CHAPTER IX.
CROOKSTON AND ITS INSTITUTIONS.

BY JAMES A. CATHCART, SECRETARY OF THE COMMERCIAL CLUB.

HISTORICAL SKETCH—CITY BUILDINGS AND OTHER PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS—THE COMMERCIAL CLUB—THE BANKS
—MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES—THE CITY SCHOOLS—OTHER SCHOOLS—LODGES AND OTHER CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS—THE NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION—HOSPITALS, ETC.

Crookston, Minnesota, known as the Queen City of the Red River Valley, is the County Seat of Polk County and the largest and most important city in northwestern Minnesota. In size, Crookston ranks fourteenth in the state, its population (from 1915 city directory), being about 8,500. Early history shows the township of Crookston was organized March 28, 1876. The town was incorporated in 1879 by a special law signed by Governor John S. Pillsbury. The name Crookston was given to both the town and township in honor of Colonel William Crooks, of St. Paul, who was chief engineer in locating the first railroad in this section. This road was then known as the St. Paul & Pacific Railway, and during the year 1872 was constructed from Glyndon through Crookston to the Snake River, where is now the city of Warren, Minnesota.

Later the St. Paul & Pacific Railway was put in the hands of receivers, and for a number of years railroad construction work was at a standstill. In the fall of the year 1875 part of the rails north of Crookston were taken up and used to turn the line to Fisher’s Landing, a distance of eleven miles west of Crookston. No other railroad extension work was attempted in this section until the year 1877, when the St. Paul & Pacific Railway, still in the hands of receivers, again took up the construction work of connecting certain portions of the road left unbuilt after the financial crisis of 1873. In 1878 the line from Crookston to Warren was reconstructed and the road extended to the Canadian boundary. During the following year, the road was also extended from Fisher’s Landing to Grand Forks, North Dakota. In subsequent years the St. Paul & Pacific Railway was purchased by Mr. J. J. Hill and his associates, who rapidly increased the line by purchase and construction, building up what is now known as the Great Northern Railway System. Crookston is a Great Northern Railway Division point, having the main lines to St. Paul, Winnipeg, and Duluth, connecting lines to the Pacific Coast, and branches to Fargo, Warroad, and St. Vincent.

The Northern Pacific Railway was constructed from the south to Crookston and from Winnipeg to Grand Forks in the year 1889. It was not until 1890, however, that, by the construction of the road from Crookston to Grand Forks, a through line was provided from St. Paul to Winnipeg via Crookston. The year’s delay in connecting the line was occasioned by right-of-way and crossing controversies between the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railways.

From the above facts, Crookston’s importance as a railroad center is quite evident, her transportation facilities including eight lines reaching directly to St. Paul and Minneapolis, to Duluth, to Winnipeg, to Fargo, to the Lake of the Woods country and across the State of North Dakota to the Pacific Coast.