

# On The Main Street

with Ford Moynes

Remember the Harvester's Excursion from all parts of Ontario to the Canadian West 50 and 60 years ago? "Them were the days" when T. C. Matchet, local Canadian Pacific Agent, located on Kent Street, one door east of Golden's Stationery Store is now situated, filled the large plate glass window and the door with big yellow posters advertising cheap rates. There was the annual cry for harvesters to travel by special trains to Winnipeg and from the Manitoba capital the harvesters proceeded to various points along the C.P.R. to take their places among the homestead farmers.

Hundreds of young men, many of them boys, as well as older men, boarded these special trains and ate their lunches and slept sitting up all day and all night in hard wooden seats. The coaches were ill ventilated and the smell of food and the other, at times, nauseating odors became routine.

The chaps who could play a tune on the mouth organ were always popular. It was a motly crowd, but a happy one. All this long journey to the rain garden of the West for

a fare \$11 and the return fare was generally \$15 providing the harvester showed a ticket that he had actually worked in the West. These harvesters from Ontario bent their backs in the flat Prairies, sweat from head to toe, became bronzed, tough and healthy and all for \$7 a day. Many of them returned home with their pockets jingling with silver and many long green backs tucked away in their long socks.

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