

climate. For Canada, in a greater degree than for any other country, the presence of the railway is for this reason absolutely essential to the maintenance of its prosperity and the continuance of its growth.

Important epochs.

For the purpose of briefly indicating the beneficial effects produced in this country by railway construction, it will be well, perhaps, to glance at Canada's position at three or four epochs, bearing in mind always that the results shown are not in all cases clearly defined or definable as direct results of railway enterprise, and that other causes may have been at work contemporaneously to produce them : to the railway nevertheless is unquestionably due a large and perhaps the largest share of the present status.

These epochs may be the following :

- 1st. The commencement of railway construction in Canada in 1836.
- 2nd. The completion of the Grand Trunk Railway from Rivière du Loup to Sarnia, in 1860.
- 3rd. The Confederation of Canada, in 1867.
- 4th. The completion of the Intercolonial Railway main line from Halifax to Lewis, in 1876.
- 5th. The commencement, in 1877, and the completion, in 1886, of the Canadian Pacific Railway main line from Montreal to the Pacific.
- 6th. The present date, 1894-1895.

It must be remembered that Canada, as at present constituted, is of recent birth, the following being the dates of important changes. From 1791 to 1841 four distinct divisions exist, with separate governments, laws, and archives, viz : — Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Lower Canada (now Quebec) and Upper Canada (now Ontario). In 1841 Upper and Lower Canada were united under the name of the province of Canada. In 1867 the confederation of these four provinces occurred; since which date the gathering of statistical information is less difficult. In 1870 the Northwest territories were acquired and the province of Manitoba was created. In 1871 British Columbia and in 1873 Prince Edward Island joined the Dominion.

First railway built.

The first railway enterprise in the country was the construction of a short section of road, 16 miles long, between La Prairie and St. Johns, in what is now the province of Quebec but at that time called Lower Canada. This was opened in July 1856, with horse traction, locomotive power being adopted the following year. It was part of the Montreal and Champlain Railway, which was completed in 1851, giving communication between Caughnawaga, on the south side of the River St. Lawrence, above Montreal, and Rouse's Point near the boundary line of the United States.

Between 1857 and 1850 but little was done in the direction of railway works, there being in the year 1847 only 54 miles (87 kilometres) of railway in operation, all in Lower Canada. The principal means of communication was by water, which was made available by the construction of the system of Canals on the River St. Lawrence, opened in 1848, the Welland Canal, giving access from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron, having been opened in 1829.