy, who has a general store east of the Red River, will move to Plum Coulee in the spring. A. Fehr and C. Friesen have been located here for some time.

The busy town of Morden, 81 miles from Winnipeg, is the next town reached. Morden is one of the solid towns of Manitoba, and it has an air of thrift and prosperity which is pleasing to note. Everyone is busy, and the appearance of the place puts one in mind of the old boom days. An immense quantity of freight is handled here, both coming in and going out. Wheat of course is the principal export product, but coarse grains, flax seed, butter, eggs, poultry and meats and stock are shipped from Morden in large quantities. The quantity of incoming freight is so large that it cannot be accommodated in the freight sheds, and the prairie along the railway is piled up with freight, as it is dumped out of the cars. The business men of Morden carry larger stocks of goods than is usually found in the provincial towns. The town has a large Mennonite trade, from the Mennonite settlements to the east and south. North and west the country is well settled with Canadian and other English speaking people. The Mennonites are looked upon by the merchants as first-class customers, and they are a great benefit to the town. They are close buyers, but usually have a good deal of cash, which they pay out willingly when they have it. They do not go into debt when they have money, and always pay off their debts as soon as they get the money from their crops. Another feature with the Mennonites is, that they market their grain early in the season, and at once pay off any obligations which they may have contracted during the summer. This is a feature which can be commended to many English speaking farmers, who hold their grain for higher prices, and compel the merchant to wait long for the money due him.

Though the railway was built through Morden, or rather through the place where Morden now stands, in 1882, the town does not date its existence as far back as that year. In fact the town may be said to have had its beginning in the fall and winter of 1884-85. Previous to this time the nucleus of a town was started near Morden, called Stephen, but the C. P. R. authorities finally selected a town site at Morden, and at once the new town commenced to grow rapidly.

Morden received a great impetus in the early

days by the removal of the business places of Nelson, almost in a body, to Morden. All the settlers of Manitoba who date their residence in the province as far back as 1882, will be familiar with the name of Nelsonville, afterwards changed to Nelson. In 1882 Nelson was the thriving town of southern Manitoba, and it was by far the largest place west of the Red and south of the Assiniboine rivers. The Manitoba Southwestern railway, then in course of construction, was expected to tap Nelson and make it one of the future cities of the Prairie Province. With these bright prospects Nelson was a favorite with land speculators, and during the boom days Nelson lots were sold almost nightly by auction and otherwise in Winnipeg. But the Southwestern railway never reached Nelson, through a change in the management of the road, which led to a change in the route of the railway. Then the C. P. R. Co. built the Pembina Mountain Branch, and ran the road three miles south of Nelson. Two such blows as this—the loss of the Southwestern and the construction of the Pembina branch within a few miles of the place—were enough to kill any town, and of course Nelson had to succumb. The people held out till 1885; but in the winter and spring of that year the business men of the place moved almost in a body to the new town of Morden, then commencing to grow up on the Pembina branch, a few miles southeast of Nelson. Nelson has now practically disappeared, the buildings having been moved to Morden, and some to farms in the vicinity of the lost town. In its palmy days Nelson was a bustling little town, with its mayor and council, and its merchants were doing a good trade. Such are the changes which a very few years have made in Manitoba. Nelson is now almost forgotten by the general public, but the many investors in Nelson lots will remember the name with sorrow. Many of the merchants of Nelson are now doing a flourishing trade in the new town of Morden.

The rush from Nelson in 1885 soon made Morden the leading place on the Pembina branch, and it has pretty well maintained its supremacy, though other points westward on the line are not lagging behind. The population of the place is not far from 600, and the business institutions, all told, are in the neighborhood of fifty.

The general store line is well represented in Morden. There is first the large store of E. Penner & Co. The business of this firm was fully dealt with in the report of Gretna, in our last issue, where the firm also carries on business. H. P. Hansen is the resident partner and manager of the business of E. Penner & Co. at Morden. A very large stock of general merchandise is carried, and the business gives employment to eight or ten clerks. The business is the oldest in Morden, and has been in existence since the fall of 1884. The capacity of the store was doubled this year by the erection of a new building, and the size now is 50 feet wide by 70 deep, two storeys. The upper part is used for a tailoring department. The building is fitted with the automatic cash carrier system. A large warehouse, 50 by 25 feet, is used for storing surplus goods. Haley & Sutton do a general store trade, and carry a very large stock, including some fine lines of

goods not usually found in provincial towns. They occupy premises 90 feet deep, 30 feet of which was added last summer. The building is two storeys high, with large warehouse in rear. They also have a tailoring department. This firm started at Nelson in 1878, and moved to Morden in 1885. Meikle and Coppinger also carry a large stock of general merchandise, including about all lines except hardware. The building occupied by this firm is 70 feet deep, with warehouse in rear. A fine trade is done. The Hudson's Bay Company established a general store trade in Morden about three years ago, with Mr. Holloway as manager. T. M. Tobias and Co. do business of a general store nature, handling all kinds of farm produce largely. This firm also buys flax, which is marketed by the Mennonites. About 40,000 bushels of this article will be handled at Morden. Tobias and Co. do not intend going out of business at Morden, as was lately rumored. They find trade too good to think of such a move. The rumor arose from the sale of a building occupied by them.

G. W. McLaren, dealer in drugs and stationery, is one of the old business men of the district, having started at Nelson previous to the construction of the railway. He came down to Morden like the rest of the Nelson people, and has been very successful since. He carries a large stock of drugs, stationery, fancy goods, etc., including many fine lines which one would hardly expect to find in a provincial town of the size of Morden.

In the hardware line Geo. Ashdown carries a large stock of heavy and shelf goods, stoves, tinware, etc., and also has a manufacturing department in tinware, etc. He commenced business in Morden in March last, having succeeded to the business of A. Godfrey & Co. R. McMitchell handles stoves and tinware, in which line he has been doing business for two years, in a successful manner. The furniture line is represented by one establishment, carried on by J. T. Blowey, who carries a very large stock of all classes of furniture, undertaking goods, musical instruments, etc. He has lately erected a large warehouse for the storage of surplus stock. Mr. Blowey was formerly located at Nelson, and moved to Morden in the fall of 1884. Among the more recent additions to the business places is the boot and shoe store of O. H. Dingman, established in August last. Mr. Dingman conceived the idea that a business devoted to the one branch could be made to pay in Morden, and since opening he has found trade fully as good as he could have expected. He has the only business devoted exclusively to this important branch of trade, and he thinks he can give better satisfaction than if handling a number of other lines. In the grocery line there is also a store devoted to this branch exclusively, conducted by W. B. Pennycook, who commenced business in August last, and is pleased with the result of his enterprise. A. Stewart also handles groceries, in connection with which he has a bakery, and handles confectionery, etc. A. E. Sinclair & Co., who make fruits their principal business, commenced business in July last. They also have a bakery and handle confectionery. Snowden & Nelson do a large wholesale and retail trade in meats, poultry, stock, etc., shipping meats and