

time accept the standards of the Empire of which we claim to be an important part and in which we hope to be a growing influence.

#### FORESTS AND WATER SUPPLY

CANADA is suffering in many directions for lack of water. The streams in Ontario have grown smaller and smaller, and in a season of drouth such as we are now experiencing, the water-supply is inadequate for our needs. The chief cause of the trouble is the denuding the river banks, lake regions and natural reservoirs, of the forests which have hitherto preserved, guarded and maintained a regular supply. In the past, if any person saw a tree, he proceeded to cut it down. That it had an economic value as a guardian of the water supply was something which the settler and lumberman did not recognise.

The Canadian Forestry Association and other bodies have been discussing the problem for years. They have been so far successful that they have induced the governments of the Dominion and Ontario to set aside large areas of the public domain as forest reserves. This is good so far as it goes. That the fountains of all important streams have been so guarded, cannot be maintained. The forest reserves have been made more with an idea of preserving some of the timber and game, than of preserving the great natural fountains. The governments should go farther and make reserves of all forest districts, say a mile wide, on either bank of all important rivers and lakes. This would prevent undue evaporation. What the governments have done in the interest of Canada's future timber supply and of the vanishing wild animal is to be commended. If they will pursue a similar policy in the interests of our natural water reservoirs, they will be deserving of equal commendation.

If all the trees on the North American continent were to be cut down, our lakes and our rivers would in a few decades be materially reduced in size, and the country would lose much of its fertility. Give "Old Sol" the opportunity and he will dry up the continent. A certain area of forest is absolutely necessary to the protection of our soil-fertility.

#### AN ILL-ADVISED ADDRESS

MR. WILLIAM T. STEAD has broken forth in song once more and has addressed his lay to the German people. In plain "journalese" Mr. Stead has written an "Open Letter to the German People," in which he asks twenty-five or thirty difficult and dangerous questions. There is always something doubtful about an "open" letter. It is like the people with a reputation for frankness or candour who go to and fro and up and down upon the earth, saying the things they ought not to say until a merciful Providence strikes them dead or dumb. Mr. Stead's open letter to the German people, asking them what the Kaiser means (just as if they know) and what they are prepared to do, in case their ruler feels that England has offended his honour, is an epistle which might fairly bewilder the honest Teuton, if he were so foolish as to read it.

However, the press of the country which Mr. Stead has so solicitously addressed in his *Review of Reviews* appears to have refused to reply to or notice his friendly communication. The only important organ to take up the matter declares that Mr. Stead's undiplomatic remarks are merely a piece of impertinence and that his own business might profitably occupy that gentleman's attention. In comparison with William whose surname is Stead, the Emperor William appears to be an inoffensive and comparatively reticent gentleman. Unfortunately, there is no Von Buelow for the suppression of indiscreet editors.

#### THE CASE OF THE INTERCOLONIAL

THE newspapers are disposing of the Intercolonial Railway. On the whole, they are doing it very well. The Government has a multitude of counsellors; which, perhaps, is what it wanted. For, since the Minister of Railways first adumbrated a readjustment of Intercolonial management; and especially since a prominent Government organ sent up a kite, there has been much writing on a subject that is every bit as important as it seems.

It is a sign of great health that, even from the Maritime Provinces, there is a consensus of opinion against further use of the Intercolonial as chiefly a local political engine. It is a mistake to suppose that there is any abiding advantage to a political party in the sort of patronage that belongs to the control of a railway. As soon as a job becomes vacant there are a dozen intriguing applicants for it. There are eleven sore politicians as soon as the appointment is made. It is safe to guess that Sir Wilfrid Laurier's selection of a Minister of Railways from outside the Intercolonial sphere of influ-

ence, was made with the idea of weakening, if not destroying, the incubus of the patronage which, while it was a comfortable assistant in the early days of the administration, was bound to become a nuisance, and to provoke disaffection as time went on.

The Intercolonial has never paid interest on its cost. The Maritime Provinces have always regarded it as their consolation for entering Confederation. If it had paid, they might have seen a grievance in the achievement. They have been given very low rates, and the dining facilities on express trains have made the passengers feel quite at home at a moderate price. An increase in rates has not been proposed by any politician,—at least, not by any politician in the Maritime Provinces. The handing over of the railway to a Commission, with instructions to cut out political patronage, would not, of itself, put the Intercolonial on a satisfactory basis; because the governing factor in the situation, which Mr. Graham and the Government recognise in its true perspective, is the competition that will presently denude the Intercolonial of whatever special strength it enjoys as the first land communication between the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic, so long as a railway is in a virtually monopolistic position, it can,—like a street railway—pursue its generous courses with little danger to itself. But when that vital advantage is withdrawn, and its disadvantages are multiplied, it is in rather parlous case.

The Intercolonial was built to secure communication between communities previously separated upon the more telling attributes of political and commercial unity. Government construction of the railway was the only way of securing political considerations for a Dominion that had not yet found itself. Windsor was the effective western limit of Canada. Modern Western Canada was the Great Lone Land. A hundred-million dollar budget was undreamt of. We live in another century; and by comparison, in a different Canada from that of forty years ago.

The political mission of the Intercolonial has been fulfilled. For vital things, Edmonton is nearer than Halifax now than Windsor was forty years ago. The Intercolonial, instead of being the artery by which alone the circulation of the blood of Confederation was maintained, has become one of several competitors for traffic, without hope of gain from the political doctors who are no more necessary to it than a homoeopath is to a telegraph pole. And, regarded as a railway, it cannot keep pace with the times without adapting itself to the changed conditions of the times. It cannot remain as it is.

Why not? The dominating features of modern Canadian development is the West. The Grand Trunk was a great Canadian institution long before the Canadian Pacific carried a passenger along the north shore of Lake Superior. The Grand Trunk had its own lines through rich portions of the United States as well as in the best sections of Canada. But the Canadian Pacific went West; and therefore became powerful in the East; and achieved a position in the railway world that is the admiration of all men. The Grand Trunk, by the same essential impulse that drives inland nations to look for salt water harbours, is expanding westward. The great business houses that have become mighty in Eastern Canada are those which have done most in Western Canada. The West is the East.

Western Canadian trade has put Canadian Pacific steamers on the Atlantic, and enabled them to enjoy an unchallenged eminence for speed. The growth of trade, therefore, compels the extension of transportation machinery, under one control, to salt water and beyond. It accounts for the declared intention of the Grand Trunk to control its own steamers as well as the transcontinental railway. It completely upsets the old-time balance of commerce in the Eastern Provinces. A line from Montreal to Halifax and St. John is all in all to the Intercolonial. But it is only incidental to the railways that have founded their strength upon the illimitable West, and draw revenue, also, from the boundless deep. The advent of the Canadian Pacific Railway to St. John heavily hit the long distance travel over the Intercolonial. Short distance travel is local travel, and not a determining feature of traffic earnings, for a railway through a sparsely populated territory cannot live on its local passenger or freight traffic.

Even if local traffic conditions were predominant in the Maritime Provinces, the case of the Intercolonial would not be comfortable, because the Transcontinental is building to the sea, and the Canadian Northern will build to the sea. The Intercolonial will not get the traffic that originates with, or for, either of these lines, any more than it gets Canadian Pacific traffic. They will divide with it the business it now does, in its vanishing exclusive territory. They will increase in strength on land and sea, but the Intercolonial cannot fail to decrease, because of its inherent limitations. The contrast between the busy freight terminals of the Canadian Pacific Railway at St. John, and the less busy depots of the Intercolonial is an almost perfect illustration of the soundness of this view.

It is all very well to tell the Intercolonial to hustle for freight, and wipe out deficits accordingly. It cannot be done. The Government itself is duplicating the Intercolonial along a most important section of its route. The Canadian Northern has a charter to build from Quebec to the Bay of Fundy, and to the Atlantic shore. Inevitably, the Intercolonial will become isolated, and its latter end will be worse than the beginning. It must have been a recognition of this that impelled some prominent Liberal to send up his now famous kite in the Montreal Herald. A problem of capital business importance has been brought into the arena of public discussion; and public opinion may crystallise in definite propositions before very long.