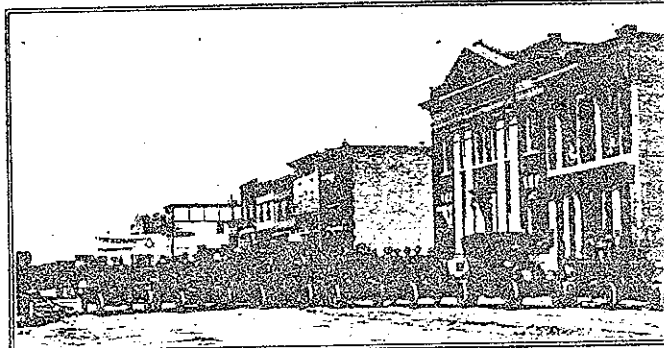
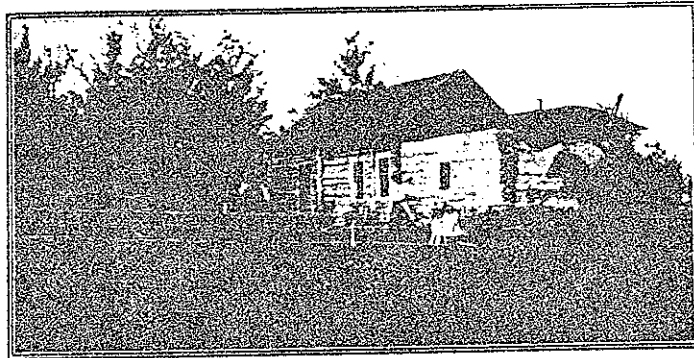


A City Built for the Future

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD



FROM A LOG SHACK TO A CITY FILLED WITH AUTOMOBILES IN SEVEN YEARS

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HORACE GREELEY once advised the young man to go West. And young men went. It was young blood, fit for hardship and strife, that was chiefly responsible for the opening up of our own great West. Young men followed the trail of the beaver. Young men blazed the Oregon trail. It was youth that laid the foundations of a nation beyond the Mississippi—not boyish youth, but manhood in its prime. And history is repeating itself.

Canadian statistics tell some remarkable facts—facts which are not largely advertised by boomers of the Dominion west, who picture the prairies as a land of milk and honey for all. They do not say "Only the youngest and strongest of you can achieve success here," for that would be a jolt to business. As a consequence, luring advertisements have drawn thousands of Americans into the Canadian west who have not been strong enough to "stand up" under the pressure, and who have wrecked themselves on the rocks of a new country. This, perhaps, has been best for the country itself, for nothing succeeds like strength and young blood when it comes to laying the bone and sinew of a new people. And as a result of the fact that it has largely been a matter of "the survival of the fittest" in the Dominion west, that west is now showing the whole world a thing or two in the way of town and city building.

It is probably unique in history that a little city of 5,000 people should attract the investigation of a city of millions. Yet this is what North Battleford, Saskatchewan, did in the case of Chicago, in the matter of its municipally-owned apartment houses.

Not long ago Ex-President Taft said that it would not be long before the Canadian west would have ten million people. There were thousands of people, and many newspapers, who laughed at him. On the other side of the border Sir Wilfred Laurier replied to disbelievers by saying, "It is not a question of there being ten million people west of the Manitoba boundary. There will be twenty. The question of present importance is, 'How soon will there be ten million?'"

The next year or two will do much toward answering this question. Five years ago there were less than half a dozen cities in Western Canada of 5,000 people or over. Today there are sixteen. Next year there will be between twenty and twenty-five; the following year over thirty. And the number will continue to increase rapidly. Michigan, a state that could be tucked into a corner of Saskatchewan, has forty-three cities of 5,000 population or over. Ohio has sixty-five. Four Ohio counties have more cities of over 5,000 population than the whole of western Canada. The twenty Central and Western States have 512 in all. "How long, then," asks Laurier, in pointing out these facts, "will it take western Canada to get its ten millions?"

Today the process of town and city building west of Winnipeg is a marvel—and a science. Take for instance the city of North Battleford. Seven years ago, when I visited the place to walk over Reil's old battle-grounds, there was a log shack on the present site of the city. Two years ago there were 1,300 people there. This year I found

5,000. I don't think that North Battleford, generally speaking, has more of youth in its population than other new place in the Northwest, but its figures are remarkable. In its population of 5,000 it possesses only one person who has reached the age of seventy. One of the "oldest four" is Mayor James Greise, who is fifty. Of the 5,000 people in the city, 4,600 are under the age of forty. Of these, 1,800 range between the ages of thirty and forty, and 2,800 are under thirty.

What a tremendous "working power" this youth means in a city of 5,000 people is shown by results. The city is building itself of stone and brick. It has a \$120,000 collegiate, a \$100,000 hospital, a \$200,000 exhibition grounds, brick and stone schools, four banks that represent a capital of \$44,000,000, a modern fire department, including a chemical engine, an \$80,000 post-office under construction, ten miles of sewer, eight miles of cement sidewalk, and is counted the best lighted city in Saskatchewan.

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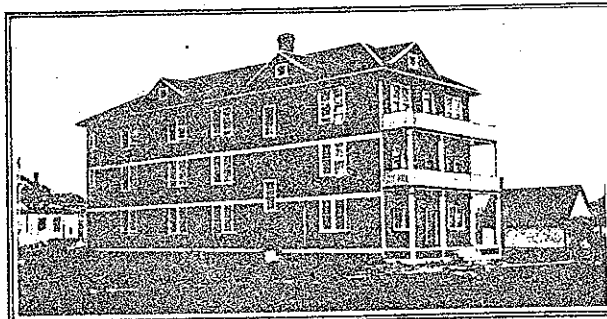
You can't keep down towns whose men possess a sort of spirit—especially in a rich and fertile country. They quickly grow into cities. From the first the citizens have been that of the American dream, *E pluribus unum*—and that is what has made the what they are. Young Americans are chiefly doing business. Englishmen who have no use for "lifts," who prefer fire-places to modern furnaces, find no opportunities in the cities west of Winnipeg. Canadians who come from the farther east to wake up, or go down with the East men.

Great interests are beginning to look to western Canadian cities as they have regarded cities before. For instance, a L. company sent investigators to North Battleford six months ago, and asked for a franchise to build a street railway—a street railway that would mind you, in a town which at that time had 4,500 people! In the end the company agreed to a franchise so liberal to the citizens that it would make an ordinary American city put up bonds, and pledged itself to give a minute schedule from the start. Until North Battleford has 15,000 people, this company cannot make a cent. But the enthusiasm of the citizens are compelling the interests to get in on the ground floor, at once. This is typical of practically every western Canadian town.

It is unusual to see citizens possessing an advantage, and the big interests shackling them to a large extent for the privilege of coming in. The town doesn't like the methods of capital, its citizens. "We'll do that ourselves, and run it as a municipal property." And they do.

After studying city development in the Northwest several years, I can state with assurance that municipal ownership has been the chief key to prosperity. The sword of Damocles hanging ready for any incoming development capital that doesn't give positive results of a square deal. The street railway is the property that North Battleford will not give up. This is because the popularity of municipal ownership compelled outsiders to give the city a mighty bargain.

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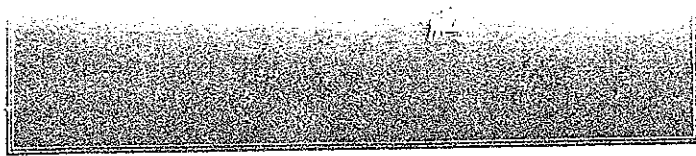


AN APARTMENT HOUSE OWNED BY THE CITY

When the population began to grow at such a rate that it could not be properly housed, the town council of North Battleford, Canada, voted an appropriation for a municipally-owned lodging house, and within forty days this 50-room apartment was helping to solve the problem and was making money for this progressive little township.

housed, the council met, voted \$20,000 for a municipal rooming-house, and within forty days had a 50-room apartment in full swing. Everything is owned municipally that can be owned municipally, and the tax-rate is kept down to 12 mills on the dollar, or \$12 to every assessed thousand. This is only one of the West's "object lessons," showing how a small city may be made to grow, and grow right.

Canadian small cities believe in wearing "big city clothes" at the beginning, and they are proving out the fact that the experiment is not costly and it pays. There is scarcely a town of four or five thousand that has not its up-to-date metropolitan club. North Battleford is planning a \$30,000 club house next spring. This is a pretty big luxury for a town of 5,000 people, and when I remarked this fact to Joe Foley, one of North Battleford's citizens, who began on nothing a few years ago and who is now well on his way to being a millionaire and a Member of Parliament, he seized pencil and paper and figured out the towns that had metropolitan clubs, and what those clubs meant. "Our club will be worth \$100,000 a year to this town from the beginning," he said, and he spoke the truth.



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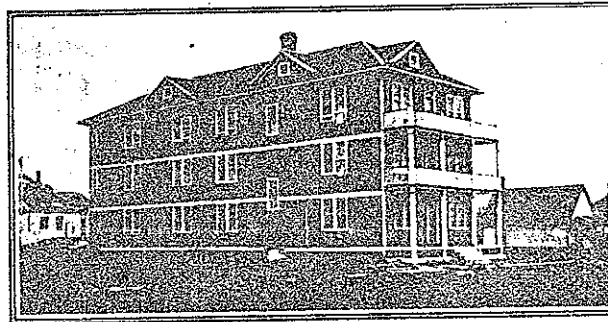
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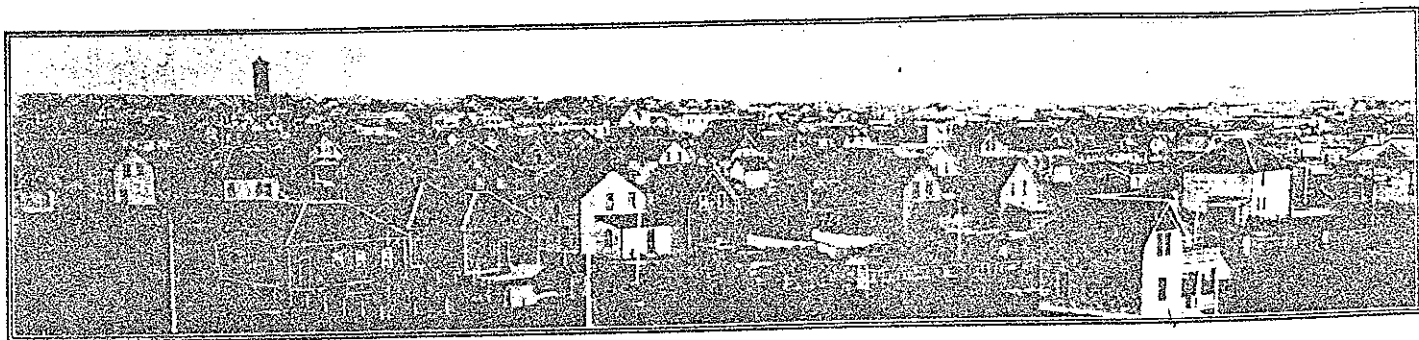
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A YOUNG AND VIGOROUS CITY WHICH HAS SPRUNG UP IN THE WILDS OF THE NORTHWEST

It is a city of young men who have built it with an eye to the future and whose experiments in municipal ownership have opened the eyes of the whole continent.