

Irrigation in the West.

Lethbridge, Alta., Dec. 1. — The agreeable spectacle of tree-lined and flower-fringed streams of water flowing through the streets of Lethbridge may at present appear like an iridescent dream, yet within two years it may be an accomplished fact. The return of Mr. E. T. Galt, president of the Alberta Irrigation company, from the east, as also the engineers from the field of active operations, has revived the interest in irrigation matters considerably, and the magnitude of the undertaking is now beginning to dawn upon the inhabitants of this district. The idea of conducting water artificially for a distance of sixty miles may be somewhat of a novelty in Canada, yet it has been the making of several states immediately south of the international boundary.

The money has been raised in England, and it is proposed to expend over \$500,000 in canal construction and the purchase of lands, (now comparatively valueless, owing to insufficient rainfall), tributary to the canals.

The board of trade and town council are now considering a proposition from the irrigation company, who offer to supply the town with three and a quarter million gallons of water daily during the season—i. e., from April 15 to October 15—by bringing a canal from Stirling, one of the provisional termini, to Lethbridge, a distance of twenty miles, between which points it is proposed to irrigate 20,000 acres of excellent farming land. In return for these concessions the company asks the town for a bonus of \$50,000, in twenty year debentures.

The subject of irrigation is a very vital one in Southern Alberta, and as it may be of even general interest to other portions of our great Northwest, I append herewith the substance of an interview with Mr. Galt in to-day's News:

Mr. Galt said that for many years past the proprietors of the Alberta Railway & Canal Co. had given earnest attention to a number of irrigation projects, which had been submitted to them for the reclamation of their lands, situated between Cardston and Lethbridge, but which negotiations had come to naught, mainly owing to the inability to demonstrate where the markets would be found for the products of land under irrigation, but when the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass railway was determined upon, it seemed to his people that the time had arrived to deal with the matter; for with the completion of the railroad mentioned, large and growing markets for all kinds of agricultural products would be opened up in the mining districts of British Columbia.

The Alberta Railway & Canal Co., for financial and other reasons, found that it was impracticable for that company to further extend the field of its operations, and it was only after extreme difficulty that responsible people could be found to prosecute the work which has now been undertaken under the charter of the Alberta Irrigation company.

Mr. Geo. G. Anderson, of Denver, Colo., one of the best known and most successful irrigation engineers in the United States, has been engaged as consulting engineer to superintend the location and construction of the canal system, and since the middle of July last he has had a large survey

party in the field. It is the intention of the company, to expend \$500,000 in canal construction, and in the purchase of lands tributary to it.

THE INTAKE

of the canal will be at a point on the St. Mary's river, nine miles above Cardston and five miles north of the international boundary line, and its course will be as nearly as direct as possible to Stirling, a distance of sixty miles, a point twenty miles from Lethbridge on the line of railroad between Lethbridge and Great Falls. Stirling will be the objective point for the main canal in the initial operations of the company, but there will also be twenty miles of lateral canals constructed from various points along the main canal, so as to secure the reclamation of as much land as possible. It is intended that the canal to Stirling will be completed by the end of 1899, and the lateral canals by the end of the following year. A telephone line will be constructed along the main canal and its laterals.

The magnitude of the proposed operations of the company may be demonstrated by stating that it is intended to improve and render available for settlement under the most promising conditions 500,000 acres of land.

With regard to the construction of the works it is intended to employ settlers who will bring their families into the country and live upon the lands which they will earn in connection with the work, as their labor will be paid for partly in cash and partly in land, which should induce immigration of a satisfactory character. In the same connection, it has been arranged to bring in during this winter and the following spring, 100 families who have been accustomed to methods of irrigation, and who by their operations, will demonstrate to other settlers the practical use of irrigated lands and the advantages thereof.

THE WORK BEGUN.

There are at present 15 teams employed on the canal construction, which number will be increased to 200 early next spring. Those who know this country are well aware that both climate and soil are fully equal to, if not better, than that which is found in the states to the south of us, where irrigation has been successfully practised on a large scale for many years, and as the supply of water is ample for the purposes intended, it does not seem unreasonable to believe that it may be possible to successfully establish a large and prosperous agricultural community in this Southern Alberta, for there is no reason why all kinds of grains, root crops and grasses should not be raised in larger quantities per acre than in other agricultural districts in the Northwest, as has been proved the case elsewhere when lands under irrigation have come into competition with lands which derive their moisture from the ordinary rainfall.

This district being naturally adapted for the raising of live stock, it would seem that settlers who take advantage of the facilities offered will be placed in a most favorable position to winter live stock, for the production of grasses will be very cheap, and it will thus be practicable to have the stock in prime condition for market in the spring, at which time the ordinary range stock is in moderately poor condition.

REASONABLE TERMS.

It is intended that the selling price for land at the outset will be \$5 per acre, with water rights attached, upon easy terms of payment, and \$1

per acre per annum will be charged for the maintenance of the canal system. When it is considered that the saleable value of irrigated land in Montana, Utah and Colorado is \$49, \$81 and \$67 respectively, per acre, it will be seen that it is proposed to deal with incoming immigrants in a very liberal manner, and every effort made to assist them in making prosperous homes for themselves, and in so doing the irrigation company will not only sell their lands, but also place upon them people who will provide business for the railway and the coal mines.

The settlement of the lands being of primary importance, it is not intended to sell more than a small holding to any one family, and in no case to sell large areas to speculators.

A staff of engineers will be employed in the offices of the company this winter, preparing plans, etc., for next year's work. Mr. C. A. Magrath has been appointed superintendent and land commissioner of the company, to whom all business communications should be addressed, and who will be pleased to furnish any information that may be required by prospective settlers.

Mr. Galt, being asked the question whether it was intended to extend the canal system to the town of Lethbridge, replied that it would depend upon the extent to which the municipality would co-operate, for the company would have a vast area of agricultural land along its canal to Stirling, which canal follows the direct line of easy and economical construction, and it would not propose to expend more money upon capital account until a large portion of such land was occupied by settlers.

Winnipeg Prices a Year Ago.

Following were Winnipeg prices this week last year:

Wheat—No 1 hard, in store Fort William, 89 to 89 1/2c.

Flour—Local price per sack unchanged at. Patent, \$2.55, bakers, \$2.35.

Bran—\$10 per ton.

Shorts—\$12 per ton.

Oats—Per bushel, car lots on track, Winnipeg, 35 to 37c.

Barley—32 to 35c for feed; malting, 35 to 40c.

Flax seed—Prices to farmers, country points, 60c per bushel.

Butter—Dairy, shippers buying at 13 to 16c; creamery, jobbers' price, 21 to 22c.

Cheese—Jobbers selling at 11c.

Eggs—Dealers selling at 20c for fresh and 17c for limed.

Beef—City dressed, 5 to 5 1/2c, country 4 to 5c, fresh, unfrozen, 6c.

Mutton—3 to 6c.

Hogs—Dressed, 5 1/2 to 6c.

Veal—5 to 6c.

Lambs—5 to 7c.

Cattle—Butchers, 23-4 to 3c.

Hogs—Live, off cars, \$4.50 per 100 lbs. for best bacon.

Sheep—3c off cars.

Seneca root—18 to 20c lb.

Hides—Green city hides, 7 to 7 1/4c for No. 1.

Hay—Baled, on track, \$6.50.

Potatoes—35 to 40c per bushel.

Poultry—Chickens, 7 to 8c per lb.; turkeys, 11 to 12c; geese, 8 to 9c; ducks, 8 to 9c.

John McLean & Co., wholesale millinery and dry goods merchants, Montreal, are in business difficulties.