

Along the Calgary and Edmonton Line

(By a Commercial Correspondent.)

The Calgary and Edmonton Railway, now being operated as the Edmonton branch of the C. P. R., extends from Calgary to Strathcona, a distance of 192 miles. The track has not been extended to Edmonton owing to the great expense of building across the Saskatchewan river, and to the fact that the company did not consider it profitable to extend the line further north, but surveyors are now on the spot arranging for the crossing of the river, and it is hoped that this will be effected before next fall. This would be a great convenience to all doing business with this district, but particularly to the merchants of Edmonton, who are put to great expense and delay in having their goods transferred by wagon from Strathcona.

There is a great difference in the climate along this line, and as the climate is a distinct factor in the productiveness of a country, we find that the northern portion is much more fruitful than the southern. For the first 40 or 50 miles north of Calgary the rain fall is very light, so much so that in most seasons it is impossible to successfully raise grain or other crops, and ranching, therefore, necessarily forms the chief occupation of the settlers in this part. Beyond this the rainfall is much heavier. In fact it rather inclines to the opposite extreme, and on low land the crops some seasons will hardly ripen before the frost comes. For a number of years ranching was also carried on throughout this section, but it has been found to be more profitable to raise some grain and keep a few head of cattle and other stock as well, and practically the whole farming community does this now.

The southern portion of the country tributary to this line is open, rolling prairie, but as we travel north we find this gradually giving place to scrub and bush land, and the face of the country also becomes more broken. There are numerous small lakes and streams, the banks of which are in many places covered with timber. Several saw mills are now being operated so that the farmer can procure lumber close at hand at a reasonable figure. Coal deposits have been found in many places and oil has also been struck, although the latter has not yet been developed. The soil is very rich and the reported yields of wheat, oats, etc., are almost beyond belief, and at first the stranger is rather inclined to doubt the truth of the glowing accounts he hears. Upon a fuller acquaintance, however, it cannot but be seen that this locality has many great resources. During the last few years a large immigration has been flowing in and this spring the rush is as great as ever. The land is nearly all taken up for 50 miles to the east of the track and as far to the west as the farming section extends, and the price of real estate has experienced a sharp advance during the past year. At several points where a year ago there were only one or two buildings there are now fair sized towns and the growth of all the towns has been very rapid.

The first town north of Calgary is Didsbury. A year ago there was practically nothing at this point, but it can now boast of three general stores, a hardware, harness shop, lumber yards, implement agencies, etc. The principal general store is that of C. McPherson, who last year bought out C. Hebert. Mr. Hebert has remained in the town and is now running a lumber yard, and also handles farm implements. E. M. Stuler opened a general store this spring, and B. J. Smith started a general store and meat market. This town has not much to show for itself yet, but a good start has been made, and those interested in its welfare have reasons for thinking that it will not be long in catching up to some of the older towns along the line.

Olds, the next station, has grown to be a town of importance. Already this year there have been some four-

teen or fifteen dwelling houses built and about the same number were erected last summer. As many of these are handsome buildings they add greatly to the appearance of the place. Some changes have occurred among the business community during the last year as would naturally be expected. E. Gilmore, butcher, has sold out to Brown, the Earl & Wolfe Co. has opened out in the hardware line, Ida M. Silverthorn opened a grocery store last December. J. H. Walker, hardware merchant, built a new warehouse last year in which he handles a line of agricultural implements, and Lyman & Deans, implement dealers, also erected a large warehouse. In addition to the merchants already mentioned, there are O. S. Moore, the Farmers' Exchange Co., W. M. Craig and W. J. Brumpton, who have general stores.

At Bowden, nine miles further on, there are two general stores kept by A. Campbell and H. E. Shenfield.

Innisfail is one of the best as well as one of the most prettily situated towns on this line. It is built in a grove of trees and near to one of the pretty streams for which this section is noted. It holds an important place as

hills, partly covered by trees, which add a great deal to the appearance of the place. The Red Deer river, which is close at hand, also adds to the beauty of the surroundings. There are four general stores here and other businesses are also well represented. The firm of Postill & Wright, general merchants, has changed to Postill & Co. The Red Deer Lumber Co. has bought the lumber yard and sawmill of G. A. Love. This mill is located on the banks of the Red Deer river at this point and has been for some years manufacturing a large amount of lumber, the most of which is used locally. W. R. Anderson has started a butcher shop in a new stand erected for the purpose. Lathimer & Purdy have opened out with a complete line of farm implements and are occupying commodious premises erected last December. W. Springbett has built a new blacksmith shop and intends using his old shop as a showroom for implements. The Massey-Harris Co. are also in new premises. It is stated that there were about thirty buildings in all erected at this point last year and the prospects are that there will be fully as many this season. A large building is being erected by the Creamery Association. This is after the plan of the other creameries, under the supervision of the government, located at different points along this line.

The town of Lacombe is the largest yet reached. It has a very fine situation and has large limits of marketable timber within a few miles of the station and has also large deposits of

tussock. F. E. Algar & Co., general merchants, have been in business here for five years, but with the exception of these two the other businesses have been started since the spring of 1900. The town is built on the banks of Hatfield river, and Truman Bros. have selected this spot on which to erect a sawmill.

Wetaskiwin is one of the large towns on this line. It has a 65 barrel flour mill, a branch of the Merchants Bank, five general stores, two hardware stores, two drug stores, furniture store, etc. In addition to the flour mill there are three elevators, showing that this is a good grain growing section. W. McDonald, general merchant, has sold out to J. W. Herle & Co., J. M. Beayl opened a livery stable, R. C. Bauer is now in the lumber business, Hull Bros. & Co., wholesale and retail butchers, opened a branch here. R. C. Ward opened a drug store and the Times newspaper was started this spring by V. C. French. In the creamery at this point some 23,000 pounds of butter were made and shipped out during the six months that it was running last season. This plant is capable of making 800 pounds of butter per day. The growth of this town, which has been very rapid in the past still continues and the writer was informed, on reliable authority, that there were 78 buildings erected or in course of erection this spring. This indicates a very rapid increase in the population.

Leduc is the next town reached. This is one of the smaller places in this section, but it contains several good stores and a flour mill.



Principal Business Street, Edmonton

a business town as it has a large number of stores of all kinds. Stiles & Dea started a general store this spring; C. B. McCallum recently started in the implement business; Dobson Bros. erected new store premises this spring and started into business as furniture dealers and undertakers; H. M. Douglas, general merchant, sold out to Campbell Bros.; another hotel, known as the Royal, was opened last summer, and a barber and watchmaker have also located here. Altogether there are five general stores in this town, one hardware, two tin-smiths, two lumber yards, five implement warehouses, a dry goods store, grocery, flour and feed store, etc. Machinery is being installed in the brick yard here and when this is in running shape it is expected that a good quality of brick can be turned out at a reasonably low figure. There is a flourishing creamery under the supervision of the government. The business being handled by this creamery has increased so much that a new building, 30x12 feet, is being erected where better facilities will be provided for manufacturing a larger quantity of butter. The Baptist congregation built a new frame church last summer, making four churches now at this point. At Tindastoll, a short distance from Innisfail, there is a settlement of about 100 families of Icelanders. These people are very thrifty and are fast getting into flourishing circumstances.

Red Deer is 95 miles from Calgary and 97 miles from Strathcona, and a stop is made here for dinner both going and returning. The town is built on level ground but is encircled by

coal within easy distance. In fact it would seem as if coal could be found almost anywhere throughout this territory. There are five general stores and one hardware here; all doing a good business as can be seen from the appearance of the stocks. Since our visit of a year ago a number of changes in business ownership have occurred, and several new stores have been started. H. A. Day has taken over the general store business of C. M. Glass, Edeson & Raikjer have started a bakery, G. W. Hosson is now in the jewelry business, M. E. West started a general store, the Metropolitan hotel is being re-opened, E. Kloitz opened a harness shop, the Merchants Bank opened a branch here this spring, a weekly newspaper, the Advertiser, was started by J. D. Skinner, and some other businesses have also made their appearance since the spring of 1900, which speaks well for the growing powers of a representative western town. There was a great deal of building done last year. In addition to stores erected by some of the merchants, who were starting in business and were unable to rent premises, G. H. Jamieson and Frank Harris each built a business block, the Morton house was built last year and C. F. Daykin, general merchant, built a large additional warehouse.

Until a little over a year ago Ponoka was simply a flag station and could boast of only a handful of buildings, but it now contains two hardware and four general stores, butcher shop, harness shop, drug store, hotel, implement warehouses, etc., as well as a good number of dwelling houses. The Lacombe Co-operative Association opened a general store here two years ago, but sold out recently to L. B. Ma-

Strathcona is the present terminus of this line. This town sprung up on the completion of the railroad and has grown since to quite an important business point. Strathcona was incorporated as a town in 1899 and has now a population of about 1,850. Its stores are large and up-to-date and a good business is transacted with the settlers in the surrounding country. There are two mills here, an oatmeal mill, owned by the Brackman-Ker Milling Co., of 120 barrel per day capacity, and the flour mill of the Edmonton Milling Co. Walter & Humberston are the owners of a large sawmill located on the banks of the Saskatchewan river about a mile from the town. New machinery has been added this year, doubling the capacity to 40,000 feet per day of 10 hours. There is also a large brewery here. The business changes were few during the last year. Cushing Bros., of Edmonton, bought the lumber business of J. J. Duggan, and John Smith bought the grocery store of McIntyre & Blaine.

Edmonton is situated on the north side of the Saskatchewan river, about three miles by wagon road from the end of the railway. Last year a combined railway and traffic bridge was built which has already proved of great benefit and no doubt played a large part in inducing the holders of the charter for a railway into Edmonton to commence work this spring. A survey party was sent up about the middle of May to lay out the line and it is announced that construction work will be commenced as soon as possible. Edmonton enjoys a rare location. It is built on a high wooded plateau overlooking the river and picturesque valley of the North Saskatchewan river,