TOWN OF SMITH'S FALLS

HISTORY OF ONE OF THE LATTER DAY RAILWAY CENTRES.

A Community with Unusual Natural Advantages---Its Public Men, Business Houses, Schools and Churches.

The member of the Smith family who conferred his patronymic on Smith's Falls replied his name with a "y," but the democratic settlers who were his contemporaries or successors ignored this aristocratic orthography, and thus it is that we find the town name written and printed with the regrettable "i." To the Tomms Smith a grant of land on the Rideau River was made by the Crown in the year 1810. The Smyth domain comprised most of what is now the Village of Smith's Falls. The road was begun in 1812, and soon after that year signs of settlement began to appear at Smith's Falls.

The first settler at Smith's Falls was Noel Russel Ward, who came to the place in 1823, just before or about the time the work of constructing the Rideau canal commenced at the place. Mr. Ward took up four hundred acres of land, on which he commenced lumbering. This trade soon caused large disturbances, and its results were felted down the streams Ottawa, whence it was conveyed to Quebec. Shortly after the commencement of this branch of industry, there followed the example set by Mr. Smyth, and lumber became the staple article of the settlement. Associated, of course, with agricultural pursuits, the lumber trade was for many years the mainstay of the village. The population within the corporate limits for 1886 was 3,000 (C). The town officers are Dr. Ferguson, mayor; Clyde Caron, reeve; Robert Spence, deputy reeve; M. M. Keith, clerk; H. W. Bartlett, treasurer; Geo. McDonald, collector, and R. Reynolds, chief of police.

THE TOWN HALL.

A two-storey stone structure, 40 x 80 feet, was built in 1870, at a cost of about $4,000. The council chamber and a station for the

TOWN HALL.

steam fire engine are located on the ground floor, a portion of which is also occupied by the caretaker as a residence, while the upper storey is used as an assembly room. At the rear of the hall stands a brick town tower, which rises to a height of 70 feet. The hall has some fine large for town purposes, and the creation of a more commodious one has lately been agitated.

WATER POWER.

The extensive water power at Smith's Falls is one of the most valuable features of the town. The numerous mills and factories which utilize water as a motive power have largely contributed to the growth and prosperity of the place. There are three falls on the Rideau river, all within the town limits, which may be designated as upper, centre and lower, with a total fall of some sixty feet. In conjunction with these are a succession of six locks on the canal, with a net averaging about ten feet for each lock. The abundant supply of water in the Rideau River and canal, which can be used three times over within a distance of half a mile, supplies a water power which, with the exception of Ottawa City, is probably unsurpassed in Central Canada. His upper power is owned by J. H. Gould. It has a fall of from ten to twelve feet, with a new dam and sluices, and at present drives a flouring mill and sash and door factory. Mr. Gould holds this power open either for sale or lease to manufacturers. Capt. A. Foster owns a half interest in the upper power, which drives grist mills, a saw mill, planing mill, woollen factory and the electric dynamo. The lower power propels a woollen factory and grist mill. These several water privileges afford facilities for driving a much larger quantity of machinery than is now in use, and taken in connection with the excellent shipping facilities by canal and railway, offer inducements to manufacturers rarely met with.

RAILWAY FACILITIES.

When in 1853 the old Brockville and Ottawa railway was built it crossed the Rideau Canal at Smith's Falls, and from this point a short branch line was built to connect with Perth, 12 miles away. Through this line Smith's Falls had connection at Brockville with the Grand Trunk and its tributaries. When the Brockville and Ottawa railway was merged into the Canada Central system, direct connection was had with Ottawa, and when in its turn the Canada Central became part of the C. P. R. Smith's Falls participated in the benefits common to all towns on that great highway. Further direct and most important benefits have accrued to the town from this connection. Two years ago the C. P. R. built the Ontario and Quebec line from Toronto to Perth. Thus it made the small branch from Perth to Smith's Falls, a

CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

MAYOR FERGUSON.

and the two together formed the through line from Toronto to Smith's Falls, where junction was had with the C. P. R. The building of this line gave Smith's Falls unusually good railway facilities, which, however, will be largely increased this year through the building of what is known as the Smith's Falls extension. This line is really a continuation in a direct line to Montreal of the Ontario and Quebec line from Toronto, and is also a part of the main line from the Pacific. This fact makes Smith's Falls one of the most convenient junctions on the line. Its importance is further increased by the fact that, by an agreement, this line will be operated by the C. P. R. Smith's Falls is made a divisional point, and both the Canadian Pacific and Ontario and Quebec railways have warehouses in now in course of erection. Thirteen miles of the

STREET SCENE DURING POULTRY FAIR.

road are now in operation, and it is expected that the remaining 17 miles will be completed and in operation by the end of the present year. The Smith's Falls station is shown in our illustration of Capt. Foster's mills.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company are laying down on Mill and Mary streets from their new roundhouses in the northern suburbs of the town to the central station yards, from which water is to be supplied to the railway. An arrangement has been consummated by which the mains may be tapped for town use, both for fire and domestic purposes.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

The Mechanics' Institute, one of the most ornamental in Ontario, was established in 1850. It is in a flourishing condition and contains over 3,000 volumes, a fair proportion of which are books of reference. There were over 3,000 volumes in circulation during the year 1886. The reading room is supplied with 37 periodicals and papers. Mr. T. C. Frost is president and Stewart Mogg librarian.

THE POULTRY FAIR.

This important and interesting local event occurs annually at Smith's Falls the second week in December, usually on the 10th and 11th of December. It was instituted on a small scale in 1876, and has yearly increased in magnitude, until it is now claimed to be the best, largest and most productive in the Dominion. Buyers come here from New York, Boston and other American cities, which was given by him having been chosen out of the last year's crop, when his election by acclamation.

NEWSPAPERS.

The history of the press in Smith's Falls dates back to 1836. In that year George Ferguson, now a resident of Brockville, commenced the publication of the *Rideau Chronicle*, after four or five years of the publication finding it profitable, discontinued the paper and removed to a more promising field. The

METHODIST CHURCH.

date of the next journalistic venture was 1853, when W. M. Keith, the present town clerk, started the *Herald*. The, with a change of name to the *News*, was carried on for several years, but eventually sold to two younger men, who, after about three years' trial, were obliged to suspend publication, Smith's Falls had no local paper from that time until 1883, when F. J. Mair established the *Independent*, which has been well sustained from the start, having been twice enlarged. It is now in its eight-page weekly journal of forty-eight columns. On the 20th of January last F. McNamara, an enterprising young journalist of some experience, leased the initial number of the *Rideau Record*. It is a thirty-two column paper, declinated to the interest of the town, moderately Reform in politics, and has already as a favorable impression upon the community in which it is published.

CHARLES A. FOSTER.

This gentleman, who is of New England parentage, was born at Smith's Falls on the 20th of August, 1846, his father being a prominent local boy in 1850. Mr. Foster was educated in the Grammar school of his native village, and at an early age entered his father's employ as an assistant in the manufacture of agricultural implements. In 1867 he, in conjunction with his brother Thomas T., was admitted to an active partnership in the firm of Foster & Wood, and of which he is now the senior member. Mr. Foster has always manifested an interest in the development and prosperity of his town, and is though devoting his energies assiduously to the improvement of his own business, yet he has so long been identified, he has on several occasions consented to act as the Town Council. At the last municipal election he was chosen a councillor to represent Ward No. 2, Town, which is a sufficient indication, in unanimity, esteemed by his fellow-townsmen, and all others with whom he has come in contact, either in a social or business way.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

are three in number, and consist of a High school, a Central school and one Ward school. The Central school building, of which we give an illustration, was erected in 1872 at a cost of $12,000. It is of stone, and accommodates from 200 to 250 pupils. The Public schools are presided over by Mr. J. C. Hamilton, assisted by a staff of female teachers. The High school is a fine, elegant brick structure, two storeys high, with towers, erected in 1884 at a cost of $4,000. There are four main rooms, 22 by 32 feet each, and a library of about 1,000 vols. The headmaster is Mr. Neil Robertson, who is assisted by two well qualified teachers.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The first mass in this mission was offered in the house of Patrick Cooney in the summer of 1829, the celebrant being the Rev. John McDonald, of Perth, from which, at that time there were only thirty Catholics in Smith's Falls and vicinity. In the year 1852, through the exertions of the Rev. John McDonald, of Perth, a frame church, 30 by 40 feet, was erected. The first presbytery was built in 1859 by Rev. Terence Smith, then resident pastor. The corner stone of the present church was laid in 1861 by the Most Rev. Doctor Horan, D.D., then Bishop of Kingston, and it was during the pastoral care of the Rev. M. Cline that the stately edifice was constructed. It is of blue limestone, 56 by 90 feet, with a gracefull tower and one medium vestry. The present incumbent of the Smith's Falls mission, Rev. M. J. Stanton, was appointed in March, 1886. Since his appointment many useful and necessary improvements have been made, the sum of over $1,000 being spent in the church alone. Therefore, many generous Protestants having

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRESBYTERY.

same service in Section of the preceding year, and a new congregation had formed in connection with the United Secession Church, which gave rise to the present Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The new congregation, of which Rev. Mr. Ferguson was pastor, indicated in 1865. He continued to minister to the flock until 1876, when he resigned, and proceeded to his native land, Scotland. In 1881 the present edifice was built, and is known as the Union church, being so named in consequence of this union. Rev. Mr. Ferguson was called to the charge, and continued in the pastorate until his death, which occurred in 1883. Rev. Mr. Ross succeeded Rev. Mr. Ferguson, and continued in the charge until 1886, when he resigned, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, who is a native of Scotland and a graduate of Aberdeen, and the New Scotland College, Edinburgh. The Presbyterians of Smith's Falls are noted for their generosity and are distinguished for their liberal contributions to benevolent and missionary objects.

WASHBURN'S EXCHANGE BLOCK.

This is now nearly a third of a century since Mr. J. Washburn came to Smith's Falls, and engaged in commerce. Six years of the time, however, were devoted to acquiring a knowledge of trade under another's supervision. Mr. Washburn is thus enabled to date his own account, establishing the "Farmers' Exchange," which had for an name the most distinctive mercantile feature of the town. The Exchange has been famous for more than a generation as a market for all kinds of farm produce, and though long a general store in the broadest sense of the word, hardware and boots and shoes have recently been crowded out to make room for larger stocks of the goods specially adapted to the farming interest. The lower storey of the building is occupied by a general assortment of goods, in exception of the particular, which occupies 20 x 40 feet of the Ferguson street front. The upper storey is fitted up with every convenience for the postmaster's brother assuming the position of postmaster, and the building is occupied mainly by horse boxes of a superior order. In the westward, or Ferguson

THE FERGUSON AND ST. FRANCIS BLOCK.

street, for commercial purposes, the ground floor is divided into three apartments. It is Mr. Washburn's intention to occupy the lower storey by himself, and the second rooms into one immense store, controlled by carpenters. The Odd Fellows, who thus affording free communication one with another, and that the same time separate the various branches of his business into distinct departments. The Odd Fellows have their lodge-room on the upper flat, which the Exchange hotel is located, in the rear on the second flat. Mr. Washburn will, with the two exceptions above mentioned, occupy the entire property in the entire building from cellar to roof, the space being occupied to suitably accommodate his increasing business.

THE MOLSONS BANK.

Smith's Falls branch of the Molsons Bank, situated on the corner of Beckwith and Water streets, is of angle frontage, three storeys high, 33 by 50 feet, and was erected in 1882. The head office of this extensive financial institution is at Montreal, with branches in the important trade centres of Ontario's and Quebec's domains. Its capital is $2,000,000, with a reserve fund of $800,000. This institution, which dates from the place was but a village, and the present office was built, and is known as the Union church, being so named in consequence of this union. Rev. Mr. Ferguson was called to the charge, and continued in the pastorate until his death, which occurred in 1883. Rev. Mr. Ross succeeded Rev. Mr. Ferguson, and continued in the charge until 1886, when he resigned, and was succeeded by the present incumbent, Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, who is a native of Scotland and a graduate of Aberdeen, and the New Scotland College, Edinburgh. The Presbyterians of Smith's Falls are noted for their generosity and are distinguished for their liberal contributions to benevolent and missionary objects.

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