

# WESTERN CANADA SECTION

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## BUILDING UP THE WEST.

### II.

A plug-hatted and frock-coated man, accompanied by another, more picturesquely Western; a Salvation Army, singing their hymns to the tune of a once popular song; an automobile, making memories of prairie roads, at forty miles an hour, and mixing in grass a couple of feet high—that gives a slight idea of the spirit of the West. The plug hat and the fedora fraternize. Those who like noisy religion, worship with the aid of vaudeville notes. It is simply a question of making the best use of the most handy. As for the automobile, that is, perhaps, at one and the same time, an incongruous and yet a heartsome sight. If your well-tailored gentleman and your fine-feathered lady of Broadway or Piccadilly were to drop, in their cars, on to these Western plains, their survival would be a matter only of medical enterprise.

The man born on the small island, or reared in the dust of bricks and mortar, usually acquires a blue fit when his automobile strikes a stone in the well-paved roadway. When you see a string of cars filling up the gaps in Western Canada's landscape, dodging around threshing machines, performing agile jumps that might make a leopard jealous, it is easy to see your insular and city men have something to learn.

Twenty years ago, or may be it is more, people said there was nothing in this Western Canada but misery, trimmed with ice, snow, and the bitters of Providence. This was not criticism from abroad; it was said by men who lived on the spot. But pioneering perseverance proved that extremes in climate are not indestructible barriers to a nation's sturdy growth.

The automobilist of the West can steer his machine around wheat fields. The horses are unaccustomed to this gasolinic demonstration of progress, but the motorist knows how to quieten the restive animals. In one hand he holds the type, in the other, the harness. From his fingers and rubber bulb comes the familiar "Honk"; from his lips the effective "Whoa!"

The Canadian West has grown out of the primitive. One may see now in almost any town or city stores which, set down in the East, would make a good impression. As for jewellery, the theatre, pleasure, the West has little to learn, except to learn not to learn too quickly. Signs of luxury are everywhere. There may be unemployment here and there. For the most part it is composed of agitators and seekers of labor, hoping that labor will come not. Poverty, as it is known where a hundred families live in one block, is unknown in his country, where the sun paints a ruddy blotch at even. And what is behind this national knack of making things and making things do?

One phase of this building-up process claims special consideration. Making money, and rapidly is considered the primary duty. This is not strange. But with the dollar problem constantly in view, with no thought of ten or twenty years hence, problems for future solution are being created.

Some of our farmers will gather three, perhaps more, crops from their land. Then it is summer fallowed; in other words, given an earned rest. Next year again it does a

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bearing duty. As the Transcontinental speeds upon its way, one sees from the windows a hundred prairie beacon lights. They are burning stacks of straw. In their smoke is reflection. Nobody troubles to haul this straw from the wheat fields. It can be had as a gift, or at the most, for a dollar a load. Talk there is of strawboard factories to eat up what now is wasted, making it something useful. Men here, who are thinking ahead, say this straw in the shape of manure should go back into the land.

In the Dakotas this season a man told me the average yield was about seven or eight bushels. In our own country eighteen bushels is a commonplace. Some are convinced that in time to come a similar sorry, statistical story must be our lot in the West. That may be raising the prophetic telescope rather high, but this straw business is one example of how money is made only while the sun shines.

Another instance—in Brandon one may see wagons, loaded with onions, wending along the main street. These tear-drawing bulbs are imported from the United States. "A something shame!" exclaimed a Scotchman. He knew that onion-growing around Brandon means getting a handful of dollars every three weeks, say, instead of every one. Money is not permitted to remain sour grapes for long, even if it signifies onions from over the border.

"I am here for twenty years," says the farmer. "A substantial banking account must be mine; no matter what follows."

A little scientific study of fertilization, a minimum sacrifice of money, would make Canada's wheat yield a thing of beauty, of joy and of dollars forever. The smell of home-grown onions, too, would mean more than a tickler for the nostrils.

F. W. F.

## MORE ABOUT THE CROP.

Interview with Alberta's Minister of Agriculture—  
Medicine Hat Fair—Future of Fort Churchill.

Monetary Times Office,

Winnipeg, September 29th.

As time goes on, it becomes more apparent that Canada's 1908 crop is a substantial and well distributed one. The Monetary Times, a few days ago, met at Medicine Hat, the