

A Jog Along the Northwestern.

A representative of THE COMMERCIAL recently made a hasty trip over the Manitoba Northwestern railway. The south-eastern terminus of this road, it is well known, is at the town of Portage la Prairie, and for some miles from this place the road runs through what appears to the eye to be one vast wheat field. The farmers were busy threshing from the stook, and the smoke from the steam threshers could be seen in all directions, while in many places the stooks of golden grain still covered the ground, their closeness together showing that the crop is a heavy one. The Portage Plains will undoubtedly by turn out a lot of wheat this year, and the amount is estimated to be about 2,000,000 bushels. This will be marketed at Portage, McDonald, Burnside, Westbourne and other railway points in the district.

Macdonald, the first station from Portage on the Northwestern, is right in the midst on the most extensively cultivated portion of the Plains country, and near the station is the celebrated farm of McLean & McRobie, who this year have 40,000 bushels of wheat, grown from 1,300 acres, or about thirty bushels per acre. Near Westbourne, one station farther on, is the well known stock farm of Senator Sanford, of Hamilton, Ont. The White Mud river runs near Westbourne, on its way to Lake Manitoba, and its banks are heavily timbered with oak, elm, poplar, cottonwood, etc., affording fine shelter for cattle. There are also good hay meadows in the district. The country from Westbourne to beyond Gladstone, through which the White Mud river runs, is well supplied with timber of large size.

AT GLADSTONE

the local storekeepers were all elated over the prospects of a good fall and winter trade, owing to the fine crops. The wheat crop has been a success in the Gladstone district this year, and all reports were universally favorable, and the people are correspondingly happy. Gladstone is one of the oldest towns of Manitoba, the place having assumed considerable importance previous to the "boom" days. The place suffered a good deal in common with most of the older settlements of Manitoba, owing to the second homesteading regulations. The land regulations formerly allowed settlers, who had received a patent for their homestead to take up a second homestead. This was one of the worst features ever connected with the administration of the public lands in Manitoba. While the boom was on, settlers, who were anxious to grasp as much land as possible, mortgaged their farms and took up second homesteads. As Gladstone was one of the early settled districts, a good many of the residents had received patents for their homesteads, previous to the "boom" days, and they forthwith proceeded to mortgage their farms, in order that they might move west and take up a second homestead. In this way a great many of the best settlers were drained from the district. Their idea was that they would be able to sell one of their farms for a big sum in a short time; but when the "boom" collapsed they were unable to do so, and the change proved disastrous for many of them. In most cases it simply amounted to

the throwing up of an improved farm for an unimproved place, and often exchanging a good farm for an inferior one. The money raised by mortgage on the deserted place would only about pay for the cost of moving to the new location. Their crops did not turn out so good in the western districts to which they had moved, and as they were unable to pay the interest on the mortgages raised on their first homesteads, the lands passed into the hands of the loan companies. The towns in the older settled districts suffered a good deal in this way from the removal of settlers who went west to take up second homesteads; but these lands are now being sold to new settlers, and the conditions are improving. All through these older settled districts, a good many new settlers have come in during the past year or two, and located on the deserted lands. The business places of Gladstone number about a dozen, including the local paper, *The Age*. D. J. McQueen, general dealer, and J. L. Logie, stationer, are old timers of the place.

At Arden, a couple of stations beyond Gladstone, there are now two stores, conducted by M. E. Boughton & Co., and Van Blaricorn, Renwick & Co. These firms each handle wheat and other grain and farm produce, and they are counting on taking about 75,000 bushels of wheat this year, or about 10,000 more than last year. M. E. Boughton was the second settler in the district, and still has his farm near Arden, in addition to the store, which he opened in 1884. The Arden people are counting on getting a roller flour mill soon. The municipality of Lansdowne has voted a bonus of \$4,000 for the erection of a mill, and negotiations were going on with D. Moore, of Neepawa, formerly of the Oak Lake mill, to build a 75 barrel mill. Arden is beautifully situated on a high, level ridge, on the bank of a branch of the White Mud river, which rises in the Riding mountain. The mountain can be seen plainly from Arden. North of Arden is the famous Lake Dauphin district, into which a good many settlers have gone during the last year or two. A railway into this district will soon be a necessity.

THE TOWN OF NEEPAWA

is the next point reached. This is a thriving place, which has made very considerable progress during the past few years. A large number of new business establishments have been started since our last visit to the place, something over a year ago, and a good many new buildings have been put up and others are in course of erection. One of the most recent improvements is the fine solid brick block just completed by Davidson & Co., general merchants, and into which the firm was moving at the time of our visit. The building is 54x60 feet in size, two storeys. It is a very important addition to the buildings of Neepawa, and will make one of the best stores in Manitoba. J. A. Clare, general merchant, has moved his store to a new and better location on the corner of the two main streets, where he is fitting it up in good shape. He is brick veneering the building, and adding thirty feet to its length, which will give him a fine store, 66 feet long. Another fine building is the one being erected by Hutchings & Bemrose, manufacturers of harness, collars, etc. This firm is

erecting a solid brick building, size 25x50 feet, two storeys, which they will occupy when completed with a large stock of harness and horse goods. Their store will be one of the finest of the kind in Canada, outside of the larger cities and towns. Another new building is the brick block built for and now occupied by the Neepawa Register, the local paper. The Register has given an additional sign of prosperity by putting in a new steam press. The Great Western hotel, near the railway station, is another new building owned by J. Crawford. It is a large three storey frame building, size 60x60, and opened last spring. It is the largest hotel building on the line. A new industrial establishment is the planing mill and pump factory of Wakefield & Killington, started this season. The establishment is well supplied with planing machinery, moulding and scroll work machinery, etc. Special attention is given to the manufacture of wooden pumps, in which line the firm do a good business, as they ship pumps to all points along the railway, in addition to supplying the residents of the locality. They also handle iron pumps of all kinds. J. T. Crawford, general merchant, has changed his location since our last visit to Neepawa, having built and moved to a store near the station. McDougall & Co., hardware and tinware, have also moved to the station, and occupy a portion of the new hotel block.

Among the new business places of Neepawa since our last visit are the following: S. Hartford, general merchant, who moved from Bridge Creek to Neepawa last spring, and who occupies premises near the station. Reid & Gerhardt is a new firm, who recently succeeded to the business of R. C. Ennis, general merchant. The gentlemen are both from Ontario, Mr. Reid coming from Port Perry and Mr. Gerhardt from Walkerton. They are now putting in a new stock, and will give special attention to furnishing goods, etc. Jas. B. Mutter, who carries a good stock of books, stationery and fancy goods, commenced business this summer. J. Wake & Son, have only recently opened in the flour and feed line and butcher shop. W. J. Wake is in charge. The firm buy cattle all along the line of railway from Gladstone to Birtle for shipment and the name has been known in this connection for years. The Neepawa Feed company, managed by A. Mercer, recently from Winnipeg, is also a new business. The company handles flour, feed, etc., and produce, for shipment. A. W. Caswell, opened in the bakery and confectionery line the past summer, and finds business good in his line. W. J. Hamilton has opened a harness shop, and John Boyd a furniture store. The Patterson & Bro. Co., implements, etc., have opened an agency at Neepawa. W. J. Hamilton is taking charge of the agency.

From these new lines of business and building improvements, it will be seen that Neepawa is going ahead. The place has a large farmers' trade and is one of the best grain markets in Manitoba. The crop of wheat will not be large this year, but it is a fine quality, and local grain buyers expect more good milling wheat this year than last. The crops are the best northward from the place this year, a remark which is true of nearly all other points along the Northwestern railway this season.