

Doing the Main Line.

Notes by a Commercial Representative

As regards some of the more important improvements in the towns west of Winnipeg a few facts will perhaps be interesting.

In Portage in Prairie there has been considerable building done this year. A new brick block on Saskatchewan avenue has been occupied by Brown Bros., general merchants, with very satisfactory results to them. Their volume of trade has since very much increased. Thos. H. Metcalfe has thoroughly overhauled his oatmeal mill at this point and is now in shape to turn out a first class product. The Lake of the Woods Milling company's mill here is being kept thoroughly up to date and is turning out its usual high grade of flour. Many of the merchants have improved their premises in various ways, and the aggregate investment in stocks has increased considerably. A. J. Crighton, wholesale teas, etc., has had a most successful year's trade and is contemplating the extension of his operations this year.

At McGregor a number of building improvements can be noticed and the town is undoubtedly growing. Rogers Bros., millers, have branched out into the stock business and in connection with that have built two new stables. Merrick Bros., Wm. Knox and E. E. Turner are all carrying on general stores here and report last year as having been a highly satisfactory one. C. Street engages in the butchering business and T. R. Vardon in hardware. Besides these there are a number of smaller traders and a private bank. Geo. H. Stacey supplies the district with lumber.

Austin is a thriving little town a few miles west of McGregor. W. Clifford is the leading merchant here and he also owns and operates a flour mill. E. Creamer engages in the butcher business. W. J. Stinson is another prominent business man. He carries on a general store. Austin is singular among western Manitoba towns for the amount of wood which it annually puts upon the market. From three to four thousand cords of the best poplar are annually marketed at this station and furnish a revenue to the farmers in their slack season.

Sidney is one of the smaller places on this part of the C. P. R. system. Thorn Bros. are the principal traders at this point.

Carberry is one of the busiest and best known towns in Manitoba. Here considerable advancement was made in 1898. Smale's two-story brick block is one of the most substantial improvements. It is occupied by the boot and shoe store of the owner, W. G. Murphy is another merchant who invested largely in building last year. Next to the Smale block he erected a large two-story brick building for the accommodation of his general store business. Murphy, Brown & Co., hardware merchants, also occupy a store in this block. The firm intends engaging extensively in the bicycle business this year. Besides carrying a stock of high grade wheels they will put in a complete repair plant and will employ an expert to attend to this. Whaley Bros., bakers and confectioners, have a fine store at Carberry, equal to anything in Winnipeg. They are expert fancy bakers. Shannon & Co., the new firm which recently brought out C. W. Malton's hardware business here, are at present getting the run of the stock and the acquaint-

ance of the customers of their store. This promises to be an enterprising concern. Another important improvement at Carberry is the handsome new station built by the C. P. R.

Douglas is a place of minor importance, but contributes a fair share to the yearly volume of trade in the province.

Brandon is the second city of Manitoba in every way. Its buildings are of the most pleasing and substantial character and its people are everything that is progressive. No attempt is to be here made to enumerate even the largest of its business concerns. They are already well known to all who have business connections with the town. Just a glance will be given at some of the improvements of last year. Alexander, Kelly & Co. are very well known as flour millers. Their mill here is in every way up to date and underwent its annual overhauling last year. Hanbury & Co., dealers in sash and doors, lumber and building material of all kinds, occupied a new warehouse last year, formerly the office and warehouses of J. A. Moor. This firm also operates a lumber mill here. Somerville & Co., marble and stone cutters, last year made a considerable increase in their capital investment in the way of new machinery. They are also adding special machinery for cutting curling stones. This is now the largest concern of the kind in Manitoba. The Brandon Machine Works Co. is one of the growing concerns of the wheat city. One of their specialties is a machine for bluestoning seed wheat, which is giving great satisfaction. It is at Brandon that Hughes, Long & Buckman, the Rainy River lumber millers, have their western headquarters.

Alexander is the next important point west of Brandon. This is an important market and a thriving town. Last year a very fair business was done by its merchants notwithstanding the fact that in common with a number of other western centres it is suffering from the effects of a short crop caused by summer drought.

Griswold, the next town west, is another, well-to-do centre. A. E. Hill and H. A. Search are the general merchants here and M. G. McEwen carries on a hardware business. Griswold offers a good opening for a first-class hotel.

Oak Lake is one of the larger western towns. It is an important grain centre as is shown by the fact that its annual receipts of wheat are upwards of half a million bushels. This town possesses one of the most vigorous milling and grain shipping concerns in the province, Leitch Bros. This firm does a large shipping business in flour, rolled oats, feed, etc., to all parts of Canada. They report business good and are well pleased with their prospects. Since last August they have run their mill day and night, and now have orders for two months ahead. Their trade extends from Vancouver to Halifax, with occasional export orders to Great Britain. They have agencies at Vancouver, Calgary, Lethbridge, Fort William, Owen Sound, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and Montreal, and also keep travellers continuously on the road. By additions and alterations yearly they keep their mill and plant strictly up to date. This specialty is the Anchor Brand of flour, the quality of which is not questioned on any market in Canada. Oak Lake has the usual quota of stores, etc., and a weekly newspaper has just been established

by J. M. Bender, to be called The News.

Virton is a town of 1,200 inhabitants and this season bears an air of general prosperity. It has what is only to rare in this country, a fine fire hall well equipped for service and manned by a volunteer brigade. The upper parts of this building are used for municipal offices, the stores of this town mostly occupy fine brick buildings and carry stocks of city magnitude and variety. Two good hotels lend their aid in facilitating business here, and a good flour mill very much improves its value as a market town.

Elkhorn is the last important point in Manitoba west. It has a good representation of business places, some of which have been added recently. The most important building improvement this year is the new Indian school which has been built to replace the one burned some time ago. This is a school for Indian children where they are taught the arts of civilization. The new building has been built by the Dominion government at an expense of about \$35,000. It has accommodation for between one and two hundred children and is in every way a substantial and commodious building. In quality of workmanship and suitability for the purpose to which it has been intended it is not excelled by any public building in this country. Mr. Wilson, the superintendent, looks forward to a very successful work when it is ready for occupation. The construction of the building lent an impetus to business in the town which was very much welcomed. Elkhorn also possesses a good roller flour mill, the property of Clifford & Hopps.

Fleming is the most westerly station in Manitoba on the main line. It has a small but flourishing business community. Dimmick Bros. are the general merchants here.

This completes the list of these western business centres within the bounds of Manitoba. In a future issue those in the neighboring territory will be dealt with and some of the leading features of last year's history presented.

Western Business Items.

The Rat Portage Miner Publishing Co. is incorporated.

C. L. Ford, grocer, Winnipeg, had his admitted C. K. Stewart as partner.

The stock of H. A. Holman, confectionery, Winnipeg, is advertised for sale, Feb. 6.

The stock of M. Naroviansky, general store, Moosemin, Assn., has been sold to T. Finkelshtein.

The stock of J. B. Leveque, dry goods, etc., St. Boniface, has been sold to Mrs. F. Coutier at 53 cents on the dollar.

There was an incipient fire in G. Murton's clothing store at Portage in Prairie, Man., yesterday, but only light damage was done.

British Cattle Markets.

London, Jan. 30.—The demand for cattle was quiet, but owing to the continued light supplies the market was firm and prices were fully maintained. There was no steady cattle on the market. Choice Argentinians sold at 113-4c, and sheep were firmer at 111-2c.

Liverpool, Jan. 30.—The market was strong and prices a shade higher. Choice States cattle sold at 123-4c; Argentinians at 111-2c, and sheep at 111-2c.