

South Polar Exploration. Lieutenant E. A. Skackleton has had the glory of hoisting the Union Jack, presented to his crew by Queen Alexandra, in latitude 88 degrees, 23 minutes south, longitude 162 degrees east, or in other words within 111 miles of the South Pole. The expedition was singularly fortunate in the extent and interest of the scientific information gained.

From the Capital

VALID REASONS FOR PROPOSED GOVERNMENT LOAN TO GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC.

Discussion Upon Canada Life's Bill—A Federal District Proposed—Fears as to Canadian Coal Trade Expressed.

One of the matters of greatest interest to the House this week was the submitting of information, as to the Grand Trunk Pacific's finances, by the Hon. Mr. Fielding—preparatory to going on with the consideration next Tuesday of the proposed Government loan of \$10,000,000 to the company. Mr. C. M. Hays, some time ago, informed the Government that this additional sum would be needed to complete the prairie section of the road, stating the following reasons for the insufficiency of resources already provided:

"The high standard of construction made necessary by the terms of the agreement, increased cost of labor, rail and all other material, and the extension of the prairie section 130 miles further west than was contemplated."

Owing to security market conditions at present making it probable that an immediate \$10,000,000 issue of the company's bonds could be made only at a sacrifice, the Government is asked to take them at their par value as a security for a loan not exceeding \$10,000,000 to be made to the company by the Government for a period of ten years. As to the rate of interest, the bonds are to bear four per cent, and, no doubt, the Government would be able to borrow at that rate or something less, consequently so far as interest is concerned the Government should suffer no loss. As to security, the Government will not only have the obligation of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company, but also the guarantee of the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada. Therefore, there can scarcely be any question as to the security of the Government for a loan to be so made. It is a case in which the Government can by the use of its credit aid the company materially and rush to completion an important national undertaking without incurring any financial loss whatever.

Cost and Resources of Prairie Section.

The Company's estimate of the cost of the prairie section and amount of cash to be provided to complete it is itemized as follows:

Total expenditure to September 30, 1908..	\$24,087,743
Estimated cost of fully completed work from October 1, 1908..	8,110,608
Total..	\$32,198,351
Resources—Proceeds series "A" bonds..	9,601,926
Received from Government on account of proceeds of bonds guaranteed by Government to extent of 13,000 per mile for 916..	10,235,482

Due from Government balance due on account of proceeds of bonds guaranteed by Government to extent of \$13,000 per mile..	1,572,517
Estimated value of construction equipment to be transferred to mountain section upon completion of prairie section ..	1,000,000

Balance to be provided.. .. \$ 9,688,425

This will work the cost out at \$35,151 per mile for the prairie section. The Government communicated with Mr. Collingwood Schreiber, the general consulting engineer, and his estimate of the total cost of the prairie section from Winnipeg to Wolf Creek, including interest, is \$33,007,449. This will make the cost per mile \$36,034. The estimate of the cost when the legislation was before Parliament was about \$18,000 a mile.

The Canada Life Company Bill.

After passing the Banking and Commerce Committee stage, the Canada Life Bill was up for discussion in the Commons early this week. A leading feature of the debate upon the matter was the statement of Hon. Mr. Aylesworth, Minister of Justice, to the effect that he did not think there could be any doubt as to the constitutional right of Parliament to pass the bill making clear the original intention of the ambiguously worded Act of 1879. The Minister of Finance succinctly summarized as follows the strong reasons why the present bill should be passed by the House:

It sought merely to fix the interpretation of the Act of 1879, which had been recognized in practice for 30 years. It legalized in this case what was the practice of other Canadian insurance companies and what was also the English practice—namely, the deducting of interest on capital stock before calculating the share of profits which should be credited to policyholders. The shareholders who had put in the \$875,000 new stock, some years ago, had put it in on this understanding; if this understanding were departed from, they should be given an opportunity to withdraw. It would not interfere with any rights which the policyholders were entitled to possess in equity. Finally, if the law were left in its present state, it would cause endless confusion; how, for instance, could the dead shareholder who had been overpaid be compelled to pay over to the dead policyholders who had been underpaid?

Owing to the question being raised as to whether the notice of the bill in The Canada Gazette had been sufficiently explicit, the bill was referred to the Committee on Standing Orders and will be held over until next session.

Ex-Mayor Cook, in a recent address before the Unity Club of Ottawa, outlined a broad scheme for a federal district (similar in scope to the District of Columbia) embracing Ottawa, Hull and some of the surrounding country. He urged that the present Government grant of \$60,000 to the Improvement Commission was no return for the favors which the Government was receiving from the city, and asserted that a careful estimate of the city engineer's department had shown that the value of the water service to Government buildings alone, if based on the charge to the ordinary consumer, was \$60,000, while if taxes were charged on Government property now exempt it would yield no less a sum than \$250,000 annually.