

MR. HILL'S INTENTIONS.

The remarks recorded to have been made by Mr. Jas. J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railway of America, during his recent visit to Winnipeg, and reception by the Canadian Club of that city, may be looked upon as an authoritative forecast of the intentions of the great Canadian-American railroader with regard to the Canadian North-West. They serve to show also that either some previous alleged disparaging expressions of opinion about the prospects of that great country were misreported, or, that Mr. Hill recognizes "a foolish consistency to be the hobgoblin of little minds," and has the pluck to acknowledge his change of views. He now concedes that the possibilities of the Canadian West are almost without limit, and that, as the country makes the city, Winnipeg must be a great city. And there will be, he foretells, as large a population west of the Red River as in all the rest of the Dominion within a short time. Transportation is the great, absorbing question. The greatness of the country has been proved, its fertility is unquestioned, and the obtaining of reasonable transportation facilities to the markets of the world is an assurance of prosperity, wealth and great population to western Canada.

Very frankly he stated that his company had had their eye on western Canada for many years, and now that existing systems of railway had become firmly established, they considered the time opportune to enter the field. Frankly also he said that, now they had made up their minds, they would not confine themselves to half measures. As an epitome of what the Great Northern has already done, or intends doing in connection with development work in the North-West, we cannot do better than repeat Mr. Hill's own words:—

"We have brought our terminals into part of Winnipeg, and we shall lose no time in getting our connecting link from the boundary into the city constructed. We are now pushing forward grading on the branch lines from Gretna to Portage la Prairie, and from Botineau to Brandon, having secured terminals in both Brandon and Portage la Prairie. We have also fully decided on the main line from Vancouver to Winnipeg. Already we have a line in British Columbia to Fernie, and we propose to push that line across the great Western prairie until Winnipeg is reached. We propose to cross the C. P. R. and run our line considerably north of it, where the country is flat, and where local traffic is sure to be heavy."

Further, he declared that the G.N.R.R. had no intention of invading Eastern Canada, but would make use of the Canadian Pacific and Grand Trunk Pacific, and added that they would be in a position to forward freight from Winnipeg over the first trains run eastward by the latter road. No wonder Mr. Hill was received with enthusiasm by a people whose first thought is the development of their country.

Another important declaration made by the great railroad magnate was that close study of the situation had proved to him that the greatest boon from a commercial standpoint that could be conferred on the Dominion would be the consummation of the much-talked-of Georgian Bay route, that is the utilization of the Georgian Bay, the Ottawa River and the St. Lawrence for the establishment of a great permanent railway from the Gulf of St. Lawrence clear up to Fort William, Port Arthur, Duluth and other points on the Upper Lakes. "Nature," said Mr. Hill,

"did about all she could for Canada when she pierced the continent with the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, and the lakes, and to utilize this great boon you Canadians must do your share. If you did that you would soon have a continuous waterway, say of twenty-four feet, from Quebec or Montreal clear up to the head of Lake Superior. With that great enterprise consummated you could send all your wheat from the head of Lake Superior to Quebec for three cents a bushel. With a six or seven cent rate from the prairies to the lakes the cost of transporting your grain to Liverpool and other British ports would be reduced to the minimum." The root of the matter is that Canada is to be a great country, and Mr. Hill, though tardily, recognizes the fact to the full.

MUNICIPAL BOOK-KEEPING.

In these days of municipal enterprise and free borrowing by towns and villages for purposes of civic improvement it is of importance that the keeping of accounts by municipal officers should be accurate. Some years have elapsed since the authorities of the Province of Ontario took steps to improve the book-keeping of county and township treasurers. To this end a system of uniform books was introduced, and pains were taken to have officers instructed how to use them. It is agreeable to learn that a result of these steps is a decided improvement in the keeping of municipal accounts throughout the Province. And, as the Provincial Auditor expresses it, "although they are still very far from what they should be, there are good hopes of better things in the near future."

There are other things, however, in municipal circles, that are very far from what they should be. And one or two of them are emphasized by the Municipal Auditor, thus:—

"It is very discouraging to see such small salaries paid to these officers by the municipalities. Salaries of \$15, \$20, and \$25 per annum are very frequent in their recurrence in the accounts. This should not be, unless in the case of a municipality whose revenue does not exceed \$2,000 per annum. A treasurer's salary should not be less than \$100, and this is far from being the case at present. There is a small class of retired merchants, and occasionally farmers, who take pleasure in doing the treasurer's work for next to nothing in the form of remuneration, and these are a great boon to the thrifty municipalities. But there are very many whose cases are a hardship, and these should be considered, more especially at the present time, when agricultural interests are so prosperous. No one who has had the opportunity of perusing the average collector's roll as it may be seen in any of the rural townships throughout the Province, can doubt the solid wealth and comfort of which it forms the exponent."

Here is what may be termed "the straight tip" by a business man to municipal residents, who have been getting their finances looked after by competent people at starvation wages, calling upon taxpayers to open their hearts and their pockets. There are few things harder than to get the average farmer, for instance, to consent to pay a decent salary to any municipal employee, whether it be a clerk, a treasurer, or a school-teacher. Looking through this volume we have found \$20 the yearly salary paid to a certain township treasurer who had received \$4,414 and disbursed \$4,137 in a single year, the assessment amounting to \$135,000. In a village with a collector's