

The Half-Way House of the Prairie

By NORMAN PATTERSON

ABOUT half-way between Winnipeg and the Rockies is a railway junction—the Canadian Pacific line running straight west from Winnipeg and the Soo Line running north-west from St. Paul meet there. For many years that railway junction was merely a railway junction, with round-house, machine shops and the mingling odours of black oil and soft coal. Now, within five years, it has become a commercial centre with hopes and ambitions and determinations. The name of the town is Moose Jaw, and please spell it as two words.

They tell the story of why Moose Jaw remained merely a railway town. On the north of the C. P. R. there were settlements; along the east of the Soo Line there were growing villages; but west of the Soo Line and south of the C. P. R. was a district containing millions of acres which were suited only for horse-ranching. The Dominion Government which owned the land did not think it worth surveying. It was indeed No-Man's Land. As a consequence, Regina and Calgary, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge all had their booms, because settlement developed all around them. Moose Jaw, bounded on one side by a mountainous, unproductive district, was held back in the race. One day, the famous Hugh McKellar, Moose Jaw's most steadfast lover, took a saddle horse and a light camping outfit and proceeded to explore the country which lay beyond the low range of hills which bounded the daily southern view from the railway village. He came back with a story which made the people wonder why they had been such fools. That story was rushed to Ottawa, surveyors were despatched, and five million acres of arable land were thrown open for settlement. The settlers are pouring in, but the real development of the newly found district will not occur until they run a railway line from Weyburn to McLeod, parallel with the International Boundary. Nevertheless Mr. McKellar's discovery made the modern, commercial Moose Jaw a certainty.

SOME HISTORY.

THE foundations of Moose Jaw's history, prosperity and success were laid in 1882 when the C. P. R. in building across our vast prairies selected Moose Jaw River as a desirable point for a divisional point and machine shops. The Moose Jaw River is the first important stream of water crossed by the railway after leaving Brandon. For many years after the railway had been constructed to Calgary and over the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver the farming district surrounding Moose Jaw was but sparsely settled. Homesteads were partly occupied to Buffalo Lake, some seventeen miles north. Not more than one hundred and fifty farmers were on the whole district tributary to Moose Jaw. Thousands of homesteads were still unoccupied between Winnipeg and Moose Jaw. These had to be occupied before the wave of settlement could reach Moose Jaw. It was generally believed in the outside world that Moose Jaw was and would continue to be the end of all settlement before entering the ranch lands of south-west Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. Farmers, who were here, were prospering and adding quarter section after quarter section to their holdings, for the land was selling at from \$3 to \$5 per acre. During the last ten years many other districts in Saskatchewan and Alberta have rapidly filled up, until Moose Jaw district suddenly came into prominence as having vast areas of homesteads and other lands open for settlement. The amendment to the Dominion Lands Act, allowing a homesteader to pre-empt a quarter section adjacent to his homestead, gave a wonderful impetus to the Moose Jaw district. Some ten thousand settlers have located in the district within the past two years and the rush continues for the Moose Jaw district has still more vacant homesteads than any other land district in Western Canada.

As the land in the immediate vicinity of the city became occupied, the fertility of the soil was demonstrated by many successive crops of wheat—heavy yields and highest quality. To-day the Moose Jaw district, which comprises the lands west and north-west to the Saskatchewan River and north to Outlook as well as south to the Coteau Hills and on the Soo Line down to Yellow Grass is second to no place in Western Canada, as a wheat growing district. For two years in succession the yield of wheat within twenty-five miles of Moose Jaw has exceeded three million bushels. These lands are now valued at from fifteen to thirty dollars an acre.

Moose Jaw became a city in 1903 with a popu-

lation estimated at 2,500; to-day the population is said to be more than 10,000 and growing so rapidly that every year requires extra school accommodation of four rooms. There are now twenty-eight teachers engaged in public school and collegiate institute work. The city has six banks, five hotels and all lines of business well represented. The permanency of the city's business rests upon the rich agricultural background; the distributing centre of trade on branch lines; the C. P. R. employees' monthly pay-roll which now far exceeds the hundred thousand dollar mark; the new flour mills, capacity 1,000 barrels per day, employing fifty men and ensuring the highest price for all wheat raised in the district; and the high standard of education which attracts students from many outside points.

A DISTRIBUTING CENTRE.

WILL Moose Jaw be a distributing centre equal to Regina, Saskatoon and Calgary? Already, it is nearly equal with Regina, but will this comparative equality be retained? Perhaps so, but Regina has railway competition and Moose Jaw has not. Moose Jaw has only one railway, for the Soo Line is a part of the C. P. R. system. Saskatoon has three great railways entering its borders. Regina has two, and Calgary has one, with a prospect of two more. Still, railways do not always decide.

Moose Jaw must remain a prominent distributing centre, even if her neighbours make greater progress. Between the Junction and Portal on the Boundary Line there are a number of fine towns: Rouleau, Wilcox, Milestone, Yellow Grass, Weyburn, Estevan and one or two others. Northward is the new line running through Tuxford and The Elbow to Outlook. There must be other lines in

the near future, and these will centre in Moose Jaw.

Furthermore, a city with enterprising and confident citizens will make headway in spite of ordinary obstacles. The ten thousand people in Moose Jaw are not likely to allow themselves to be outdone by any other ten thousand on the prairie. Their activity is marvellous—truly western activity.

A FLOUR TOWN.

ONE of the greatest possibilities of Moose Jaw is that it shall become a "flour" town. The miller looking about for a site for a new mill has a choice. He may select a town like Calgary, from which he may ship flour only to the Pacific coast; or he may select a location in Fort William, whence he may ship only to the Atlantic coast; or he may select Moose Jaw from which he may ship in all directions, according to the demand and the other influences of the moment. Wheat and flour from the Prairie are likely to be shipped in four directions in the near future, though now they go mainly in one. The opening up of the north country and the Hudson Bay route, will create a northern movement. In a few years the United States will be crying for our wheat and flour, and a southern movement will be begun. The western movement has already begun, and Vancouver is getting quite excited over the rapid growth of this particular export.

Thinking over these things, a man would not necessarily give proof of insanity if he were to predict that this "Junction City," this Half-way House of the Prairie, would become a great distributing centre for flour and wheat. Some day even the name Moose Jaw may be as famous among flour users as Minneapolis or Keewatin are to-day. If the C.P.R. will but give Moose Jaw a fair deal in coal rates it will become a manufacturing town of some kind. In the meantime it is—like its rivals, north, east and west—making tremendous and regular progress.

How Canada Could Checkmate Germany

By HIS HONOUR JUDGE BARRON

MY suggestion to the Berlin Canadian Club that Canada could hamper Germany by prohibiting the export of nickel was discussed in a recent issue of the CANADIAN COURIER by one of your staff writers. He sympathises with my aim apparently, but doubts the practicability of my proposition. I am therefore glad of an opportunity to lay my views more fully before the readers of "the national weekly."

Your editorial writer questions whether Canada "has the power to put an export duty on nickel," and then proceeds to state that "there are practical limits to what a government may do." I had thought all ownership was subject to fiscal laws, but may I quote you the statute on the subject? It is R. S. C. Cap. 50, Sec. 3, at p. 889, 1st Vol.:

"The Governor-in-Council may by proclamation published in the *Canada Gazette* impose the export duties hereinafter mentioned upon the following ores and metals:

"(a) On nickel contained in matte, or in the ore, or in any crude or partially manufactured state, and on copper contained in any matte or ore which also contains nickel, when exported from Canada, as to such nickel an export duty not exceeding ten cents per pound, and as to such copper an export duty not exceeding two cents a pound."

Now, Parliament can amend this statute at any time, by increasing or lessening these duties. The tariff laws of Canada have resulted in many United States industries coming to Canada. Why not, then, say to the Canadian Copper Company: "Yes, you may have our nickel, but we want you to place all your industries in Canada. It is our raw material which you are taking, and in addition to the two or three thousand people who now find employment at the mines, we would have the benefit of all the labour now employed in the large industries of a foreign country."

We have evidence of the benefits of such a course, in the increased timber dues placed by the Ontario Government upon logs cut by United States mill owners for export to United States mills. The result was *at once* that the mills came to Canada. Of course the Ontario Government could not adopt a similar course in regard to nickel ore, because it is not subject to royalty or other impost payable to the province which the province could raise or lower at will.

Remember, please, that practically, Canada, with New Caledonia, has a monopoly of this raw material, and all that she benefits by it is in the

employment of a couple of thousand men and the destruction of every living bit of vegetation anywhere in the vicinity of the roast beds. The United States market for the refined product could still be open to the refiners, for the 6c. United States duty (if continued) would still give a preference to the Canadian article, first because it is the best; second because its only competitor is badly handicapped by distance. Then Canada would not be in the humiliating position of having to send to New York to buy back its own product, as the Quebec arsenal has to do to-day for every ounce it wants.

Then, as to the effect on the present much-to-be-regretted race for supremacy in *Dreadnoughts*. Everyone wishes to see this race called off. England has wished it, and has so requested, but Germany says "No." Now there is only one way to stop it, that is to stop the supplies; but you ask, "How stop the supplies?" The answer is, by making the race so frightfully expensive that it has to stop *volens volens*. Canada has the power to do this, by making nickel so decidedly expensive to Germany that in a little while the strain will be too much and more than she can stand, or else drive her back to the old armour-plate for ships and that would end the race then and there. Is it not a serious thing to contemplate that in peace or war, or preparation for war, our nickel—our raw material—(as things now are) can be supplied in the refined state to Germany in spite of us? It can, indeed, be so supplied to Germany by a foreign state, under advantages to Germany not to be enjoyed by Great Britain, and to please the immense German population of the United States, this is exactly what they would do.

It seems extremely foolish that we should sell our nickel to the United States, which has no nickel, and through her to Germany, which has no nickel, when we might control the trade to our own great advantage, commercially and politically. It seems foolish for Canada and Great Britain to overlook the benefit which control of the nickel output of Canada would confer upon both.

You say that, even if the nickel did go to England by means of some preference, that a "patriotic shipbuilder" would or might sell it to German plate-makers. Of course that is possible; but England might provide against it, and probably would, when she realised what Canada was doing in her behalf. But, even so, Canada would have the comforting feeling that, any rate, she was doing her duty.