

while application has been made for the incorporation of one company which proposes to undertake the gigantic work of building a transcontinental road, as a rival to the C. P. R. Within the present decade, there were many persons in Canada who talked of the Canadian Pacific Railway undertaking as an absurd scheme, and one which would never be completed, but no sooner has this great work been brought to a successful issue, than now transcontinental railways through Canada are talked of. It is quite within the possibilities that a second Canadian Pacific railway may be built, within the lifetime of the present generation, and in fact it is becoming almost a probability that such will be the case. We have also other great railway schemes in Canada which are certain to be carried out sooner or later, such as railways to Hudson's Bay, and into the great Peace and Mackenzie river countries of the north, to say nothing of the more visionary scheme of a railway around the world, via Alaska.

But to return to our subject of railway enterprises in British Columbia. A few weeks ago an article in these columns was devoted to this matter. In an article on "Railways in Western Canada," in the last issue of this journal, the present railway mileage of British Columbia was shown to be about 615 miles, made up of the main line of the C. P. R., from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to Vancouver, 520 miles; Westminster branch C. P. R., 8 miles; Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway on Vancouver Island, 75 miles; Union mines railway, 11½ miles. The Esquimalt road connects Victoria and Esquimalt harbor and naval station with the coal mines of the Nanaimo district. The short road at the Union mines, connects these coal mines with the harbor, in the Comox district, Vancouver Island. This road was completed in January of the present year, and the mines are now being opened and put in operation.

Of the various railway schemes in British Columbia, there are two which may be said to be in course of construction. Both these roads are designed to connect with railways in the United States to the south. One of these roads is intended to connect the city of New Westminster with Puget Sound points. Provision has been made for the construction of a bridge over the Fraser river at New Westminster, and some preliminary work has been done on the road, such as clearing the right of way, etc. The city has voted \$75,000 to this road as a bonus, and a further \$75,000 to assist in the construction of the bridge. It is claimed that the Northern Pacific Company has an interest in this road. The other railway mentioned as under construction, is a C. P. R. scheme. This road is intended to connect the main line of the C. P. R. with a road building northward from Seattle, on Puget Sound. Connection will be made with the C. P. R. near Mission Station, a point on the main line 42 miles east of Vancouver. The

only work done on this road on the Canadian side of the boundary, is in the direction of preparing for the construction of a bridge across the Fraser river, near Mission Station. This is the first work which is necessary in the construction of the road. The C. P. R. Co. is now handling considerable through freight to and from Puget Sound points, which is carried by steamers between Puget Sound and Vancouver. With direct railway connection with Puget Sound cities, no doubt the C. P. R. traffic in that direction would be increased. Both the C. P. R. and the New Westminster roads are expected to be completed this year.

The other proposed railway enterprises in B. C. are of a more uncertain nature, so far as their immediate construction is concerned. One feature common to them all, however, is the claims being made upon the Provincial Government for assistance. The Shuswap & Okanagan railway is a scheme which has been for some years under consideration. The company formed to build this road was voted a grant of \$200,000 by the Provincial Legislature some time ago, and this was further supplemented by a grant of \$3,200 per mile from the Dominion Government, the length of the road being about 50 miles. The projectors, however, have found it impossible, even with this assistance to finance their scheme. The company now asks the Legislature to guarantee interest for twenty years, at four per cent., on \$1,250,000, and they claim that this would secure the construction of the road. This would be in lieu of the \$200,000 provincial grant, and the company would also make over its Dominion grant to the province. A guarantee on the sum mentioned seems a rather large grant in comparison with the length of the road. The Shuswap & Okanagan road is designed to run from the main line of the C. P. R. southward to Okanagan lake, in the interior of the province. This lake is navigable for 60 miles, and there is considerable good agricultural and grazing land in the district which would be opened up. Though it is always desirable to develop the province by the opening up of interior districts, yet the people should be careful that they do not pay too dearly for what they gain in this direction. The Okanagan country is probably one of the most valuable districts in British Columbia, possessing mineral as well as agricultural and pastoral wealth, and the development of the region which would follow railway construction into the district, would no doubt considerably increase the resources of the province.

Another interior railway scheme is the Columbia River & Kootenay road. This proposed road has been given a grant of 200,000 acres of provincial lands and certain concessions in the way of tax exemptions, etc. It is proposed to open up the Kootenay district by means of this road—a region considered to be very rich in mineral and agricultural wealth. Several

other roads are talked of, such as the extension of the Island railway, a short line between Vancouver and the Fraser river, a road from Vancouver southward, via the delta district, to Puget Sound points, and there is also the proposed Victoria, Saanich and Mainland road, all of which schemes have their special advocates.

The one great railway scheme, however, which is attracting the most attention, is the proposed Canadian Western Railway. This is a gigantic scheme contemplated as a rival to the C. P. R., and intended to connect the Pacific coast with the East. A bill incorporating the Canadian Western Railway Company has been passed by the Local House, empowering the company to build a road from the eastern boundary of the province, via the Yellowhead Pass, Cariboo and Bute Inlet, to connect with the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway on Vancouver Island. The Yellowhead Pass, it will be remembered, is the route originally selected for the C. P. R. The pass is said to present very few engineering difficulties, in comparison with the route finally selected for the C. P. R. A road by that pass would also pass through a more valuable territory, it is claimed, than the country now served by the C. P. R. It is proposed to have this railway cross from the mainland to Vancouver Island, in the vicinity of Bute Inlet, where it is said a crossing is practical, and thus Victoria would become the terminus of the road. It is expected that in time connection would be made at the eastern boundary of the province, with some transcontinental road. A big land subsidy has been voted by the Local House.

A bill has been passed providing for a grant of about twelve million acres of land in aid of the road. This scheme has created a great deal of enthusiasm in Victoria and on the Island, while considerable opposition has developed on the mainland, and particularly at Vancouver, against the granting of land to the company. Naturally Vancouver would be opposed to the creating of another Pacific railway terminus in British Columbia. At this distance, however, it is impossible to look upon this gigantic scheme as one which is likely to be undertaken at once, though in the future it is quite probable that a railway may be built through Yellowhead Pass. The land grant is certainly a big thing for a single province to hand over to a railway company, but the bill granting the land was carried by a vote of seventeen to three, despite the protests of the Vancouver board of trade. The land grant will include alternate blocks extending thirty-two miles on either side of the proposed road, each block of land having a frontage of twenty miles on the railway, and to be opposite a similar block to be retained by the Government, and will total up to nearly 12,000,000 acres, including some very valuable timber and mineral lands. The bill stipulates that construction is to commence within two years, and the road is to be completed in ten years.