

Belgium, then, which is the most thickly-populated country in Europe, is, at the same time, one of the most prosperous, with a population but little given to emigration; as nearly self-sufficient, agriculturally, as well as industrially, as it is possible for any community to be. Owing to its dense population, and to other causes, it is both industrial and agricultural; it may be said, indeed, almost literally, that there is not an inch of waste space in the whole country; the plough, the spade, and the factory rule supreme. The other causes referred to are, of course, those on which I chiefly wish to insist, its admirable systems of cheap and easy transport, its canals and light railways.

As to the prosperity of Belgium, a point to be insisted on, the latest statistics available, those of 1898, give its population as 6,669,732, the value of its trade, per 1,000 inhabitants, as 574 millions of francs (about 23 millions of dollars) as compared with 480 millions of francs (about 19 millions of dollars) for the United Kingdom, and 211 millions of francs (about 8 millions of dollars) for the United States. As to the causes indicated, which are, undoubtedly, the true ones, its navigable waterways, rivers and canals, measure 2,193 kilometers, or 7.5 kilometers to every 100 square kilometers of territory. These, it must be remembered, are in addition to its railways, 6,600 kilometers, 2,000 being the narrow gauge system, known as "Vicinaux," or, as we should say, light railways, connecting every town and village with every other. "The transport industry," the report from which I am quoting states, "is one of the primary causes of the prosperity of Belgium. It has been the constant object of the government's care." Is it not possible that we have, here, the model to be followed, if Canada is to attain her manifest destiny?

These light railways, which, with the navigable waterways, form the most perfect system of internal communication in existence, are, it may be explained, narrow gauge, steam lines, running along side the main highways, through the villages and towns, and carrying passengers and freight—the last is of prime importance to our subject—at very low rates. Two examples, only, need to be given here, concerning which, the comparative cost of everything, in Belgium in Canada must, of course, be borne in mind; a difference best, perhaps, indicated, by the respective units of value, the franc—twenty cents—and the dollar, though the rule is not, of course, of universal application, but depends on many circumstances. Taking this difference into account, however, and the estimated cost of the whole transport system of Belgium—the cost of replacing it—33,000,000 francs, the following official tariffs, supplied by the Consul