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John Maclean





J. H. ASHDOWN, President
1869-1919

SEMI-CENTENARY

— OF THE —

J. H. Ashdown Hardware Co., Limited.

Calgary

WINNIPEG

Saskatoon

ESTABLISHED 1897



A short story of the founding of its business, a brief review of the building up of its extensive trade, an account of its different locations in Winnipeg, Calgary and Saskatoon, together with a brief biography of Mr. Ashdown from his early boyhood up to the present day.



A. S. BENTLEY, President
1887-1888

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COMPILED AND PRINTED BY
THE J. H. ASHDOWN HARDWARE COMPANY LIMITED
CATALOG AND PRINTING DEPARTMENT

12-5-40



Foreword

The development of the Canadian North-West has been one of the romances of history. Where a few short decades ago the Indian ranged the forests, the buffalo roamed the mighty prairies and all else was silence, there now resounds the busy hum of industry. Cities, towns and villages have sprung up. Railroads gridiron the land. The rich soil has been leaved upon to help feed the struggling peoples of older countries. Yet Western Canada is but in its infancy. It requires not the vision of a prophet to foresee its tremendous destiny. Many millions will live in happy prosperity within its borders. The surface has only been scratched.

All honor then to our pioneers. In the rush of our daily life we fail to look back to earlier days. We do not give full credit to those to whose courage and far-sighted vision we owe our present enviable position. The Golden Jubilee of the Ashdown business is therefore an Event. We believe that a record should be made of it. In no spirit of self seeking, but with an eye to the perpetuation of some of the records of a period of struggle and adversity, of success and prosperity, the following pages have been written. They are dedicated to those founders of our country whose efforts marched hand in hand with Mr. Ashdown in its upbuilding, to the friends and customers whose co-operation has made his great success possible, and to the unborn millions who will come after us.

Finis coronat opus

H.H.P.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Directors:
4—J. H. ASHDOWN, President
2—R. A. GRAHAM, Secy.-Treas.
1—N. S. HUTCHISON
6—H. C. ASHDOWN, Vice-President
3—A. E. DYKES, Manager
5—C. H. S. BAMFORD

Historical Sketch

By

W. T. Allison

IT may be questioned whether any business man in Canada has had a more interesting or more successful career than Mr. James H. Ashdown, of Winnipeg. He has not only had the satisfaction of building a gigantic wholesale and retail hardware business from the smallest of small beginnings in a frontier settlement, but he has had the rarer fortune still to live to such an age as to be able to pass the fiftieth mile-stone in the history of the business that he has guided and conducted with unerring skill to this hour. Mr. Ashdown is in his seventy-sixth year, but his strength is still unabated and his eye and brain are as clear as ever. He is in his office every day, and holds in his steady hand all the threads of a business that operates over the western section of the Dominion. The head and centre of a vast organization, with headquarters in Winnipeg and immense warehouses in Saskatoon and Calgary, he is a wonderful example of mental and physical vigor. Surrounded by a strong staff of men, whom he has selected and trained during the long years, Mr. Ashdown looks forward confidently to the future expansion of trade in the prairie provinces. Although the business is fifty years of age on September 11, 1919, quite ancient in comparison with most of its rivals, it is still young and hopeful in its outlook, for the twentieth century belongs to Western Canada, and no man can be too optimistic concerning the possibilities of settlement and development in the immense territory served by this well-established, alert and always growing house.

A Household Word

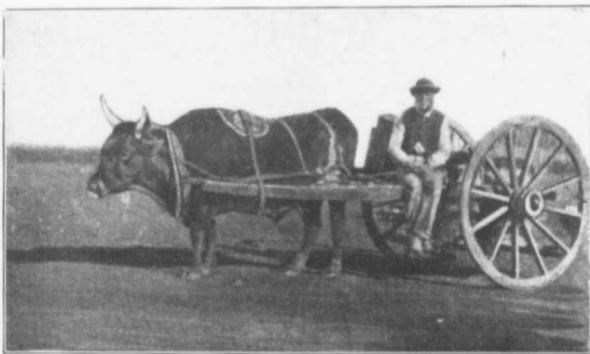
While the name of James H. Ashdown is a household word in the western provinces of Canada, and while tens of thousands of people know that he has occupied a prominent place in the life of Winnipeg, both as mayor and as president or director of the Board of Trade and of numerous financial and philanthropic institutions, comparatively few westerners, not even his personal acquaintances, are familiar with the story of his early life, his experiences during his first arduous years in the Red River Settlement, and the subsequent steps by which, seizing occasion by the hand, he mounted to a leading position as business man and

GOLDEN JUBILEE

public-spirited citizen of Winnipeg. It is to supply this information, and at the same time to relate the more formal history of the Ashdown Hardware Company, that the present publication has been undertaken.

Emigrating to Canada

In the forties and fifties of the last century there was a heavy tide of emigration from the old land to Canada. James H. Ashdown was a boy eight years of age in old London when his father caught the Canadian fever. It was in 1852 that William Ashdown and his wife, Jane, brought their family on the long voyage to this country and settled in the village of Weston, near Toronto. The father opened a small store and at the early age of eleven James had to leave school, for he was needed at home to serve behind the counter. During his schooling, however, he seems to have imbibed a love for solid reading, for at the age of fourteen he gave his evenings to the perusal of Chitty's Blackstone, certainly a peculiar work to attract a growing boy. But Mr. Ashdown derived great benefit from his study of Blackstone. Aside from a general knowledge of the principles of English law, a valuable intellectual asset for a business man to possess, he is nothing if not logical. A well-known Winnipeg lawyer, who has done a great deal of work for Mr. Ashdown, states that few men can equal him in getting at the weak spot in a legal document. This ability comes from those long winter evenings in his youth when he pored over the famous commentaries.



Red River Ox Cart from Actual Photograph

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After a residence of several years duration in Weston, William Ashdown decided to give up the business and take a farm in the township of Brant. There the younger members of the family, James included, had to share in all the hardships and unremitting toil of pioneer life when the bush farms of Ontario had to be won from the wilderness.

Carving out a Future

It was when he was eighteen years old that James H. Ashdown decided to leave home and carve out his own future. The only gift he received from the family was a small sum of money, the proceeds of the sale of a set of solid silver spoons which his mother had brought with her from England. The young man was endowed however, with good health and a sturdy frame and faced the future with the utmost confidence. He walked from the bush farm in Brant to Guelph. Failing to secure work there, he proceeded towards the village of Hespeler. As he was walking along the railway track coming into the village, he saw a sixpenny bit sticking in the sand between two railway ties. He dug it out with his knife and reflected that it would provide him with one more meal.

The finding of the sixpence must have been a favorable omen, for it was in Hespeler that young Ashdown found employment and, more than that, a chance to learn a trade. John Zryd, the local tinsmith, accepted him as an apprentice under a three-year



Red River Settlement 1868, which grew into the City of Winnipeg

GOLDEN JUBILEE

contract. In those days an apprentice never had too much spending money in his pocket. The young man from Brant township received, in addition to board, lodging and laundry, \$25 the first year, \$30 the second, and \$45 the last year of his apprenticeship. Always eager for work and glad to earn a few dollars on the side, the apprentice posted up the books for the Hespeler blacksmith. For this night work he was paid \$6 per year for a period of two years, and \$8 the third year!

Seeking a Fortune in the Western States

As soon as the young tinsmith had learned his trade he decided to seek his fortune in the Western states, for the general idea had spread in Canada that a great boom would follow the close of the War of Secession. But this prosperity was not so pronounced as anticipated, and, after spending some time in Chicago and St. Louis, he finally found his way to the limits of civilization, at what was to be known as Fort Zarah on the plains of Kansas. A block house was being erected to protect

Wm. Mepez Recd Recd Settlement
14th September 1869
Twelve Months after date I promise
to pay to the order of George Moser
the sum of Fifty Pounds Sterling
for value received
E. S. O. O. H. G. James H. Ashdown

Copy of Note given to Mr. George Moser for the purchase of his Hardware Stock
with which Mr. Ashdown started business

GOLDEN JUBILEE

settlers from the Indians and the young mechanic from Ontario secured work on this building for some ten months. There he saw the herds of buffalo which were still numerous in the West; the Indian tribes-men when they came to barter at the trading post; above all he saw and liked the boundless prairie country.

It was the memory of that free life in the Western country that made young Ashdown dissatisfied when he returned to Ontario. It was a letter that he chanced to read in the columns of the Toronto "Globe" that emphasized his discontent with the tamer life of Ontario. A settler of Portage la Prairie had written to "The Globe" to express his delight with life in Western Canada and to expatiate on the wonderful possibilities of the new country. It was probably one of the first specimens of "booster" literature that had been published by the Eastern press, and, strange to tell, it was the deciding influence that gave James H. Ashdown to Winnipeg and the prairie provinces of Canada.

459 ST. PAUL STREET,

Montreal - 11 Sept - 1867

Mr. George Moser

McARTHUR & MARTIN,
GENERAL COMMISSION MERCHANTS.

<i>1/2 Doz Galvanized Sheet</i>	<i>Comm: 5%</i>	<i>25 13 50</i>
<i>Enamel & soft steel }</i>	<i>Winnipeg 10% discount</i>	<i>95</i>
	<i>Rec'd payment</i>	<i>16 25</i>
	<i>W. H. Ashdown</i>	

Copy of Invoice for first Bill of Goods received by Mr. Ashdown after buying out George Moser

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Winnipeg Manitoba
4th November 1870

For and in consideration of
the sum of Forty pounds sterling,
paid to me — I Maurice John
Goodwin Bowman, do hereby transfer
all my right title and interest in
that lot of land in the town of Winnipeg
fronting on the main street, and
being the one adjoining on the south
side, the lot on which the Police
Station is now situated, — to
James Henry Ashdown, and do
hereby promise to execute any
deed or other papers which may
be required for the legal and
proper transfer of the same —

Witness

Andrew Shaughnessy Maurice John Goodwin Bowman
Cuthbert J. Bird

Copy of note given by Mr. Ashdown for purchase of property
where Main Street Store now stands

Called to Western Canada

But in 1868 there was no city on the map named Winnipeg,
nor was there a province known as Manitoba. There was a
straggling Red River Settlement and two stone forts on the river
bank (one, Fort Garry, at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine
rivers, the other, known as Lower Fort Garry, some twenty miles
down the Red) that were trading posts of the Hudson's Bay
Company. Mr. Ashdown knew nothing of the commercial
possibilities of the settlement, and from what he had seen of

GOLDEN JUBILEE

the frontier life in Kansas, he knew that he would have to put up with many hardships, would, in fact, have a difficult time getting to the vicinity of Fort Garry; but the West had called him, and once more he set his face towards the land of the boundless prairie and the buffalo.

In those days the only entrance to Western Canada was by way of St. Paul and St. Cloud. There was a new line of railway northward from St. Paul to St. Cloud, but beyond that little settlement there was nothing but the prairie trail totally unknown to any but the hardy Red River voyageurs. Several years later a line of steamboats was to carry passengers and freight down the Red River, but in June, 1868, when Mr. Ashdown arrived at St. Cloud, he had to make a bargain with the driver of a Red River ox-cart for the carriage of his luggage and provisions. He, himself, had to walk beside the train of ox-carts, stopping

£ 13.6

Winnipeg May 18th 1871
 Rec^d of J. H. Ashdown the
 sum of two pound thirteen
 shillings & six pence being the
 amount in full of wages as
 Trussmith

W. J. White

May 23th 1871
 Rec^d of J. H. Ashdown
 the sum of \$5.00 Canada cur
 on A/c
 William Small

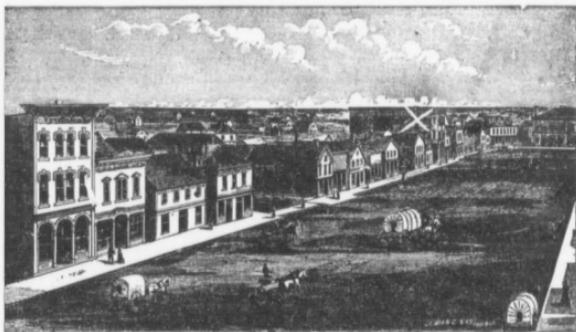
Copy of two receipts for payment of wages paid by Mr. Ashdown to men who worked for him in the year 1871.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

when they stopped and starting when they started. At meal time he had to prepare his own food, boiling tea, frying bacon, etc., and was incessantly assailed by clouds of mosquitoes. At night he slept beneath the carts or elsewhere as circumstances allowed. At last, after what was considered a very favorable journey of nineteen days, on the 30th of June, 1868, he reached Fort Garry.

Grasshopper Plague

It is almost impossible for the present-day dweller in this large and beautiful metropolis to imagine the primitive kind of scene which greeted Mr. Ashdown when he was ferried across the Assiniboine and passed the fort to the scattered little village which at that time had not even the dignity of a name. Its log buildings lay sprawling over the prairie and they were few in number, for the population scarcely numbered a hundred souls. There were Scotch and French settlers further down the river, but the village which was to grow into Winnipeg was a desolate-looking place. Moreover the young man from Eastern Canada had arrived at a very inauspicious time in the history of the Red River country. The settlement was experiencing its second visitation of the grasshopper plague. The grasshoppers had been numerous the year before but as they came in the autumn the crops escaped. They left myriads of eggs behind them,



Winnipeg 1875, Looking North from Portage Avenue
X This sign denotes Ashdown's Main Street Store

GOLDEN JUBILEE

however, which were now hatching out in millions. Every green thing in the settlement was soon devoured by these locusts. They came in such numbers that they were piled up against the south walls of the fort in deep drifts. For fear their decaying bodies would poison the atmosphere, employees of the Hudson's Bay shovelled them into Company carts and wheelbarrows and dumped them into the Assiniboine river. Whole fields were swept clean by these insatiable insects, so that great scarcity of food seemed inevitable. During that summer flour was selling for from twenty-five to thirty shillings per hundreds pounds, and oats for horse feed were two dollars a bushel. The buffalo hunt that season was also a dismal failure. As a result of this hard luck an appeal was made to the public of the United States and Eastern Canada, and also to the Dominion Government, for aid. By the autumn of 1868 it was found that 423 families, numbering 2,342 persons, had to be supplied with provisions during the winter and until the next harvest. Later on the number of persons requiring aid to prevent them from starving amounted to three thousand and the freighting of the supplies which had to be brought in from St. Cloud during the fall and early winter was a tedious and expensive task.

There was no reserve of food in the district owing to the fact that the settlers had little or no incentive to raise large crops.



Winnipeg 1875, Winter Time

X This sign denotes the Ashdown Main Street Store

GOLDEN JUBILEE

The Hudson's Bay Company was the only purchaser of agricultural products, and it frequently restricted its purchases to ten bushels of wheat and half an ox from each settler annually. It was not the policy of the company to encourage agriculture. Its chief interest was in furs and the wilder and more unsettled the country the better for the fur trader. Living under such conditions, therefore, the settlers depended upon freighting, hunting, fishing and the cultivation of the small amount of grain and garden stuff necessary for their own use. When the grasshopper plague came, all they could do was to appeal to the outside world for assistance to save them from famine.

Excuse if not the Cause of the Riel Rebellion

It is one of the ironies of history that the effort of the Dominion Government to help the settlers of the Red River country in their necessity was at least the excuse if not the cause of the Riel Rebellion of 1869 and 1870. The Ottawa authorities considered that it would be better to provide the starving settlers with work at good wages than to feed them gratuitously. Accordingly work was provided on the Dawson road under the direction of John Snow, and a survey of the district was instituted by Colonel J. Stoughton-Dennis. Soon Snow was employing many men in opening a road to the Red River settlement from the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods, and Dennis, accompanied by a large party, was busy surveying the whole district on a rectangular plan. Now in the early days French, half-breed and British settlers had squatted along the river banks. Their little farms had a narrow frontage but extended back from the river for two miles. According to an old custom they also enjoyed hay rights on the wild land for two miles behind their own property. When the Dominion surveyor, therefore, came along and cut across their narrow, ribbon-like farms with his rectangular scheme there was much uneasiness, not to say hostility. The English-speaking settlers were the first to take offence, and their suspicion of the Government was passed on to the French and half-breeds. When the latter commenced taking violent measures, the Scotch and English settlers withdrew from the agitation. But the fat was by this time in the fire, and the Red River Rebellion was the result. And the whole trouble, according to Mr. Ashdown, arose out of the misunderstanding of the good intentions of the Dominion Government.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Mr. Ashdown Serving in the Capacity of Painter

In spite of the grasshopper visitation with its train of misery and rebellion, in spite of the fact that in the fall of the year pemmican was selling at sixty cents a pound and flour at eighty cents, young Ashdown decided to stick it out. His people in the East wrote urging him to return home, but he was not the kind that turns back having once set his hand to the plough. He had already gained self-reliance and resolution in the school of hardship, and he was going to give the new country a chance to right itself. For the first summer and the following winter and summer he undertook any honest work that presented itself. For instance some of his jobs were the painting of Deer Lodge, Knox Church and Holy Trinity. All the first winter he turned his earlier experience in Brant township to account in a lumber camp on the Assiniboine.

Starting in the Hardware Business

There were few business opportunities in the Red River settlement and Mr. Ashdown had to wait until well on in the second summer before he was able to set up for himself. George Moser, the local tinsmith, was a German. He talked freely on political subjects and discussed the grievances of the settlers with strong anti-British sentiment. Becoming alarmed at the course affairs were taking in the settlement, he concluded that it would be better for him to leave for the United States before the storm broke. He was glad, therefore, when Mr. Ashdown proposed to buy the business, which was located in a shop at the rear of a store at the corner of Main and Portage, where the Canadian Pacific Railway ticket office now stands. The purchase price of the stock of George Moser amounted to the sum of £243: 6s. Although the prospective hardware merchant did not have sufficient resources to pay cash down, he was helped out by a loan from Colonel Dennis, and Moser was so anxious to sell that he accepted Mr. Ashdown's notes for the balance. Just here it may be said that some months later, Moser rued his bargain and told some of his acquaintances that he hoped Ashdown would not be able to meet his notes when they came due. Once more the young Canadian who had bought out the German was cheered by the loyalty of a friend, a Mr. McBride, who went to him and told him he had heard that Moser wanted to get hold of the business again, but he would stand by Ashdown and would be glad to give

GOLDEN JUBILEE

him financial assistance if he needed any when the notes matured. While this kind offer was appreciated, there were sufficient funds on hand for the lifting of the notes at maturity without any assistance.

The young tinsmith and hardware merchant deserved to succeed. Most men would have hesitated to invest their capital in a place which was likely soon to become the centre of serious disturbance, for during the summer a young French half-breed, Louis Riel, had been inflaming his compatriots almost to the point of armed revolt. It was characteristic of Mr. Ashdown's optimism and indomitable spirit, however, that he embarked every cent of his earnings, pledged his credit, and commenced his business career in the face of such difficulties. Moser flunked, but Ashdown made the venture of faith in his own and the country's future.

Changed Location

The young merchant soon removed from the undesirable premises which had satisfied Moser. He rented a shop on Lombard street but had hardly become established there before the rebellion came to a head. Had Hon. Joseph Howe, who visited Fort Garry in the early days of October, 1869, taken the advice of Mr. Ashdown, it is probable that the threatened rebellion would have been averted. Mr. Ashdown earnestly advised the famous Nova Scotian to call a public meeting and, by making a clear statement of the Government's intentions, disarm suspicion and meet all the objections of malcontents in open discussion. But for some reason or other, which Mr. Ashdown says he could never fathom, Mr. Howe refused to adopt this sensible plan. After a very short stay he started on his return trip. Somewhere south of the American boundary he met the Hon. William MacDougall who was on his way to Fort Garry as Lieutenant-Governor elect to take over "The Hudson Bay Territory," including Assiniboia, which was governed by an elective council, presided over by the Governor of the Hudson Bay Territory, and to replace it with a popularly constituted provincial regime. Instead of stopping to hold a conference with MacDougall, Howe passed him with the curt greeting, "It's a cold day!"

MacDougall and his party of officials deemed it imprudent to press on to Fort Garry, for they had already received word that the

GOLDEN JUBILEE

French would oppose them by force. The new governor remained at Pembina, and appointed Colonel Dennis as his military representative to organize the loyalists against the rebels. It is significant that the overt act in the Riel Rebellion occurred on October 21, 1869, a few days after Mr. Howe's mysterious visit had terminated. A detachment of Riel's men erected a large cross at a narrow pass near Stinking River, barricaded the highway, and proceeded to hold up all travellers and all trains of freighting carts, allowing none to pass on their way to the settlement without permits from Riel's officers. Among other things that the rebels confiscated were arms and ammunition being sent into the country for the use of the new Lieutenant-Governor and his party. On November 3, Riel took a still bolder step by seizing Upper Fort Garry. This he accomplished without any resistance, marching through the gate of the fort at the head of 125 armed half-breeds, who forthwith took possession.

Guarding Provisions

These events created great indignation among the English-speaking people in the little village near the Upper Fort. The men of the place, Mr. Ashdown among them, talked matters over and Dr. Schultz and others advocated resistance. He urged the others to help him protect the Government pork and provisions stored in his warehouse. As the English settlers were without arms or in fact provisions, Mr. Ashdown said it would be folly to resist Riel in this way. "Let the Government guard its own provisions!" was his advice, and he went back to his store. Schultz's counsels prevailed, however, and he and his followers, some fifty volunteers, mounted guard over the Government stores. Mr. Ashdown relates that he went to bed that night, but not to sleep. Although the Schultz move was contrary to his better judgment, he did not feel that he could stand aloof, so after an anxious night, he walked over to Schultz's store and lined up with the little band of unarmed citizen guards.

Mr. Ashdown's life-long ability to size up a situation and make a wise decision was never better illustrated than in this early and most dramatic incident. If his friends had taken his advice he and they would have been saved a miserable experience. Three days after the English patriots went on guard, they were marched as prisoners through the gate of Fort Garry. As Schultz's store

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Board of Directors at time of Incorporation 1902

No. 5—J. H. ASHDOWN, President

No. 1—JOHN EMSLIE

No. 3—A. BUEHLER

No. 2—ISAAC PITBLADO, Esq.

No. 4—J. A. LINDSAY

GOLDEN JUBILEE

was under the guns of the Fort and as the English volunteers were quickly cut off by the half-breeds from all supplies of food and water, they were obliged to negotiate terms of surrender. When they marched out of the store they supposed by the message received from Riel through a negotiator that they would be given their liberty and allowed to go where they pleased, but they soon found that Riel's promise was worthless and that they were in his power.

Taken Prisoner

The prisoners were locked up in the upper flat of a two-storey building, ordinarily occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company's staff of accountants and clerks. The five or six rooms in this upper storey were crowded. The ventilation was so bad the prisoners were compelled to break several of the windows to save themselves from being suffocated. They were imprisoned on December 7 and were doomed to stay in durance vile for sixty-nine days. Mr. Ashdown was confined with twenty-one others in a room twelve feet broad by sixteen feet long. And the French half-breeds were no tender jailers. The bill of fare consisted of pemmican and tea. Had it not been for the kindness of women in the village and the good offices of Mr. Joseph Crowson, who on account of lameness was suffered to go at large by Riel, and who carried provisions to the fort, the prisoners would almost have starved. As it was many of the good things intended for them were snatched out of Crowson's baskets by the half-breed bandits. Mr. Crowson's daughter subsequently became Mr. Ashdown's wife. His widow still survives; for many years she has been a beloved member of Mr. Ashdown's family.

Mr. Ashdown has very vivid memories of that weary imprisonment and many are the interesting stories that he has to tell concerning the attempts of his companions to escape and the general conduct of the guards. He formed a very unfavorable impression of Louis Riel. He says that Riel fancied himself a little Napoleon, but he was more like a strutting peacock. Nor was he really brave. When he heard that a party of English settlers were coming down from the Portage plains to attack him and his force and liberate the prisoners, he came and stood outside the door of the room where Mr. Ashdown was confined and in a shaky voice said, "Bad men are coming. You must be quiet.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

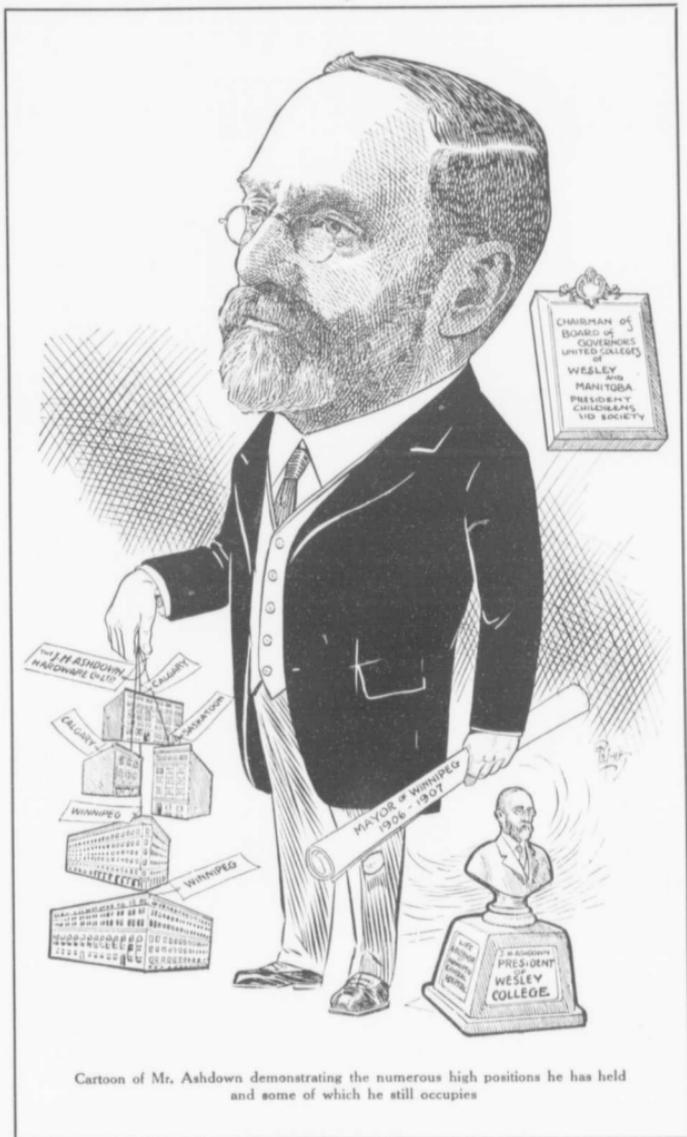
You must not make any disturbance." Mr. Ashdown admits, however, that Riel had a wonderful influence over the French half-breeds and if he had not made the mistake of putting Thomas Scott to death it is probable that he would have been pardoned by the Government for his share in the rebellion and would have been an important figure in the Western country.

The execution of Thomas Scott occurred some little time after Mr. Ashdown had secured his freedom. He had heard rumours to the effect that Riel and O'Donohue, the two leaders, had determined to execute the young Irishman, but he never thought that they would go so far. In fact the very morning when Scott was being led out to death Mr. Ashdown was working at his bench and never heard the news until after the murder had taken place. In Mr. Ashdown's opinion the execution of Scott was "worse than a crime; it, was a blunder."

Speaking of Riel's reason for singling out Scott for the supreme penalty, Mr. Ashdown has expressed the opinion that it was not because the genial young Irishman had been obstreperous or objectionable during his imprisonment, but because he was a fine figure of a man. The Indian always picks out a big man as the natural leader of any group, hence the half-breed Riel obeyed the redskin instinct in selecting Scott as his victim. Scott was well liked by Mr. Ashdown and the other prisoners. He was good-hearted fellow and there was nothing evil in his nature.

Owing to the difficulty of the route from Port Arthur to the Red River it was not until August 24, 1870, that Colonel Wolseley's Expedition, a force of 1,200 men, arrived at Fort Garry and put an end to the reign of terrorism that had lasted for nine months and his followers fled without firing a shot and law and order were established once more. Mr. Ashdown's first year of business had been discouraging but the coming of so many soldiers to the settlement and the arrangements that had to be made for housing them gave the tinsmith and hardware merchant a remarkable revival of trade. In spite of the Riel regime he had been able to import in the preceding June an order of goods from wholesale houses in St. Paul. The well-known Sheriff Inkster was in the ox-train freighting business at that time, and it was through his agency that an order of two and a half tons of hardware was brought from the railway terminus at St. Cloud to Fort Garry.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Cartoon of Mr. Ashdown demonstrating the numerous high positions he has held and some of which he still occupies

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How Business was Conducted in 1870

As showing how business was then conducted, and as a matter of very important interest in the history of the Ashdown firm, the following document bearing the date, June 1, 1870, is herewith transcribed:—

“Mr. Jas. H. Ashdown in acct, with C. Inkster.
 June 1st, 1870 By cash £50.00 (In a Bill of
 Exchange) \$5.42 \$271.00
 \$20.00 at 13 per
 cent prem. 22.60
 14.00 currency 14.00
\$307.60

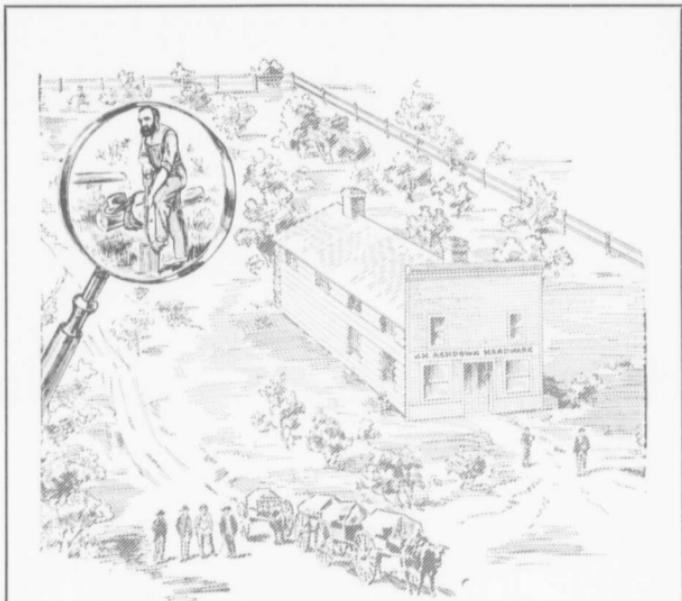
To cash to Bridert
 & Keifer \$271.00
 “ J. Inkster 21.76
 “ Frt to
 St. Cloud 14.45
\$307.21

Amount due J. H. Ashdown \$0.39”

In the above it is interesting to note the premium that English money commanded in the United States in those days. To-day the shoe is on the other foot and we have to submit to a considerable discount.

The arrival of Adams G. Archibald, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor in succession to the Hon. William Mac-Dougall, who had long since returned to Eastern Canada in disgust, gave a new tone to public affairs. The first Governor of the new province of Manitoba arrived on September 2, 1870, only a few days after the joyous entry of the Wolseley Expedition, and on November 20, an event that was almost as cheering as the setting up of the new Government was the completion of the telegraph line to Fort Garry, forming a fresh and important link between the Eastern provinces and the North-West and being a happy augury for the future. Encouraged by the increasing volume of business, it was in this same eventful month that Mr. Ashdown decided it would not be long until he would need much larger premises. So on November 4, 1870, he purchased the lot on which the Main street retail establishment of the J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company now stands, for the sum of forty pounds sterling.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



The above illustration shows Mr. Ashdown's first building on the lot where the Main St. Store now stands, also shows shrubbery imported and planted by himself. The inset shows Mr. Ashdown digging post holes for the fence he put round this lot himself. This building was erected in 1871.

First Building on the Present Site

The following year was an important one in the history of this enterprising merchant, for his business had already yielded him such good returns that he was able to pay for the erection of a wooden building, twenty by sixty, two storeys high, on the lot which he had bought the previous year. Mr. Ashdown did some of the work on this building himself and a most interesting memory that he has in connection with his first permanent place of business is that the lumber was brought down the Red River on the steamboat "Selkirk" by no less a person than J. J. Hill, who was afterwards to achieve fame as the railroad king of the North-Western States. This was the first trip of the steamboat down the Red River. Perhaps this helps to account for the high price of the lumber. At any rate Mr. Ashdown had to pay seventy dollars per thousand for the siding used in the build-

GOLDEN JUBILEE



This illustration shows Mr. Ashdown's first building moved over and the three story brick building erected in 1875.

ing and one hundred dollars per thousand for the flooring. However, he was glad to get it at any price, for business was increasingly good and he had to have a larger store.

Navigation on the Red River

A word might be said in passing regarding the steamboat business which flourished on the Red River from 1870 until the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Winnipeg in 1880. When Hill and Company put the "Selkirk" into commission they found they had a rival, "The International," a boat built by the Hudson's Bay Company. We are familiar with steamship mergers nowadays, and are apt to consider them a modern invention, but Mr. Hill formed one on the Red River as far back as 1871 when he added "The International" to his freighter, "The Selkirk." The company took on a new name, "The Red River Transportation Company," and, as is usual when mergers are formed, up went the freight rates. In fact the new company became so unreasonable and dictatorial that they refused to carry goods for certain people. This was an intolerable condition of affairs and James H. Ashdown was not the man to keep quiet when there was any abuse to be combatted. He and other merchants

GOLDEN JUBILEE

of the settlement decided to form an independent steamship company. They organized "The Merchants' Line," and procured the building of two river steamers to which they gave the names, "The Manitoban" and "The Minnesota." For two years or so these boats churned the turbid waters of the Red river and no invidious distinctions were made either in carrying freight or passengers. But the officers of the Hill boats looked upon the Merchants' craft with jaundiced eyes and one fine evening, in rounding a bend on the river, "The International" ran into "The Manitoban," and struck her a deadly blow amidships, a blow delivered accidentally on purpose. As bad management and financial difficulties had attended the Merchants' Line during most of its brief history, this predestined collision gave it the coup de grace and wound up its righteous but inglorious career.

In the summer of 1868, when Mr. Ashdown arrived in the Red River Settlement, there were only one hundred inhabitants in the muddy little hamlet which was afterwards to grow into the city of Winnipeg. To show how quickly the place began to grow after the Rebellion was over, it is only necessary to state that a careful census taken in October, 1872, showed the total population to be 1,467. Settlers were flocking into the country and the business of the little town was improving every month. But there was no municipal law; no provision for the survey of the streets or improvements of roads; no adequate fire protection; no water system, the water supply being in the hands of men who hauled it up from the Red River in barrels set on ox-carts, and worst of all no proper school facilities. Moreover, the town was split into four centres, each of which was jealous of the others. There were the following contestants for the golden milestone around which the coming city should revolve—(1) Fort Garry, which had wealth and antiquity in its favor, the centre of the powerful Hudson's Bay Company influence; (2) the straggling village in which Mr. Ashdown had built his store and which was now enjoying a building boom; (3) Point Douglas, favored by a group of active speculators and land agents and (4) St. John's, the old ecclesiastical centre, dear to many because of sentimental ties.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Head quarters, Winnipeg

How Winnipeg got its Name

The burning question now before the citizens in the whole settlement was what to call the municipality which should include all these rival centres. In his paper, "The Nor'-Wester," Dr. Schultz suggested that it be called Winnipeg, after Lake Winnipeg. Others were for calling it Selkirk. Others suggested the old name Garry, by which it was already known in the East. The name Assiniboine was also warmly supported. The majority of the citizens, however, were for Winnipeg, and they were determined that not only should the future city at the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine be called Winnipeg but that it should be incorporated forthwith as a city. Mr. Ashdown was for the name Winnipeg and was equally pronounced in favor of going to the Legislature and asking for incorporation as a city. But it took more than a year of agitation and effort to secure this happy result. While Dr. Schultz, who afterwards became Lieutenant-Governor of the province, was lucky enough to coin the name Mr. Ashdown might well claim to be the father of the city. For to him more than to any one man was due the successful carrying of the bill for incorporation over the heads of the recalcitrant Legislature of the time.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



R. A. GRAHAM, Sec'y Treas.

Winnipeg has seen a good many municipal rows in its day, but none stormier than the struggle which attended its birth. On New Year's Day, 1872, Alexander Begg published the first number of "The Trade Review," a paper started for the express purpose of presenting and supporting the name "Winnipeg" against all rivals. During the whole year mass meetings were frequently held to discuss the question of incorporation and Mr. Ashdown was

a leading speaker at these lively gatherings. When the Legislature met in February, 1873, short shrift was made with the bill for incorporation of "Winnipeg." Attempts were made by members to substitute one or other of the various names favored by rival interests. Provisions essential for the financial administration of the proposed municipality were also changed and the bill generally mutilated. Feeling ran so high that the friends of the bill mobbed



A. E. DYKES, General Manager

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Main Street Store, building which was burned to the ground October 11th, 1904. Within thirty days after the fire, business was being conducted in the lower story of the building illustrated at the bottom of this page.

the speaker of the house, who had made an adverse ruling on the bill, and tarred and feathered him. This act of violence killed all chances of passing the bill that session and the house prorogued without anything definite being accomplished.



Main Street Store, Winnipeg

GOLDEN JUBILEE



GEO. ASHDOWN
Manager Main St. Store, Winnipeg

The Birth of a City

When the Legislature again assembled in the following autumn the "Winnipeg" party collected its forces together, once more resolved to push the question to the limit. It is significant of the confidence that his fellow-citizens had already come to repose in Mr. Ashdown that they selected him as chairman of the committee to fight out the question with the law-makers. They knew that they could depend upon him as a moderate but determined and resourceful spokesman. Mr. Ashdown relates that one of the strongest forces in opposition to the bill was the manager of the

Hudson's Bay Company. When the chairman of the citizens' committee got down to actual work at the Legislature, the Hudson's Bay Manager argued the question stubbornly. First he wanted the committee to consent to have the municipality incorporated as a village. When he saw that they were obdurate, he said he would consent to having Winnipeg named in the bill as a town. But Mr. Ashdown would not give way an inch. He had big ideas about Winnipeg. "It is going to be a city, a metropolis, and we might as well start out right in the first place, and have it incorporated as a city!" No opposition could break down the resolution of Mr. Ashdown and his committee, and as their powers of persuasion were effective, and strong public feeling supported them, the bill was passed and the Royal assent given. On November 3, 1873, the busy little village on the banks of the Red River with a population of only 1664 became at a bound the City of Winnipeg.

First Representative

Mr. Ashdown might also supplement his claim to be called the Father of the City of Winnipeg by virtue of the fact that he was

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Eleventh Avenue, Calgary

the first representative of the people's party to sit on the Council. As soon as the city obtained its charter the first municipal election took place. Defeated in his effort to keep Winnipeg in swaddling clothes, the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company used his powerful influence to foist a very defective election law on the city. In the election campaign he made up a Hudson's Bay ticket, and as the company wielded the big stick over officials and numerous half-breed employees, he boasted that his candidates would sweep the nominees of the citizens' party out of sight. Mr. Ashdown was one of those representing the peoples' interests, and he put up an active campaign. On election day, however, the big chief of the Hudson's Bay Company went from poll to poll with sleighs full of half-breeds. Mr. Ashdown relates that the sleighs were so crowded that the men did not have room to sit down. And these electors voted at every poll without regard to residence or anything else. The political boss who was directing their unscrupulous activities met Mr. Ashdown at the poll where the Union Bank building now stands at the corner of William Avenue and Main street. With a broad smile the boss said to Mr. Ashdown, "I'm sorry I can't support you!" "All right," replied the indomitable hardware merchant, "I'll get there in spite of you!" And he did. But he was the only representative of the citizens' party that was elected. He continued to sit on the Council for several years and had much to do with the framing of early by-laws and the organization of the public utilities of the city. He also contributed largely toward laying the foundation of Winnipeg's efficient school system.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



T. E. YUILL
Manager Calgary Wholesale

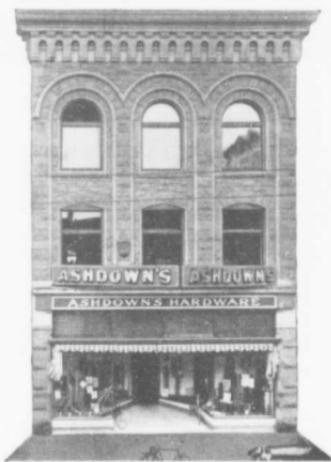
Second Period of Expansion

Although Mr. Ashdown displayed his qualities of good citizenship from the day he landed in Winnipeg and always willingly gave a great deal of his thought and time to municipal affairs, he never neglected his own business. From 1875 to 1885 might be called his second period of expansion. In 1875 the wooden building which he had erected four years earlier was found to be altogether inadequate to the constantly growing needs of his business. The time had now come for something more solid, more pretentious. Accordingly the old frame building was moved to the north side of the lot and a brick store, considered very handsome in those days, erected three stories high and with dimensions of twenty-five by seventy feet. This was thought at the time to provide ample accommodation for another decade, but so rapidly was the population increasing, and so active were building operations that only three years later Mr. Ashdown sold the original frame building and in its place filled in his lot to the north side with a brick structure that was larger than the brick store he had built three years before. This increased space only served his pressing needs for two years longer, and in 1880 we find him putting on a big two-story addition, fifty by eighty feet, in the rear. Five years later his store covered every square foot of space in the whole lot and he probably wished that he had bought three or four large building lots instead of one.

First Locomotive to Reach Winnipeg

During this period, that is between 1875 and 1885, two events happened that were fraught with immense significance to Winnipeg and the Canadian West. In 1880 the Canadian Pacific Railway, that great venture of Canadian optimism, reached the banks of

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Eighth Avenue, Calgary

the Red River. In the following year trains were running into Winnipeg and East was joined to West at last. It may be of interest to some to learn that the first C.P.R. locomotive to reach Winnipeg (it is now a treasured souvenir, adorned with varnish and flowers, in the little park opposite the C.P.R. station) crossed the river on the ice.

The second event which did much to accelerate the movement of population to the West was the North-

West Rebellion in which Louis Riel was again the stormy petrel of the prairie country.

What the C.P.R. did to further the development of the West is well known. The coming of the railway was naturally followed by an influx of population, but unfortunately this rush of settlers was accompanied by a boom which boosted prices very high and had bad after effects.

Perhaps the beneficial effects that flowed from the rebellion of 1885 are not so well understood. Riel's second attempt to establish himself as a dictator was in itself an evil and cost the lives of many settlers and volunteers, reaping a particularly heavy toll of life from Winnipeg regiments, but the aftermath of that brief struggle was highly advantageous to the new West. Previous to the outbreak of the rebellion, the settlers scattered over the prairie country had been engaged in a struggle for existence that had been made very difficult by reason of poor railway facilities and several crop failures. General Middleton's force required to have their supplies teamed long distances from the

GOLDEN JUBILEE



W. J. ILLSEY
Manager Retail Store, Calgary

railway and this afforded employment at big pay to farmers who sorely needed the money. Again, the volunteer regiments from the East were largely composed of young men from Ontario farms who had heard much of the prairie country but were now able to see it for the first time and to form a favorable judgment of its immense agricultural possibilities.

After the rebellion was over thousands of these men came West to become the backbone of the farming community in the Western provinces. And the letters written to Eastern Canadian and American newspapers by the correspondents with the forces did much to advertise this land of "magnificent distances" and illimitable possibilities."

The Winnipeg Board of Trade Incorporated

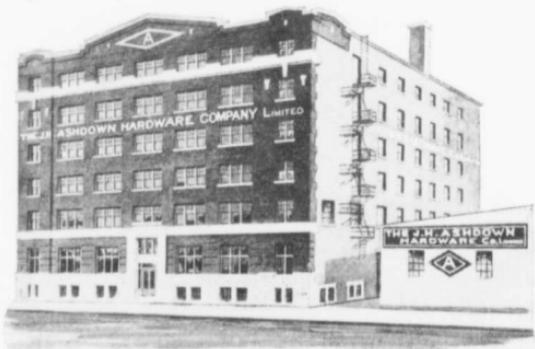
Although the commercial interests and rapid growth of city and country alike may be said to have started with the arrival of the C.P.R. on the banks of the Red River in 1880, the attempt of Eastern interests to control the destinies of the West and use it to their own advantage imposed a duty upon public-spirited citizens to struggle against injustice. The Winnipeg Board of Trade, incorporated in 1879, was foremost in these battles to obtain for the West the benefit of its great natural advantages and it was as a charter member of this wide-awake organization that Mr. Ashdown performed some of the best of his public service. From 1879 until the present day he has been a leading member of the Board of Trade and has sat on the Council of this influential body every year for forty years. It would be impossible for him

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Saskatoon Building which was burned to the ground, March, 1918. By January, 1919, the building illustrated at the bottom of this page was opened for business.

or for any one else to calculate the amount of time and effort that he managed to spare from the demands of his business in acting on committees and taking his full share of the discussion of public questions that have come under the purview of this body through nearly half a century of the city's life.



Present Saskatoon Building

GOLDEN JUBILEE



J. NOEL NIVIN
Manager Saskatoon Branch

Disallowance Question

The first big struggle in which the Board of Trade engaged was in 1887 when Mr. Ashdown was president of the organization. This was what was known as the Disallowance Question. While the people of Western Canada hailed with the greatest enthusiasm the coming of the C.P.R., they had no intention of allowing that railroad to maintain a monopoly in the West or to bleed the young country by excessive freight rates. Yet this was precisely what the new corporation backed by political influence set out to do. When in 1886 the Legislature of Manitoba unanimously granted a charter to a company to build a railroad to the Southern boundary

to connect with the American system of railways and thus by establishing competition force the C.P.R. to reduce its excessive freight tariffs, there was a great to-do at Ottawa. Although the party in power had promised during a campaign that if elected it would not disallow railway charters granted by the Manitoba Legislature, it subsequently yielded to the powerful pressure of the C.P.R. and would have made a continuation of its monopoly possible in Manitoba and the West had it not been for the strenuous campaign waged on behalf of provincial rights by men like Greenway and Martin in the Legislature and by President Ashdown and the Winnipeg Board of Trade.

A relic of that intense campaign for provincial rights has come down to us in the shape of a brown-backed pamphlet issued by the Winnipeg Board of Trade under the imprimatur of President Ashdown in July, 1887. It is entitled, "Plain Facts Regarding Disallowance of Manitoba Railway Charters." The pamphlet contains an analysis of the high freight rates charged by the C.P.R. in the West as compared with those in operation on

GOLDEN JUBILEE

American railroads. The whole argument in its practical and constitutional aspects is very vigorous. The following passage towards the close shows how Mr. Ashdown and the men behind him could fight on a vital issue:

"We ask for the abolition of no privilege or advantage guaranteed by the Dominion or any portion thereof to any individual corporation or community. We ask for no aid from the tax-payer of the Dominion in our efforts to free ourselves from the withering monopoly with which we are unjustly burdened. But we ask for the privileges guaranteed to every province in Confederation by the British North America Act; for the guarantees made to Manitoba by the Dominion Act, creating the very corporation which now holds the grasp of monopoly upon our province and its people; for the cessation of the abuse of the Vice-Regal veto power, in direct contradiction of the statements and pledges of the leader and other members of the present Government, made by them when the charter of the Canadian Pacific Railway was granted; and, lastly, we ask for a redemption of the pledges made by members of the same Government, but faithlessly broken in order that one hundred thousand struggling pioneers of this prairie province may be crushed and trampled upon to secure a purely imaginary financial gain to one soulless corporation."

The people of Manitoba, after years of struggle in the local Legislature and at Ottawa, won out on this important issue. It was owing, however, to the pressing financial needs of the C.P.R. rather than the compulsion of the Dominion Government which resulted in the abolition of disallowance in Manitoba and the North-West. It was in 1887 that the company unwillingly surrendered its strangle-hold on the West in order to secure the Federal Government's guarantee of interest on \$15,000,000 of its five per cent. bonds for fifty years.

High Freight Rates

But the struggle of the merchants of Winnipeg against high freight rates was to be continued for very many years. In fact it is a live enough issue today. Among the business men of this city vitally interested in the question was Mr. Ashdown. One of his many

GOLDEN JUBILEE

labors on this intricate subject is to be found in the sixteenth annual report of the Board of Trade which gives his lengthy evidence before a Government Freight Rates Commission which sat in Winnipeg in December, 1894. In his able presentation of the case for the Board of Trade, Mr. Ashdown charged the C.P.R. with having put in force and sustained in the whole country from Fort William to the Rocky Mountains freight rates altogether too high and out of proportion to those charged elsewhere in Canada. He contended further that by adopting this policy the company had grievously injured the people and seriously retarded the progress of the entire West. One of the telling points of Mr. Ashdown's indictment of the company was his quotation of an unlucky utterance of the then president, Sir William Van Horne, made only three years before, "that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company would carry fuel at cost, would carry settlers' building material at about cost, and would carry settlers' grain at a mere shade over cost."

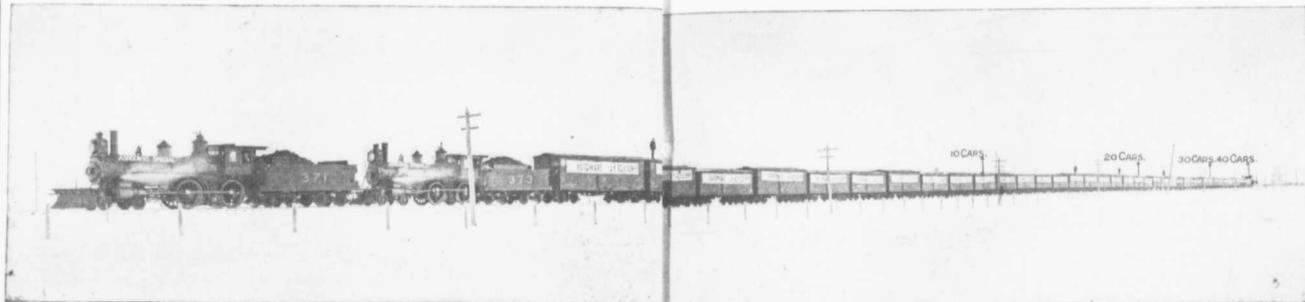
Calgary Branch

But high rates or low there was an insistent and steadily increasing demand for hardware goods. As early as 1889 the incoming tide of settlers was spreading all over the last great West. Houses were going up, hardware was required everywhere, and Mr. Ashdown, always with a keen eye to the future, saw that Calgary would one day be a distributing point perhaps second only in importance to Winnipeg. In 1889, therefore, he purchased a hardware business there and, two years later, built a store, 32x50, three stories high. Although he had always done a certain amount of jobbing trade he decided about this time that the growth of retail stores in the prairie towns that were springing up like mushrooms overnight, would necessitate a further extension of his wholesale trade. The fact that the severe climate of the West required much of the imported merchandise to be shipped up the lakes in summer time and stored in Winnipeg warehouses in preparation for the business of the next winter and spring was bound to make this city a great wholesale centre. Quick to perceive this, Mr. Ashdown hastened to build his present wholesale warehouse, a brick and stone building four stories high with dimensions eighty by one hundred and thirty-five feet. This was the first wholesale hardware house erected West of the Great Lakes.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Forty Cars of Hardware in One Shipment

It was in the Spring of 1900 that Mr. Ashdown conceived the idea of sending out a whole train-load of hardware to points in the West. This was an epoch-making event, not only in the history of his own firm, but in the wholesale business of Winnipeg. Each car in the long train, which carried eight hundred tons of building material and general hardware, was decorated with the phrase "Hardware from J. H. Ashdown," and caused nothing



The "Ashdown Special" Forty Cars of Hardware

dispatched West in one train on Tuesday, March 6th, 1900

less than a sensation in commercial circles of the West. The newspapers of Winnipeg wrote up the event as a striking evidence of the rapid development of the country, and it excited much talk on the part of the general public. News of this enterprise spread to the south, and the story of the "Ashdown Special" awakened several of the wholesale hardware houses of the South and East to the commercial possibilities of Western Canada, with the consequence that within a short time some of them

GOLDEN JUBILEE

established branches in Winnipeg, while others began to send travellers into the prairie provinces to compete with Mr. Ashdown's representatives. Competition, however, is the life of trade; although rivals invaded his field, he never regretted the despatch of his special train. It was one of the biggest advertisements that the commercial West ever received.

So rapidly was business developing that in 1902 it was found

necessary to build another large addition to the wholesale warehouse on Bannatyne Street. In the same year Mr. Ashdown decided to incorporate his business as "The J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company, Limited." It was incorporated under Dominion charter with a nominal capital of one million dollars, which was subsequently increased to two millions. The company is a close corporation, the bulk of the stock being held by Mr. Ashdown and members of his family.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Registering the "Diamond A" Trade Mark

In 1904 the firm marked another milestone in its path of progress by registering its "Diamond A" trademark, now so well known wherever hardware is displayed for sale in Western Canada. Copyrighted February 24, 1904, this "Diamond A" brand stamped in red on goods sold by the firm, carried with it all the resources of the Ashdown Company in the way of a guarantee. Wherever it is seen in the West today, it assures the actual or prospective buyer that the article it labels is of such good quality that satisfaction is guaranteed by one of the most reputable houses in Canada.



The "Diamond A" Trade Mark which stands for the highest quality and is backed by
The J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company Limited

Both the incorporation of the company and the registration of the "Diamond A" trademark impressed hardware dealers with the growth and enterprise of the firm. The Ashdown house was now carrying huge stocks, but it was doing nothing more than maintaining the early policy, handling such a variety of hardware that customers would never be disappointed. From the very beginning Mr. Ashdown prided himself in carrying such a full line of hardware that people could always be sure to find what they wanted in his store. Whether other dealers stocked a certain line of hardware or not, it was always possible to procure it at the Ashdown store. As in earlier years, the company still enjoys this reputation; it remains in the lead today as during the whole fifty years of its history.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Rapid Reconstruction

It was in 1904 that Mr. Ashdown demonstrated his ability to secure quick results. Whether in the management of his own business or in the conduct of public affairs, he has proved himself an adept in executing plans with rapidity. His record in this respect was established after the fire, which, on October 11th of that year, destroyed his retail store on Main Street. Almost before the ashes were cold, he was beginning the work of rebuilding. The ruins were cleared away by October 27th, and a new building, two storeys high, fifty-five by seventy, was erected and open for business within thirty days from the laying of the first stone. As soon as it was possible to resume building operations the next Spring, the whole lot was filled in and the building completed, the handsomest and best-equipped hardware store in Canada.

The history of the J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company is one long chronicle of building operations. The reader of this narrative must have been struck with this fact already. No business man in Canada has been obliged by the steady growth of trade to build and rebuild oftener than James H. Ashdown. In 1906 he was obliged to add two more stories to his already large wholesale warehouse in Winnipeg. Three years later he made another departure. Owing to the rapid extension of trade in Alberta, he erected a wholesale warehouse in Calgary. It was four stories in height and 50 x 120 feet, but, optimistic as he was, Mr. Ashdown underestimated how quickly Alberta was progressing, so that the very next year he had to raise his new warehouse to six stories.

Saskatoon Branch

The next year we find him transferring a branch business, which he had established in Nelson, British Columbia, in 1896, to Saskatoon, which he judged would soon become a very important distributing centre for Saskatchewan. He erected a large warehouse there. Saskatoon has also witnessed one of Mr. Ashdown's feats in quick recovery after a fire. In March, 1918, this big warehouse was destroyed by fire, and by the following January the new building was open for business. It is modern in every respect, equipped with a sprinkler system, with freight elevators and track facilities, a warehouse six storeys high, with a frontage of 100 feet and depth of 120 feet, the best building of its kind in Western Canada.

GOLDEN JUBILEE



H. H. PIGOTT, Credit Manager

Although during the period of the war the Ashdown Hardware Company held its own and did a big volume of business every year, there has been little or no immigration into Western Canada, and the high cost of building materials and the scarcity of labor incident to the war have arrested the development which under conditions of peace would have taken place. Nothing can deter the progress of this western land, however, and another year will probably see things going forward again with greater momentum than ever. When that day comes, the company will be found equal to every emergency, and it is likely

that Mr. Ashdown will have a few more buildings yet before he concludes his business career. Whatever the future may hold for him, it is certain that the firm which he has brought to its golden jubilee will maintain superiority in its field, and will be a powerful influence in the upbuilding of the great West.

Elected Mayor of Winnipeg

This short sketch of a notable career and the growth of a great business would be incomplete if no mention were made of Mr. Ashdown's signal services to the City of Winnipeg in one of the most trying periods of its history. In 1906 he was strongly urged by lead-



C. H. S. BAMFORD, Sales Manager

GOLDEN JUBILEE

ing citizens to stand for the mayoralty, as the whole system of civic finance was sadly in need of overhauling and large municipal problems were pressing for solution. He was constrained by the appeal of his fellow-citizens to surrender his hard-earned leisure to the toils of public office. Elected Mayor for the year 1907, he instantly addressed himself to the difficult tasks confronting the city fathers. It was a time of crisis not only in the affairs of Winnipeg but of many other cities of America and national governments as well. The financial stringency that suddenly affected Europe and America on account of the Balkan crisis made a policy of retrenchment and economy everywhere imperative. Mr. Ashdown's splendid executive ability, his fashion of descending to the consideration of what some might consider unimportant details, his habit of getting at the root of every tangle in the civic administration, and his implacable hostility to incompetence and extravagance delighted the rate-payers of Winnipeg. Never did a public man receive a more significant vindication than Mayor Ashdown when he stood for re-election at the municipal contest of 1908. He was not only re-elected by acclamation himself, but in addition to his own unopposed return, secured the election of a council pledged to the support of his policies. Because of this warm endorsement by the electors, he was able to reorganize the municipal government on an efficient and economical basis.

Received Greatest Compliment

It was in connection with the straightening out of the financial muddle, the consolidating of the debt of the city, and the knotty problems related thereto, that Mr. Ashdown received the greatest compliment that any Council could pay its Mayor. So confident were the Aldermen in his ability as a financier, in his good judgment and integrity, that they passed a resolution on September 4, 1907, authorizing him to visit London, New York and other money markets to make arrangements for the future financial requirements of the city and to sell its securities. He was given full power under the seal of the city to negotiate and sell debentures up to the extent of those on hand, namely—\$4,534,529.00. To quote the exact wording of the resolution passed by Council, he was "authorized and empowered to sell such debentures and such notes of the city of Winnipeg as he deems advisable, and to make such terms with the purchasers of such debentures or

GOLDEN JUBILEE

such notes as to payment, the limitation of the sale of future debentures issues and hypothecation of the securities and revenues of the said city, and also to negotiate such loans upon such credit of the said city for such amounts and upon such terms as he considers in its best interests." This was a tremendous load of responsibility to be placed on the shoulders of one man, but the City Council made no mistake in doing him this honor. To Mr. Ashdown every office that he has ever held has been deemed by him a public trust, to be lived up to as faithfully as if his own interests had been involved. It is now a matter of civic history that the Mayor for 1907 and 1908 went on this mission to the money-markets of the East and by his shrewd bargaining paved the way for most advantageous terms to be made for Winnipeg, thus placing its financial affairs upon a sound and business-like basis.

Member of Shoal Lake Water Commission

It was in consequence of his distinguished service to the city during his occupancy of the Mayor's chair that a few years later, when the project of bringing water from Shoal Lake was adopted, the City Council, having in view the vastness and costliness of



THE MASTER BUILDER

The Illustration above is a copy of a special work of art arranged by Mr. R. D. Waugh, and presented by him to Mr. Ashdown for his association in connection with the Greater Winnipeg Water Supply.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

the scheme, appointed Mr. Ashdown a member of the commission charged with the oversight of the construction of the ninety-mile aqueduct to Winnipeg. The recent successful completion of this remarkable engineering work at a cost of over fourteen million dollars, ensuring to Winnipeg a limitless supply of pure water for all years to come has owed not a little to the time and thought devoted to it by Mr. Ashdown.

And it was no doubt in memory of his early interest in fighting railway monopoly and in urging good railway facilities for the prairie country, that in 1904 the Dominion Government appointed him as the most capable person in the West to sit on the Royal Commission on Transportation. As a member of this important tribunal, which was charged by the Government with taking evidence in all the leading ports and railway centres of the Dominion in order to suggest needed improvements in harbor facilities and railway service, and to lay down a general policy for the guidance of the federal Government in dealing with the transportation problem, Mr. Ashdown rendered a valuable and conspicuous service to his country.

National Industrial Conference

The last of Mr. Ashdown's public activities to date consists in his selection to represent the wholesale trade of Western Canada in the National Industrial Conference to be held at Ottawa on September 11th, 1919; curiously enough exactly fifty years from his starting in business. This conference has been called by the Government, as a result of the report of the Royal Commission to enquire into Industrial Relations in Canada, of which Chief Justice Mathers was chairman. Its importance can hardly be over-estimated. It is an attempt to bring together, upon some practicable working basis, Capital and Labor in Canada. In view of the prevalent world-wide unrest and turmoil, it is vital that the changed conditions caused by the war should be faced and a realizable *modus vivendi* be evolved whereby interests apparently antagonistic, but in reality inter-dependent, shall continue to work in harmony. The best brains in Canada should be devoted to this task; and it may be said that Mr. Ashdown's relations with his own employees have been exceptionally cordial and mutually satisfactory. He has always treated them fairly

GOLDEN JUBILEE

and liberally, and he enjoys their respect—even affection. No man in the coming conference will look with more sympathy than he upon the demands of organized labor, if kept within reasonable limits.

Besides the calls which his business has made upon his time, Mr. Ashdown has been active in financial circles. He is President of the Canadian Fire Insurance Company and of the Gold Pan Mining Company. He was one of the incorporators of the Northern Crown Bank, and for years acted as its Vice-President and also as a director; and he is a director of the Bank of Montreal, the Northern Trust Company, the Northern Mortgage Company and the Indemnity Exchange.

In conclusion, a word or two should be said regarding Mr. Ashdown's wide and varied interests in Winnipeg's educational religious and social institutions. A prominent Methodist layman, one of the founders of Grace Church, he has also taken a keen interest in Wesley College during the whole course of its history, being chairman of its Board of Directors for many years and its most generous supporter. In his many years of service as a director of the Young Men's Christian Association he has been equally devoted and equally open-handed. The General Hospital, the Sick Children's Hospital, the Children's Aid Society, the Girl's Home of Welcome, and many other institutions have been helped in difficult days and constantly through the years by his wise counsel and munificence.

No man has worked harder to build up a mighty business, nor has any man toiled with greater singleness of heart to promote the best interests of the City of Winnipeg and of the Canadian West generally than James Henry Ashdown, and his countless friends and admirers in all parts of the prairie country will wish him joy on this golden jubilee of the founding of his business and many years of tranquillity "to husband out life's taper at the close."





Illustration of Ashdown's Garage and Stable and Trucks

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PRINTING



View of Composing and Press Room

FIFTY years ago, when Mr. J. H. Ashdown laid the foundation of the J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company, Ltd., in the little frontier trading post of Fort Garry, now the cosmopolitan city of Winnipeg, there was but one small printing plant consisting of a Washington Hand Press and font of type, in that part of British America which is now styled New Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, east of Vancouver Island. That small plant was owned by the late John Schultz, afterwards Sir John Schultz, who edited and published a small weekly paper. Mr. Ashdown helped to produce and distribute some of the earlier editions, and his reminiscences in this connection link the past with the present and throw "the light of other days around us." Comparing these old memories with present day conditions is most interesting, and impresses one with the wonderful advancement this country has made. Fifty years ago, one small hand printing plant, to-day every village has its printing establishment, and in Winnipeg are to be found some of the best equipped printing plants in America. History repeats itself: Mr. Ashdown, the pioneer hardware merchant, is once more identified with the printing trade.

The J. H. Ashdown Hardware Company, Ltd., have for several years owned and operated a printing plant that can turn out in an hour more and better work than the small plant of John Schultz could in a month. The accompanying half-tone illustrations give a slight idea of the magnitude of the plant. At the top of this page is a view of the Composing and Press Room. On the right of the picture is a large Miehle Press, which prints

GOLDEN JUBILEE

DEPARTMENT



View of Bindery Section

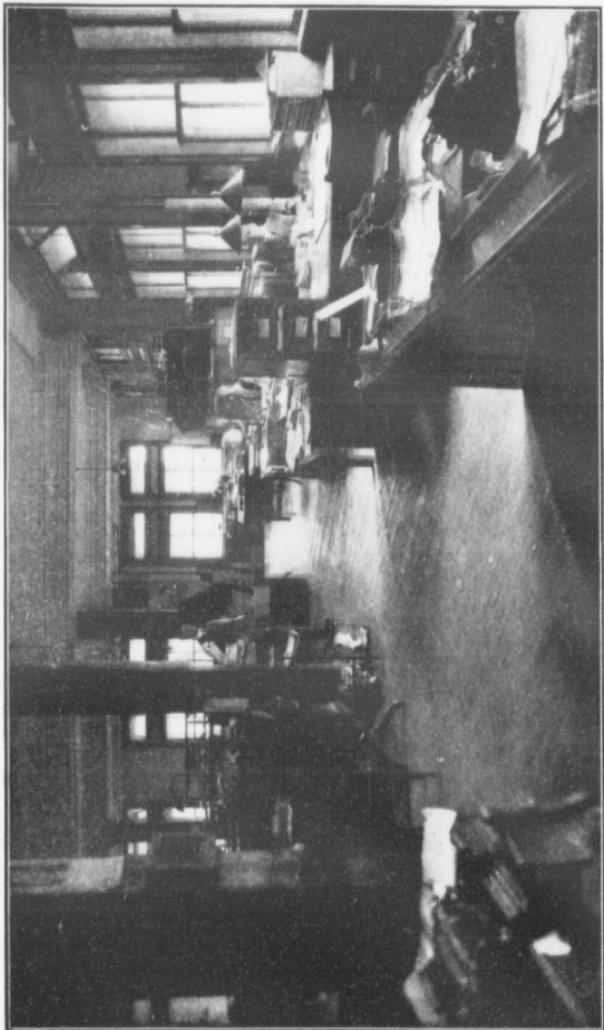
eight catalog pages every revolution of the cylinder. Since this photograph was taken there has been added to this department, an Optimus Cylinder Press. In the background, near the window, is the Gordon Press. Surrounding the post is a Miller Saw and Trimmer for cutting down Electrotypes; close to it is a Lead Cutter; in the rear of the post are four double Composing Frames, while in the left foreground can be seen two large Imposing Stones where the type set is locked up into forms for the presses.

At the top of this page is shown a section of the Bindery. In this department are a Punching Machine, Paper Cutter, Perforator, and Wire Stitcher. All presses and machines are operated by electric power, and are working to capacity every business day to turn out the Printing and Catalogs required by the Company and its branches. In this picture of the Bindery, pay particular attention to the rows of shelves. On these shelves are stored printed Catalog pages, all put away in numerical order, and from them are assembled the various Catalogs issued by the Company. Another feature of the Bindery is a special Galley Cabinet. In this Cabinet are filed 2,000 standing pages of type and electros, each page on a separate galley all ready to be locked up and printed at any time. All the plant and equipment shown in the illustrations is used almost solely to print the Catalogs, Stationery, and other printed matter required by the Company. Its installation is part of the policy laid down by Mr. Ashdown, and faithfully carried out for fifty years to minimize overhead expense, thereby directly benefiting the Customer.



Part View of the Head Office, Winnipeg, Manitoba

GOLDEN JUBILEE

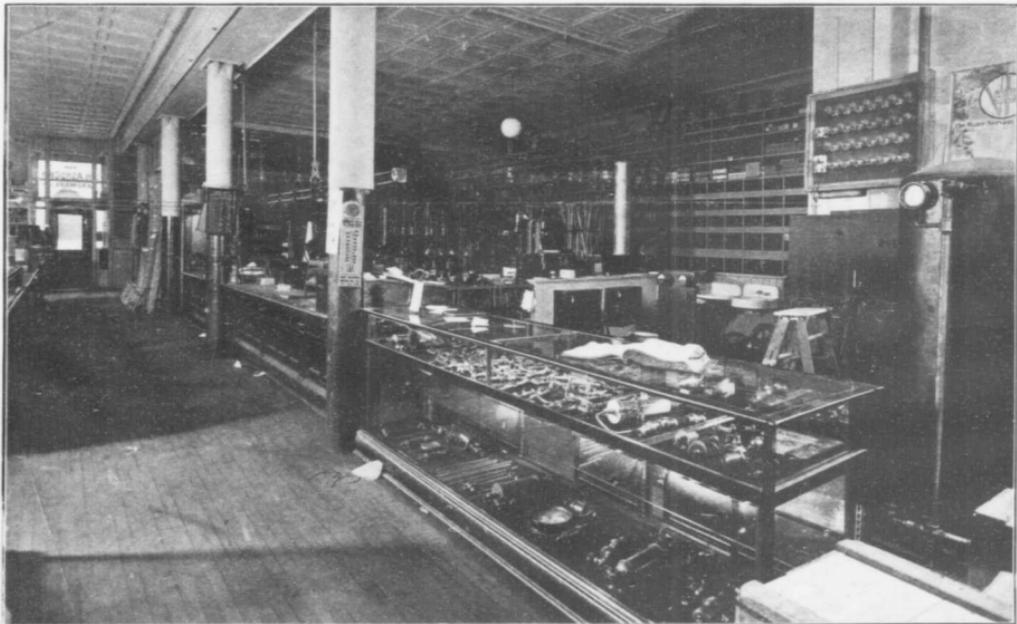


Part View of the Head Office, Winnipeg Manitoba

GOLDEN JUBILEE



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a part of the Paint Section.



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a part of the Plumbing Goods Section.

GOLDEN JUBILEE

THE COMPLETE CATALOG

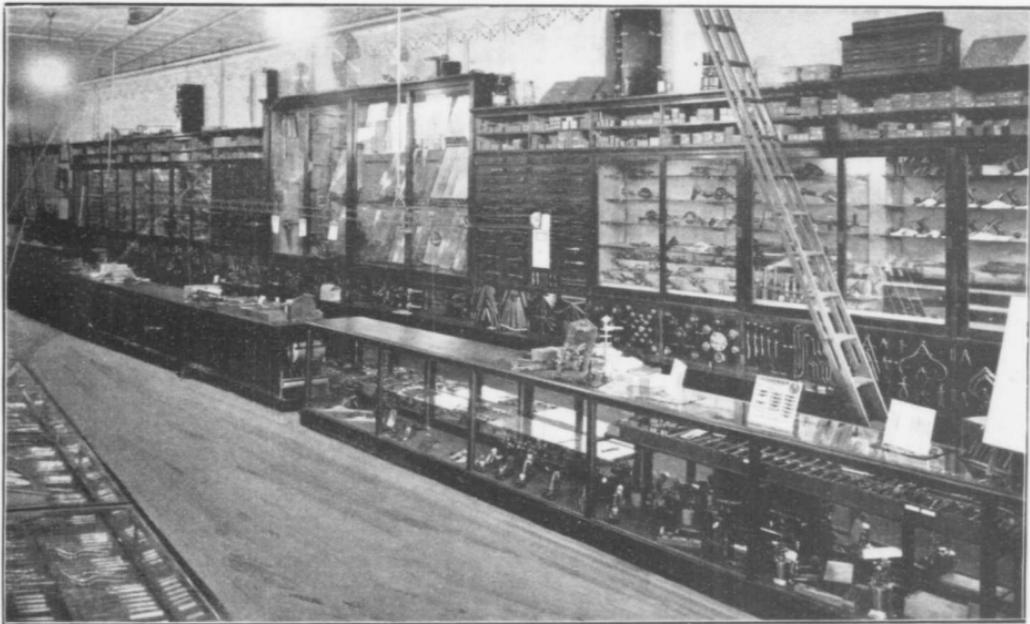


Illustrated on this page is our complete General Catalog. On its two thousand pages is fully illustrated and described in a comprehensive manner the many thousands of articles which comprise the Ashdown Hardware Stock, the largest and most complete in Canada.

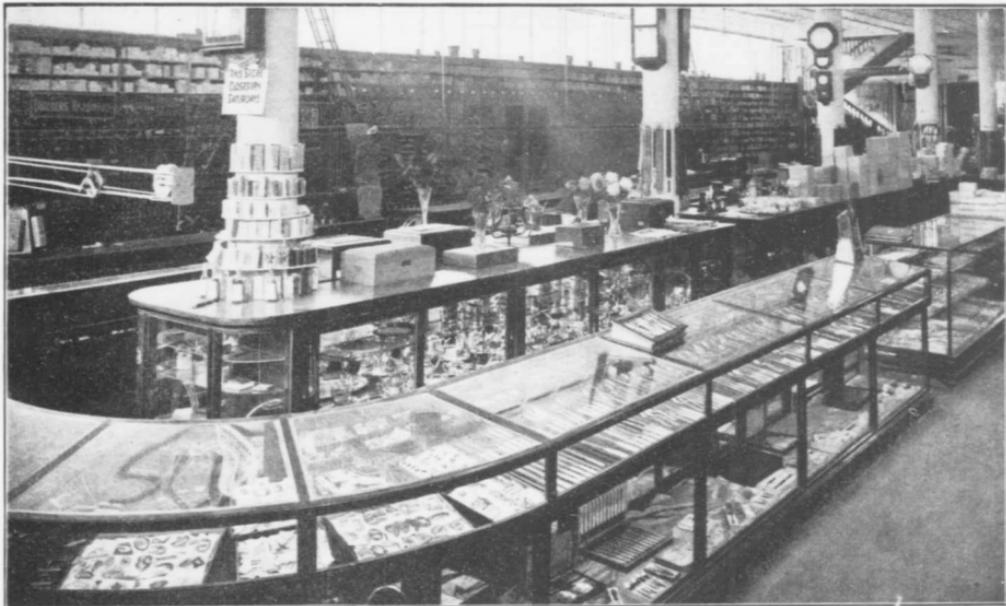
The Catalog is divided into sections. Each section is carefully compiled, kindred lines being segregated. The binding is Loose Leaf. The Ashdown Company was the first in Canada to apply this style of Hardware Catalog. It is needless to dwell on the many advantages of Loose Leaf binding; they are so well known. In that way a catalog can be revised and kept up to date, by simply removing the obsolete pages and inserting the new ones issued when changes are rendered necessary.



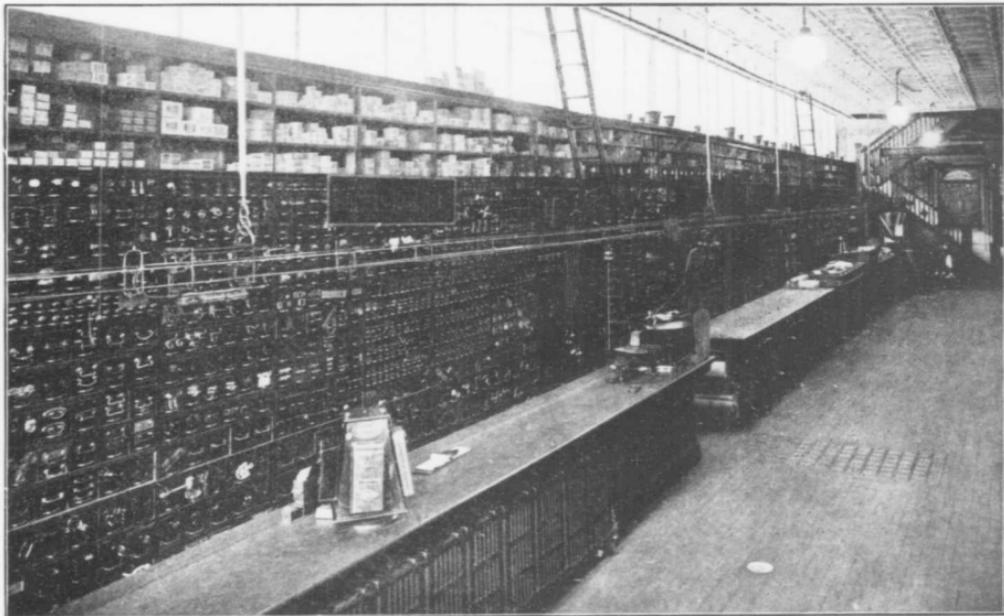
THE BEST RESULTS ARE OBTAINED BY KEEPING IT
UP, AND INSERTING THE NEW LEAVES AS SOON AS
THEY ARE RECEIVED



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a portion of the Tool Section.



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a portion of the Ground Floor, the Cutlery Section in the foreground.



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing the Builders' Hardware and Blacksmith's Supplies Sections.



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a portion of the Sporting Goods Section.



Interior View of the Main Street Store, Winnipeg—Showing a Section of the Housefurnishing Department.

ROLL OF HONOUR

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Abell, W. J. | + Goble, John |
| Ashdown, Chas. | Hawkins, Chas. |
| + Bell, Norman H. | Hawley, G. C. |
| Blackhall, Alfred | Herbert, Geo. H. |
| Blom, G. H. | Herd, Geo. |
| Boston, J. H. | + Hobday, Cecil H. |
| Boulton, George | Hodgson, George |
| Bowen, Robert | Hood, Henry |
| Caldwell, Tom | Horne, M.M.,M.C.,Lt.G. |
| Campbell, A. M. | + Hourihan, J. |
| + Campbell, Newman | Hunter, Len. |
| Caplette, J. | Johnson, O. T. |
| Chalmers, C. | + Kelly, T. |
| Clark, John | Lake, Charles P. |
| Clark, Stanley P. | Lawrence, R. |
| Cohen, Joe | Lewis, Harry S. |
| Cooper, O. S. | Lindsay, E. G. |
| Craig, Roy | Little, W. |
| Crooks, A. H. | Livingstone, Geo. |
| Cunningham, G. | Lundy, J. G. |
| Curtiss, Harold | Macnamara, A. L. |
| Damer, J. W. | Matheson, R. |
| D'Arcy, Norman | McBride, Stuart |
| Debuc, A. | McDonald, W. |
| DeGoesbrand, G. | McGuire, Geo. |
| Delaney, C. J. | + McHenry, J. |
| + Driver, A. | McInnes, C. E. |
| Durnan, F. | McInotsh, G. |
| Faulkner, R. E. | McKee, J. |
| Ferry, R. E. | McKenzie, Kinnear J. S. |
| + Fitzgibbons, Jerry | McLarty, D. |
| Flett, D. | McVey, J. C. |
| Foley, Ed. | + Miller, J. S. |
| Foster, H. | Morton, Capt. Arthur |
| Frise, W. | Muirhead, W. |
| Fulford, S. B. | Murray, Peter |
| | + Killed |

ROLL OF HONOUR

Nancarrow, Lt. F. R.	Smith, Alf.
+ Nichol, Andy	Smith, Chas.
O'Brien, Lt. Don	Smith, T. J.
O'Brien, John	Smith, Wm.
Olson, B.	Snell, W. J.
Page, Chas. E.	+ Spaul, R.
Parrott, Arthur	Steele, Lyall
Parry, Hubert	Stephens, W. E.
Pattinson, W. L.	Stevens, Alfred
Peacock, Arthur	Sutherland, Donald
Pentland, G. O. H. W.	Sutherland, Capt. R.
Perdue, C.	Tetlow, Geo.
Phillips, Harry	Thomas, D. A.
Prescott, D. A.	Thompson, W. E.
Purdy, Geo.	Vine, F. S.
+ Rad, Thomas	Walsh, Frank
Radford, N.	+ Warner, C. M.
Robertson, F. K.	Webb, W. H.
Robinson, W.	White, A.
+ Roffey, T.	+ White, Tom
Ross, Andrew	White, W.
Sanderson, T. B.	Whittal, Harry G.
Savage, J.	Williams, J. S.
Scruton, M.C. Maj. F. D.	Winsor, Arch.
Sheldon, Wm.	+ Wood, Wm.
Shoeman, Wm.	+ Woodman, F. F.
Shute, W. S.	Woods, Harry
Slackford, C. H.	Yates, Jack

+ Killed





