

# WESTERN CANADA SECTION

ROOM 315, NANTON BUILDING, WINNIPEG. 'Phone 8142. Representative, C. W. GOODALL.

## BUILDING UP THE WEST.

### IV.

To till a new country, sow, and reap, to populate it, to place capital where it will thrive, to make factory wheels hum, to extend boundaries, these and others are big jobs. When finished—but they never will be. A limit certainly there is to geographical extension; but enterprise is a commercial repeater. The primary labor done, men must turn around and hoe the other way. Then comes criss-cross work. National development has no end. It stops according to the personal vision; for which one may thank the fates for variety in humanity.

Capital is thrown out, not only in the West, but everywhere, with ulterior motive mucilage-attached. Capital usually brings back to its owners the something that has stuck. It does double good; it helps general progress and makes money for those who send out new monetary possessions to find financial friends.

The city of Medicine Hat, the up-to-date headgear of its district, intends to attract capital with natural gas. In Alberta that commodity is airily helping to hold up the earth's crust. It awaits only the discoverer. In the Peace River country an explorer told me his camp-fires were of natural gas, brought along in pipes to where lay men and maps. It has been found in many parts of the Province. The story goes that one impatient discoverer made a gas bore bigger with the aid of dynamite. He fled from the passing throng on top of the results. Ignorance there is concerning the extent of this natural commercial asset. That must be in a new country constantly affording surprises in the resources catalogue. But at Medicine Hat, the natural gas is yoked up to the everyday task. It is whipped into power-giving and illuminative obedience by the men who know Medicine Hat has an especially good card of Alberta's pack. Someone has said the city seems to have all hell for a basement. One might reasonably add—and consequently a possible manufacturing paradise for the ground floor.

So many so-called commercial possessions are in the naked experimental stage. This or that will drive engines—or at least models. Such and such will illumine towns—or anyway models. At Medicine Hat it is different. Practical demonstration has vogue. The natural gas rounds one up at every corner. In business offices it roars its merits from the furnace. In the C.P.R. shops gas takes the place of coal. What little coal lies around just there is almost a mineral accident. The Canadian Pacific have a natural gas well, an exception to the rule: Leave well alone. Cold engines are under steam and ready for the road in little more than one hour. Before the advent of natural gas, it meant three to four hours. Six thousand dollars a year are thus saved to the company. On the station platform, natural gas glares a welcome to east and westbound transcontinental trains. For the city is on the road's main line, with the Crow's Nest Pass Railroad to make a steely intersection. From the street lamps, the gas wages war with daylight. At dusk it wins. Medicine Hat uses its natural gas as the average person does tap water. Wasting, running, spilling, all day, the whole night, it matters not. The city has too much of a good thing; and it has taken on a fit of gaseous

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intoxication. To the student of economy it gives heartache. But the folks here argue that this particular bounty of Alberta's giving is good for one hundred years at least. Others figure with several centuries into the future. A guarantee of ten decades will probably satisfy the prospective manufacturer seeking cheap power. For every five cents one thousand cubic feet of natural gas are available for manufacturing purposes. The citizens keep well-lighted homes at thirteen and a half cents per thousand. In other words, nature's generosity means going shares in the gas bill.

This aeriform fluid is being clothed here with much publicity; it has been and it will be. Because if Medicine Hat imagination is stripped to the core, the fact remains that its natural gas chiefly will make Medicine Hat the manufacturing centre it desires to be. The captain of industry, the capitalist, will do well to learn something of the unique opportunities in this direction. Some will probably decide to curtail the daylight gambols of lamps meant only for darkness; in other words, divert part of the gas to turn factory wheels. The pressure from the gas wells is heavy and consistent. These facts give weight to the arguments of prophets who juggle with centuries. Medicine Hat will magnetize manufacturing capital.

As elsewhere in the West, one sees at Medicine Hat a cosmopolitan population. It is flavored, too, with a decided Scotch accent; but this is found more upon the ranches

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