

Lethbridge.

The town of Lethbridge, Alberta, is at present attracting a great deal of attention outside, owing to railway construction in the district and prospective activity in coal mining. Lethbridge is the western terminus of the Alberta Railway and Coal Company's railway, sometimes called "The Galt Railway." This is a narrow gauge road, which branches off from the Canadian Pacific railway at Dunmore station, 652 miles west of Winnipeg, and thence runs in a westerly direction, 109 miles to Lethbridge. The road was built in order to reach the coal deposits previously discovered and worked at Lethbridge. The coal was first discovered by the outcroppings along the deep bank of the Belly river, near which the town has been built. The mines were opened in 1882, and during the two following years coal was taken out by steamers down the river to Medicine Hat. This, however, proved an unsatisfactory mode of operating, as the navigation of the river is rather precarious, and the stream is closed by ice for a portion of the year. In 1885 the railway was built to the mines, and since then the mines have been operated steadily, shipments of coal being made to Winnipeg and other parts of the country. At Dunmore the coal is transferred from the narrow gauge road to the Canadian Pacific railway cars. The Lethbridge coal is of a superior quality to any of the other mines operated to any extent in the country, consequently the article has always been in demand. The output from the mines since the railway was built has ranged from 200 to 400 tons per day.

This year a new move is being made which it is expected will greatly increase the output from the mines. A railway is now being built from Lethbridge to Great Falls, Montana. Work is now going on on both sides the international boundary, and the road is to be completed by next September. It is expected that the completion of this railway will open a large market in Montana for Lethbridge coal. The coals now obtainable in that region are of inferior quality to the Lethbridge article, and the latter coal it is expected would have a large sale to the smelters in the Great Falls district and for other purposes. The length of the road from Lethbridge to Great Falls will be about 200 miles, about 80 miles being in Canadian territory. At Great Falls connection with other railways can be had, by which the coal can be distributed throughout the region. The new road will be narrow gauge, similar to the line from Dunmore to Lethbridge.

Extensive preparations are now being made to increase the output of the mines, in preparation for the expected demand from Montana on the completion of the railway. The present output of coal is about 400 to 500 tons per day. Heretofore the coal has all been taken out from an incline shaft, entering the mine from the side of the hill. Three new shafts are now being put down, each shaft having a capacity of about 400 tons of coal per day. These, with the present incline shaft, will make the capacity 1,600 tons per day. The first of the new shafts is now completed and the engines and machinery for operating it have been placed. Coal is now being taken out of this shaft, but it will take a little while to develop it fully. The second shaft is also down to coal, and will soon be in operation. The third shaft is down about 100 feet and will be completed in about three

months. It is expected that by October first the output of the mines will reach 900 tons per day, and by next year the demand from Montana is expected to reach 2,000 tons per day, so that if these expectations are realized, it will be necessary to continue increasing the facilities for putting out coal at the mines. About 400 men are employed in connection with the mines, and this number will be doubled, it is expected, by next fall. A number of new cottages are being erected for the miners. The company owns the houses occupied by the miners. A new powder magazine, to hold 40 tons of powder, is also being erected, and additional machine shops are being established at the new shafts.

The Lethbridge collieries are owned by the Alberta Railway & Coal Company, the same company owning the railway from Dunmore to the mines, and also the railway now being built from the mines to the Montana boundary. At the boundary the railway will be met by a railway being built by a company chartered in Montana. The company was formerly known by the name of the Northwest Coal & Navigation Company, but this name was changed by Act of Parliament. The name "Galt Mines," and "Galt Railway," has been applied as a short term, from the fact that Sir A. T. Galt took an active part in establishing the Company.

The town is named after Mr. Lethbridge, of London, England, who also was a leading promoter of the company. G. H. R. Wainright, late of Winnipeg, is general manager of the railway, and J. Bailey is superintendent. Mr. Stafford is superintendent of the mines, E. T. Galt is general manager of the company.

The company received a grant of 3,840 acres of land per mile from the Dominion Government, to aid in the construction of the railway. This land is granted in alternate townships, the Government reserving the intervening townships. The company will also get a grant of 6,400 acres per mile for 68 miles of the road now being built to the Montana boundary. The lands are being offered at \$1.25 per acre and upward, without conditions, on easy terms. Parties purchasing lands receive a guarantee of five months work each year for three years, from the company. The company owned the townsite of Lethbridge, but the inside lots have now mostly passed into other hands. The remaining lots are held at \$125 to \$200. The lots were sold at \$75 when first placed on the market, but inside property is now held at \$500 to \$1,500 per lot. Coal lands are reserved by the Dominion Government, and held at \$10 per acre. The coal lands owned by the company were purchased at this figure. The land department of the company is in charge of C. A. Magrath. The company owns a timber limit in the mountains, and has a saw mill at Lethbridge. Logs can be floated down the rivers from the timber limit to the mill. The mill is not at present in operation.

Lethbridge is the headquarters for the railway, and a considerable force of men is given employment in the machine shops, round house and offices of the company. The construction of the new road to Montana will necessitate a large increase in the staff employed in connection with the railway at Lethbridge.

The improved prospects for the town in the increased development of the mines and railway extension, caused something of a stir in real estate this spring, and town lots advanced very considerably in value. Up to the present, how-

ever, the town has not felt the effect of the prospective development, but this will come later on. Ordinary commercial lines of business appear to be represented to the full extent of the present requirements of trade. There are four stores doing a general trade, and carrying large stocks. These are I. G. Baker & Co., H. Bentley & Co., J. H. Cavanagh, and Sherlock & Freeman. These stores have all been established since about the opening of the town by the railway. Sherlock & Freeman, who also carry on business at Grenfell, Assa., succeeded to the business established by Botterell. A. McDonald & Co. are a new firm so far as Lethbridge is concerned, but well known throughout the west. This firm has recently bought out the grocery and provision business carried on by J. D. Sibbald & Co., and it is the intention to add a large stock of general merchandise. A new brick building is being erected by the firm as an addition to the present quarters. In the financial line Lethbridge has a branch of the Union Bank of Canada, of which F. R. Goodwin is manager. John Hawley & Co. commenced business about May 1st last in hardware, stoves, tinware, etc., about the same time buying out the tinware and stove business of T. F. Kirkham. A. J. Hipperson also carries on business in stoves, tinware, plumbing, etc. He carries a large stock and has erected a new workshop last spring. In the furniture line John Craig carries a good stock of furniture, undertaking supplies, etc. He is erecting a new workshop and warehouse, and will use his present quarters entirely for show rooms. Those interested in real estate can communicate with J. F. Ritchie, who has an office for that purpose. Mr. Ritchie has the handling of lots on the Higginbotham addition to the town. W. R. McDougall attends to the requirements of the residents in the line of custom shoemaking, while John McNaughton is ready to supply reading matter from his book and news store. A. R. Brady undertakes to furnish the people with the staff of life, and H. Miron supplies the town with meats. The *Lethbridge News* is the name of the local paper, published by T. Saunders. The *News* office claims the best steam press in the Territories. The Lethbridge House, the principal commercial hotel, is owned by Wm. Henderson. The house has recently been placed in charge of C. A. Armstrong, late of Winnipeg, who is making improvements to the building. In addition to the places of business mentioned there are two drug stores, harness shop, jewelry store, fruit stores, lumber yards, several hotels, etc. The medical and legal professions are well represented.

In laying out the town the company reserved a large square in the centre, containing about ten acres of land. The business portion of the town fronts on this square, which is to be permanently reserved as a park. This gives the place a pleasant appearance.

Lethbridge has a board of trade, Dominion Lands office, and is a customs port. The town is not incorporated, but application to this end will be made at the next session of the Territorial Assembly. A census of the place just taken places the population at 1594. It is also a mounted police post, where about 100 men are stationed.

A move is now on foot to erect a new hospital building. Sir A. T. Galt has promised a donation of \$10,000 for this purpose, and a committee has been formed to carry out the enterprise, the intention being to erect buildings to cost at least \$20,000. A company is also being formed with a capital stock of \$12,000, to be known as the Lethbridge building company, for the purpose of erecting a hall, to be used for public purposes.