

A C.P.R. Inspection Trip.

Vice-President Shaughnessy returned to Montreal June 20, after a month's absence in the west. From Montreal he went via Toronto, Chicago & St. Paul, thence taking the Minneapolis St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie line to Portal & on to the main line of the C.P.R. at Pasqua, Assa. He again left the main line at Dunmore, proceeding to Lethbridge, & from there over the Crow's Nest line for the distance the track was then laid, 116 miles, continuing on to the Kootenay district, where he inspected the Columbia & Kootenay, Columbia & Western, Slocan Lake & Nakusp & Slocan branches, then on to the main line at Revelstoke, visiting Vancouver & Victoria & returning by Winnipeg & the north shore of Lake Superior.

On his return to Montreal he spoke of his trip as being a very satisfactory one, having found the system in first-class condition from Montreal to the Pacific. He was struck with the evidences of prosperity on every hand, & there was every indication that during the coming summer there would be a bountiful harvest & that the people of the Northwest would be in a satisfactory condition so far as the crops were concerned.

In answer to a question in regard to the solution of the smelter question & the profitable production of the low grade ores of British Columbia, he said the C.P.R. had taken steps to do the best possible for the country, & it remained to be seen what the results would be. The Trail smelter would be blown in July 1, after a thorough re-arrangement of the plant, & it was expected that the results would be of a satisfactory nature. This is the property which was purchased some time ago from Mr. Heinze, & the proposition was to make it profitable for the mines to ship their ores there for smelting. At present an average of 225 tons of ore is being shipped to the smelter each day, mostly from 3 or 4 mines, but it is expected that later on a larger number of mines will be shipping. The heaviest shippers at present are the War Eagle & Centre Star mines. The re-arrangement of the smelter is expected to bring about the most satisfactory results.

The Vice-President was very much pleased with the progress British Columbia was making. No other concern, said he, was in a position to judge of this so thoroughly as was the C.P.R. Co., whose interests in B. C. now are simply enormous, & still they are extending & spreading out in every direction. Said Mr. Shaughnessy: "The people of B.C., generally are not aware of the fact that the works that the C.P.R. are carrying on this year in the West will involve an expenditure of at least \$25,000,000. Of this \$15,000,000 has already been provided for, & \$10,000,000 more will be forthcoming as soon as it is required. Referring to the progress Vancouver was making, Mr. Shaughnessy stated that since his visit there last September he had observed a great change, & all for the better. He had never wavered in his opinion with regard to Vancouver, & that was that it was certain to become Canada's Liverpool on the Pacific coast.

While it was true that the Klondike boom had subsided for the time being, Mr. Shaughnessy thought the general improvement all along the line in business would make up for the loss in that respect. In conclusion, he remarked that the outlook for business generally, from one end of Canada to the other, was never more hopeful than it is at the present time. This is possibly the most prosperous time that Canada has ever enjoyed, & it is likely to last for some time.

The fast C.P.R. service between Montreal & the Pacific coast, of which something has been said, is at present under consideration, but nothing has yet been definitely decided in regard to it.

The Crow's Nest Pass Commission.

On returning to Montreal recently from his western inspection trip, Vice-President Shaughnessy of the C.P.R. was interviewed in reference to the Crow's Nest Pass Commission report.

"In the 1st place," said Mr. Shaughnessy, "I have been travelling; in the 2nd, I have not seen the report of Judge Dugas in its entirety. What I have seen have been extracts from that report, something of the discussion in the House, & certain comments in the papers. I prefer not to go into the question at the present. If, after I am seized of the full report in question, it seems necessary for the C.P.R. to make defence, I will not be slow in doing so."

Reference was made to the deaths of the two men from diphtheria under conditions suggesting the grossest cruelty & inhumanity.

"I have no objection to refer to these two cases," Mr. Shaughnessy remarked, "but observe that I am not going into the general question. If any person, in whatever capacity has been guilty of cruelty in the cases you mention, the C.P.R. will consider it an imperative duty that such person or persons be punished. But it is not for the Co. to punish; it is for the authorities to take the matter up, & I understand that the Government, before the close of the session, gave a pledge in the House that an investigation would be made. We are thoroughly in accord with public opinion on this point. I venture to think I know the conditions which prevail in railway construction a little better than some of the critics. These two men, when they started out, probably did not know the nature of their disease. They were ill, & they wanted relief. But the moment the character of the disease was discovered, no camp along the line would take them in. Why? Not because the men in such camps were inhuman. But self-preservation is the first law of nature. This law exerts itself in a railway camp precisely as it exerts itself, say, on Dorchester street in this city. Suppose application be made to the private residents of Dorchester street on behalf of two men suffering with smallpox or diphtheria, that they be given shelter, how many do you think would respond to such an appeal? Not one, I venture to say; & this not because they were at all inhuman, but because of the imperative law of self-preservation. These men would not be taken into any of these camps; they could not be received into any of the tent hospitals, because there were other patients there who would be liable to catch the disease. Mind, I say the cases were heartrending; but it will remain for this Government investigation to show that anything more could have been done under the circumstances of the case. I do not know if there was negligence or cruelty which might have been avoided under the peculiar circumstances, but if so, then the guilty party should be punished."

To the remark that as the public money had been given for the construction of the road, & that therefore the public had an immediate interest in having all the circumstances in connection with the employment & treatment of the men fully disclosed, Mr. Shaughnessy said that this reference to public money having been given was just what he objected to. "Why, the Co. gives back to the Government & the country far more than it receives. A subsidy is granted; but the Co., in a low schedule of rates & concessions, gives an ample—a full equivalent—for what it receives. The construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Ry. is simply a bargain, which we are carrying out. Whether the money be public or private, every man connected with the work, in whatever capacity, should receive fair play. That is certainly the desire of the Co. I do not urge the point that it is not public money

to justify any improper treatment of any man; but the contention in this regard is misleading. The Co., I may say, is no novice in the matter of railway construction. We pretend to know a little about it. We have employed hundreds of thousands of men. At present there are between 4,000 & 5,000 men employed on the Crow's Nest Pass Ry., which I expect will reach Kootenay Lake this fall. The work is proceeding satisfactorily; all is harmonious; it was never anything else as far as the Co. was concerned. At the time of these complaints there were between 2,000 & 3,000 men working away with the utmost content. I would not be understood as criticizing the judicial report at all, for I have not seen it in its entirety; but I may remark that the clause providing for the fare for the return journey is a perfectly proper one, for if it were not inserted in the agreement with the men, not a few of them, ill-selected, unfit for the work, not understanding the conditions, would be demanding to get home the second day. It is one thing to put that clause in the agreement to ensure some degree of permanency in the employment, & another thing to enforce it when the work is done. But the wages offered were the highest in Canada, & that is why so many flocked to the work. I am not aware that even at home, & without the deductions which have been enumerated, & working 20 days in the month, laboring men are able to save a great deal at the end of a given period of work."

Mr. Shaughnessy also made the remark that it was contrary to the experience of railway construction that when men chose to leave work they were fed by the camps along the way. "Such a practice would have the most demoralizing effect. It is no slight thing to handle 5,000 men. You must have strict rules; & when I say that no man in Canada need be idle at present, I mean no man who is willing to work. I do not mean loafers or vagabonds, who only mean to give trouble. I am speaking in a general way with respect to public works of any kind."—Montreal Witness.

Across the Plains by the C.P.R.

Westward from Manitoba it is easy to realize that Canada has the greatest railway system in the world. The night, the long day, & again the night over the level prairie, the winding, straining climb among the mountain peaks, where the clouds settle in the thin atmosphere a mile above the ocean level, the giddy descent from ledge to ledge, skirting along the mountain sides high above the swift rivers & mirror-like expanses, tunneling projecting crags, bridging dizzy gorges, & falling gently with the more subdued landscape, to where the salt tides rise & fall on the western shore of the continent—these tell of a heroic struggle with nature in her grandeur & her greatness. Awakening on the prairie, the first impression is that of an open sea.—S. T. Wood, in Toronto Globe.

A Russian Air Brake Contract.

For some months negotiations have been going on between representatives of the Manchurian Ry. in Russia & the Westinghouse Air Brake Co. of Pittsburgh & the Westinghouse Brake Co. of London, Eng., for the purchase of a large quantity of Westinghouse air brakes. A deal has just been closed by which the Manchurian Ry. purchases between \$2,000,000 & \$3,000,000 worth of Westinghouse air brakes. The placing of this contract means that shops for the making of these air brakes will be built in Russia, probably in St. Petersburg, by the Westinghouse Air Brake Co. The contract is the largest that has ever been placed for air brakes & means that other roads throughout Europe will probably adopt this brake.