

CASTOR, ONE OF THE YEARLING TOWNS

Bulletin Staff Correspondent.

The beavers who used to build their undisturbed beaver town were not a match for the human beavers who have in about a year built a good-sized town upon the banks of the Beaver Dam Creek by which the C. P. R. runs East from Lacombe. The beavers built homes of sticks and mud but the men have built fine business blocks of the sandstone which is found in plenty in the banks of the creek but which was too tough for the strong teeth of the beavers.

Early in April, 1909, when it was announced that in that year the C. P. R. would build forty miles east of Stettler to the Beaver Dam Creek, there was then no beaver to be found, they having disappeared long ago. But being assured of a railway, the pioneer business men flocked over the prairie and squatted near Williston post office. These old-timers of the old town built temporary movable buildings which after the auction sale of Castor townsite on July 23rd, 1909, were moved to steam, or gasoline traction engines from Old Williston village to Castor, a mile and a half distant. Cells were dug, foundations begun, done was quarried and building material was hauled all the way overland from the end of steel at Stettler. But Castor grew marvelously, and was known as the wonder of the West.

The pioneer track-laying train was welcomed on Dec. 17th, 1909, and after sidings were constructed a regular daily passenger and freight service was begun just three days before Christmas, 1909. From then on freight poured into Castor. Lumber came by the carload even by the trainload, and Castor has grown apace. The original townsite has proved too small and three other subdivisions have been added and now ninety cozy, comfortable homes are built thereon.

Big Town for a Yearling.

The merchants and business men of Castor are busy. Nearly every line of business is represented as the following list shows:

Four general stores, four hardware stores, two boot and shoe stores, two shoemakers, two tinshops, one furniture store, a dry goods store, a millinery, two jewelers, two confectionery stores, two bakeries, two butcher shops, two drug stores, two doctors, two dentists, three lawyers, two barber shops, two pool rooms, a bowling alley, three blacksmiths, two harness shops, five flour and feed stores, nine livery barns, a veterinary surgeon, five dray lines, four implement agencies, six lumber yards, a tannery, a pawn shop, four contractors, five real estate offices, two chopping mills, four hundred three auctioneers, one dairy, six shops, five flour and feed stores, nine restaurants, four hotels, the Castor Hotel, Alberta House, Cosmopolitan (nearing completion), the National Hotel, a three-story building, a hotel, a bar, a R.N.W.M. Police office, an undertaker, a newspaper, a wholesale warehouse of the Imperial Oil Co., Alberta Pacific grain elevator, three warehouse stores, two banks, both busy. The Trades Bank has offices in the corner room of the National Hotel, where Manager W. M. Harrison has a staff of four clerks. The Merchants Bank is now in small quarters but expects soon to be in the fine new bank block built of local sandstone, and a credit to the bank and the town of Castor. Manager R. J. Dinning has a staff of four clerks.

There is a daily mail arriving on the evening train. Many new lock boxes are being installed at the post office and at the present growth of the mail it will not be long till the quarters now used will be enlarged. Upon an evening when the mail arrives from the rural post offices the room is fairly stocked with mail bags, till Postmaster Watson and his clerks have barely room to turn. But the citizens, settlers and business men appreciate the good service at Castor post office. It is an important office, for mail for the town and surrounding district, for over fifty and in some directions for nearly a hundred miles, now passes through Castor.

It is difficult to estimate correctly the population of such a growing town as Castor, but citizens who ought to know, estimate it at from 1,400 upwards. It is stated that when the application was being made for a second liquor license that the census takers ceased their labors when they reached the 1200 mark for they were only after the license and not after the full census.

Many residences have been built, but it is said that there is not a vacant house in town.

Castor Incorporated as a Town.

The town council are Mayor Hugh Smith and councillors: Geo. M. Dillon, R. D. Travers, R. M. Locke, Thomas Finlayson, A. B. Thompson and C. A. Waller, with Geo. Auzier as secretary-treasurer. The other officers are: medical health officer, Dr. J. D. Lyon, solicitor, E. S. Locke and constable, Wm. Davis.

A volunteer fire brigade is organized

with Red Deer, Lacombe and Stettler. Skating is also a popular amusement for the young people.

W. J. McBride is president and W. N. Harrison secretary of the curling club which has over fifty members. They will affiliate with the Royal Canadian. Unfortunately the curling rink was recently destroyed by fire handicapping the curlers much for this part of the season.

Coal Cheap and Plentiful.

Coal is cheap at Castor, being delivered for \$2.50 per ton, so there is no excuse for not having a full cellar, but even when the coal bin is empty the citizens need not freeze, for in many of the cellars it would only be necessary to dig up chunks of the cellar floor. In some parts of the town the cellars are just deep enough to touch the coal seam and leave a floor of coal.

There are five coal mines in the district south from Sedgewick with the

rural line north from Castor. They have also urged the Department of the Interior to build an immigration hall at Castor. They are alive to the importance of improving the roads leading to Castor from the surrounding settlements. The board has also issued publicly advertising—P. De Soucy, of Castor, is now in France and is interesting French capital in Castor and the district.

The Castor Board of Trade has about fifty members, who pay a fee of \$10 each. The officers are: President, R. J. Dinning; secretary, treasurer, W. H. Spencer; council, E. C. Locke, George Dillon, W. J. McBride, Dr. R. D. Lyon, P. J. Turner, E. Whiteside, W. N. Harrison and M. Locke. Regular meetings of the board are held monthly. Last Nov. a grand banquet was held and an address delivered by the local

member of the Legislature.

Agricultural Society.

R. Whiteside is president and Geo. Coit is secretary and treasurer of the Castor Agricultural Society. The ex-gasoline would boom plowing. The following districts: The Hub had 800 acres of crop this year. His Lauderdale, Hamilton Lake, Sound-wheat yielded 30 bushels to the acre. The Fredericksen Land Company has about 3,800 acres and have about 1,000 acres under cultivation. The Whiteside, own the Northern Star and have about 3,000 acres. Next year they expect to have 3,000 acres under cultivation.

Pasture Now Grows Grain.

Lane & Climie, old-time cattle ranchers, southwest of Castor, are expecting to have 3,000 acres of grain, and are about 100 head of cattle for samples of what Castor homesteaders

are doing. But perhaps the average homesteader, who has been here only two or three years, has broken about fifty acres, though many have broken much more.

The Williston Trading Co. broke about 750 acres this season. Among the owners of power plows in the Castor district are Messrs. Johnson Brothers, who have two outfits; Thompson; T. G. Correll, two steam outfits; J. Webster, 110 h.p. steam, with steam outfit, and the following have been operating gasoline plowing outfits: J. M. Hay, G. H. Starkie; Taylor & Co., C. Smith, Arthur Glander, Hanson, James Bros. and Williams.

The grain crop of 1910 has been estimated at about 150,000 bushels of which about 60,000 bushels will be marketed and the balance held for feed and seed.

Land Seekers Being Shown the Fertile Belt of Castor District.

shipment and next winter will feed about 100 head and close out the balance of the crop stock. They had 500 acres in range in the summer of 1910.

Nelson Rich, of Brownfield district, are also closing out their herd of cattle and feeding upward of 200 head this winter. They are transferring their attention to grain growing.

Cartter Brothers and Parker Bros. both of the Brownfield district, are going into mixed farming and will grow grain while retaining smaller herds of cattle.

George Cowan, one of the largest ranchers of the Berry Creek district, has sold all his cattle, consisting of over 500 head, and proposes to move to Mexico, where he will engage in ranching.

No Castor Oil Yet.

The C.P.R. secure water for their tank from above the dam of Beaver Dam Creek. Good well water is secured at from ten feet down. It is said that one well went through 96 ft. of sandstone. Coal shows up in cellars and wells. No deep drilling has been done in the valley so no signs of gas or oil have yet been found. But it is presumed that if an oil well were struck here it should yield Castor oil at Castor.

85 Phones Have 24 Hour Service.

Castor has 85 telephone service for the 85 phones in the local exchange, with telephone connection for hundreds of miles to the various cities, towns and hamlets of Alberta and the valley of the Crow's Nest in British Columbia. Modern advances of civilization come quickly to a town in Alberta and Castor, though only a year old, is far ahead of many a burg in some of the old settled countries.

Board of Trade.

The Castor Board of Trade are assisting for telephone extension north and south and ensure a good service to Sedgewick. This could be easily done in the league competition accomplished by connecting the rural

with Wm. Davis as chief. The present apparatus consists of a chemical fire engine kept in a temporary fire hall. A site has been bought for the town hall to be erected in the spring. The total assessment is about \$450,000. The tax rate is 8 mills for schools and 11 mills for town. The council are considering a project for the installation of electric light and waterworks.

Good Municipal Hospital.

The Castor Hospital is run by the municipality under the control of a hospital board appointed by the town council. There is accommodation for from 16 to 20 beds. Dr. J. Lyon, R. J. Dinning, and Thos. Finlayson, compose the hospital board. Miss Willis, the matron, has a staff of two nurses and an orderly. The good service of the

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Castor also has a German Lutheran church with the Rev. Loeb as pastor, and the Roman Catholic church with Rev. Father LeComte as parish priest.

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Societies and Clubs.

There are about 150 Oddfellows in Castor. The officers of the local lodge of I.O.O.F. are W. Beamish, N.G.; Dr. Lyon, V.G.; Chad Watson, Sec. They meet every Tuesday. A lodge of the Rebekahs has been organized with a membership of about forty.

The Ancient Free and Accepted Masons have a lodge with the following officers: John O. Young, V.M.; R. J. Dinning, S.W.; and H. K. Fielding, secretary.

The officers of the local lodge of Modern Woodmen of America are: O. W. Colley, consul; D. Jacobson, clerk; and Rev. M. E. Wiggins, advisor. The Royal Neighbors are also organized.

The Castor Institut La Canadienne has about 45 members and is the only organization of its kind in Canada. Pierre De Soucy the secretary is now in France on a visit. The object of the organization is the development of the relations of the French Canadians. A Canadian Club has been formed, and the chief event in its history has been the presentation of an address to Premier Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at Red Deer on the occasion of his recent visit. A Liberal Association is also numbered among the organizations of Castor.

E. Jones is leader of the Castor brass band which has fifteen instruments.

A debating club was organized last winter and it had so great a success that it will be re-organized. There is no public library yet at Castor, but there are two public lending libraries.

Athletics.

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