

The Commercial

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THE TRANSCONTINENTAL ROUTE.

Before the completion of the C.P.R., it was a favorite theme to talk about the great possibilities of the route as forming a highway across the New World for the trade passing between the European and Asiatic continents, as well as to and from eastern cities of our own Continent to the Pacific coast and thence across the ocean to the shores beyond. Comparative tables were frequently submitted, showing the advantages which the C.P.R. route would enjoy in the matter of distances, over the old-established routes, *via* San Francisco, and the capes. In this way it was pointed out that our northern railway would offer the shortest transcontinental route between the east and the west, and with these differences in its favor, would be in a fair way to capture a considerable portion of the through trade. It remained for Sir Charles Tupper to put the finishing touches on the picture by his representation in glowing language of the wealth and splendor of the Orient passing in a continuous and glittering stream across and through our country, over the great national highway. Many were disposed to belittle these more sanguine expectations, and to cast doubts upon the statements that the Asiatic business would ever prove of much value to the road.

Since the opening of the road, however, quite an amount of traffic has already passed over the C.P.R. from Asia to eastern Canadian and American cities. Last season some five or six sailing vessels arrived at Vancouver with cargoes of tea for shipment over the road to eastern cities, and the present month has witnessed a new feature in the inauguration of a line at first-class steamers to ply regularly between the C.P.R. western terminus at Vancouver and China and Japan. The *Abyssinia*, the first steamer of the new line to make the trip across the Pacific, brought out a large quantity of tea from Japan, together with other merchandise to make up a full cargo, as well as quite a number of passengers. The freight was destined for distributing points all the way from Winnipeg and Minneapolis eastward to New York, and was hurried forward with a dispatch that will tell in favor of the new route in the future.

The trip across the Pacific occupied between thirteen and fourteen days, with unfavorable weather, and it is claimed that with fast steamers the time can be reduced to about ten days. From the success which has already attended the northern route in carrying Asiatic traffic, it would seem that the predictions made previous to the opening of the route, will in a fair measure be realized.

So far the Asiatic freight handled on the C.P.R. has all been destined for American continental points. It is not probable that European freight could be carried in competition with the Suez Canal and Cape all-water routes, but in comparison with the San Francisco transcontinental line, the C.P.R. is 1,200 miles shorter between Liverpool and Hong Kong than the United States road. The advantages of the C.P.R. as an alternate mail and short passenger route, however, are more apparent. Especially in the matter of passenger travel the C.P.R. route will have many advantages over the all-water routes, not the least important being the greater freedom from climatic changes, which travellers from Great Britain and Europe by this route would enjoy.

The proposal that the Imperial Government should grant a mail subsidy to the new C.P.R. line of steamers established between Vancouver and Asia, has met with some opposition in the British Parliament, owing to the feeling of hostility to Canada on account of our fiscal policy. However, it is not likely that this will have any great weight with the Imperial authorities, who are disposed to consider the matter on its merits, rather than in the light of any side issues. The establishment of an alternate mail line would undoubtedly prove a practical benefit to the British public, whilst the existence of a connecting link between Great Britain and her eastern possession, across British territory, will be important matters for the consideration of British statesmen. Viewing the question in this light, and with a possibility of the line falling into the hands of a German syndicate, should the subsidy not be given, it is more than probable that the Imperial Government will grant the aid asked for. With this aid secured the new steamship line would at once be established on a solid basis, and a long step would be accomplished in securing a fair proportion of the Asiatic business for our great transcontinental railway.

RIGHTS OF LABOR.

Labor undoubtedly has its rights, and no one but an intolerant person would seek to deprive labor of the unquestionable right to organize in self-defence. Capital, represented by the employer of labor, also has its rights, which must be respected. The recognition of the right of labor to organize associations for self-protection, however, does not imply that such organizations, once formed, should be permitted to override the rights of employers of labor. The idea seems largely to prevail among labor organizations, that capital is a deadly enemy, with which they must wage unceasing and unrelenting war. To the outside observer this would seem to be a palpable error. Instead of being foes, capital and labor should be the most intimate friends. Each is entirely dependent on the other. Labor is the producer of capital, and the destruction of the latter, as frequently happens in cases of strikes, means the destruction by labor of what labor had previously produced. But whilst labor produces capital, it requires capital to render labor productive; therefore labor is dependent upon capital for employment, as is capital dependent upon labor for its further augmentation. The destruction of capital, therefore, also means the curtailment of the usefulness as well as the cheapening of labor. It may thus be readily seen that a blow at capital in the direction of its annihilation or the curtailment of its usefulness, must indirectly work to the disadvantage of labor.

Viewing the question in this light, it seems strange that among labor organizations the sentiment of hostility to capital should be so largely entertained. Certainly capital is sometimes aggressive as to the rights of labor, and even at times unduly oppressive; but, on the other hand, the same statements can be made against labor. In instances where labor has secured a very complete organization, and obtained a large measure of power, it has frequently assumed a very dictatorial character, and assayed to usurp the rights of capital. Not content with jealously guarding its own real rights, it has not infrequently attempted to curtail, bind down, and even ride, rough-shod, over the rights of capital. As a rule, such a state of things does not and cannot long continue, and the outcome is often more disastrous to labor than to capital.