

MARKS EPOCH IN ISLAND'S GROWTH

Lieutenant-Governor Paterson Turns First Sod of Canadian Northern Pacific Railway Company's Local Section

LARGE ATTENDANCE AT INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Premier McBride Says Province's Portions of New Transcontinental will be Complete in Three Years

An event which marks one of the most important epochs in the development of Vancouver Island took place Saturday afternoon, when His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor turned the first sod of the Island section of the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway.

The ceremony was the formal inauguration of construction work upon the new road. There was a large attendance of thoroughly representative citizens, perhaps three hundred in all, who witnessed an event well calculated to become notable when the history of the Greater British Columbia that is to be, comes to be written.

In the course of a trenchant speech delivered on the occasion Premier McBride stated that all sections of the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway in this province would be under contract within twelve or eighteen months at latest, and that this present portion of the new transcontinental railway would be completed and ready for operation before the expiry of three years.

Scene of Ceremony The ceremony of ground breaking was timed for three o'clock, the initial point of construction being Station 270, at what is known as "Mile 270" on the Island location. This is a short distance beyond the Point Mile House on the Colquitz cross-road, just off Burnside and very close to the head of Deadman's river. The spirit of the times was thoroughly exemplified in the very numerous array of motor cars bearing to the scene the distinguished guests of the occasion, while the public life of the country, its commercial and industrial development were most comprehensively represented in the assemblage present, including as it did members of the Government and Parliament of British Columbia, the foremost captains of industry of this western Province, members of the Island Development League, the Board of Trade, the Victoria City Council—indeed all leaders in recognition of the great potentialities of Vancouver Island and of fast ripening opportunities for its exploitation, with the object of making this most resourceful island one of the most popular and richest integral portions of the great Dominion.

Complete Arrangements Admirably complete arrangements for the important ceremony for initiating construction of the Canadian Northern on this island had been made by Mr. T. G. Holt, the general executive for the railway company in British Columbia, who in this connection had been most ably seconded by the local right-of-way agent, Mr. Robert Green, and Mr. M. G. Carlin and Messrs. Grant, Smith & Company, contractors for the first section from Victoria westward toward the sea. It was at 3:15 that way was made through the compact circle of interested spectators and the principal actors in the significant ceremonies took their places by the roadside where a very workmanlike spade mutely invited the activities of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor. The formalities of the occasion were introduced by Mr. Holt, who briefly addressed the assembled citizens before calling upon His Honor to perform the pleasing rite of turning the first sod.

Your Honor, Mr. Premier, ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Holt, "it affords me the greatest of pleasures to have you here with us today as our guests on an occasion which is certainly destined to be historic, as it officially marks the coming of the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway to Vancouver Island, and if the history of other parts of Canada where our great company has built its lines it is to be gathered here, and I am sure it is, then you are certain to have a large increase, as the result of the construction now to be initiated, in the business and general prosperity of our already prosperous and beautiful island. I do not propose, ladies and gentlemen, to make any speech on this auspicious occasion, but will ask His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor to turn the first sod."

The Honorable Mr. Paterson at once stepped forward and gracefully presided over the ceremony in which the lead- ing part had been assigned to him, with a few words to the significance of the occasion and the importance of the development of the new transportation facilities about to be provided. Said he:

His Honor's Speech "Mr. Holt, Mr. Premier, ladies and gentlemen: It must be exceedingly gratifying and very pleasant indeed to all who have an interest in the city of Victoria and the province of British Columbia, and more especially the island of Vancouver, to have the opportunity of being here present today and taking part in the ceremony of breaking ground for a railway from

which we hope to see such important results in connection with the opening up and the subsequent development of this portion of our heritage. It is well known to all of us that the material prosperity of the province of British Columbia is dependent very largely upon the perfection of the systems of transportation serving the province, and we must all be pleased to see that the attention of the great railway companies of the country has recently been drawn to our province, knowing, as we do, that with adequate railway facilities the position and prosperity of the province is just beginning. Few, I may say, are in a position to realize the amount of railway construction that is at present going on or certainly assured, for in this province even within the next decade railway building will be on a magnificent scale. We have at the present time several transcontinental lines building westerly for the Pacific Ocean, and the completion of these undertakings I believe will be but the beginning. The trade of the Dominion has so increased in late years that not only two or three important railway services will be imperatively demanded, but I am firmly convinced that the next ten or fifteen years will see as many as a dozen lines of railway coming to this province in order to meet the requirements of the developing trade of Canada. It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity today of breaking ground in connection with the construction of the Canadian Northern Pacific on the island of Vancouver."

His Honor stepped forward as he concluded, and grasping the spade in a thoroughly workmanlike fashion, lightly turned the first sod, saying as he did so:

"I declare ground to be broken in the construction of the Canadian Northern Pacific on this island, and the first sod well and truly turned," an announcement received with a spontaneous round of cheers.

Making History Premier McBride, next being called upon by Mr. Holt, said that he had the greatest satisfaction in being present on this truly auspicious occasion, and that he felt confident that the entire country would agree with him when he said that in the history more particularly of the development of Vancouver Island, this day would certainly be regarded as a red-letter one. For many years past, British Columbia and more especially Vancouver Island, had been very strong in its advocacy that if it were to be expected that this portion of Canada should be opened up and peopled with an industrious population, more railways must be supplied to meet the requirements of the land. It was with this idea that the enterprise of the Canadian Northern Pacific had been initiated and it could be confidently anticipated that it would now be carried to a successful consummation and Vancouver Island thereby afforded opportunity to grow strong in industries and in population, realizing the high destiny for the accomplishment of which Nature had so generously dowered this beautiful island.

A Great Company "Mr. Holt had very modestly refrained from any particular reference to the important part that the Canadian Northern would play in the important development programme this day inaugurated, and this was especially to be wondered at when it was remembered that that gentleman was a native of good old Ireland. He might at least have made some reference to the great work that the Canadian Northern Railway was now doing for the development of Canada. However, it seemed he preferred that anything of this kind should be left in other hands. In pursuance of this great undertaking, it was most gratifying to know that the country had every assurance that the corporation behind the railway construction enterprise now initiated was in every way capable of carrying it through to a complete and most satisfactory conclusion. In the past few years, twelve or fourteen years at the most, this Canadian Northern Company had constructed upwards of seven thousand miles of standard gauge railway in the Dominion of Canada, and it had under construction at the present time several thousands of miles in addition. It gave employment today to upwards of twenty-six thousand white people in this Dominion. Its enterprises had added several hundred towns to those appearing on the map of Canada, and everywhere, to every part of the country to which its lines had been extended, it had also brought an era of unprecedented prosperity, more especially to the west of the Great Lakes, where the present most gratifying conditions dated from the time of their commencement of actual operations.

Premier's Optimism "If one were to take the experience of other parts of Canada as indicative of what is now to be happening on Vancouver Island, he would be guilty of no extravagance in saying that it was fully to be expected that Vancouver Island within the next five years—he would cut the prophecy as to the events in store during the next decade in two—would witness more than a doubling of population and easily a tripling of its industrial wealth. There was much good land on Vancouver Island, which only awaited facilities of communication to become the homesteads of an important agricultural population. The timber product of Vancouver Island was surpassed by none in the world, and when one considered the wonderful timber resource extending along the mainland coast, and the adjacent coast of Vancouver Island one must conclude that its development in itself would prove a most valuable factor in the upbuilding of greater British Columbia. The coal measures of the country as all were aware, had already been discovered, developed and operated upon a large scale. In these two Vancouver Island coal lines was exceptionally situated; the only exten-

sive coal measures along the American Pacific seaboard, were here found, and they were, too, the largest on the Pacific coast. As for the agricultural possibilities of the island, its fruit growers, more particularly in recent months had demonstrated against keen competition that they were easily capable of winning honors against the best products that any country could produce were capable of placing upon the market. With its incomparable climate, its scenery of constant variety and unsurpassed magnificence, and its vast waterway system, Vancouver Island appeared to possess all the requisites of greatness, constituents for which its people were largely indebted to generous nature. Surely with these as a foundation and with the assistance that was to be obtained through the co-operation of this enterprising corporation, the substantial progress which he had predicted for the next five years, could not be very much out. And when one referred to Vancouver Island in such terms one referred as well to the whole of British Columbia, as the development of this portion of the province and anything that would make for the building up of the resources and greatness of Vancouver Island, must also mean the growth and prosperity, not only of the province of British Columbia, but for the whole of the great Dominion of Canada, of which it was a part.

In Competent Hands "It was a matter of very considerable satisfaction that the work of construction now undertaken should be initiated under the very competent direction of Mr. Thomas Gratton Holt, as this in itself was assurance that all forecasts with regard to the practical details of an efficient construction would be observed to the very letter. Mr. Holt had proven himself one of the most competent as well as one of the most active pioneers in the railway construction activities of western Canada. It was of peculiar interest to note that Mr. Holt, in association with Sir William Mackenzie, had played a very prominent part in these activities, and had been most prominently identified with the construction of that wonderful series of snowsheds along the C. P. R., which no doubt many of those present had time and again passed through. With such a substantial company at the head of affairs and such a genial and capable and executive head as Mr. Thomas Gratton Holt the country was to be congratulated upon the assurance which the inauguration of the present enterprise contained of fast growing and wide spreading prosperity in the immediate future, and all present would join with him and with the representative of His Majesty the King in wishing God speed for this great national undertaking.

Hon. Thomas Taylor The minister of railways being called for by Mr. Holt, Honorable Thomas Taylor said that he, too, had the greatest pleasure in being present upon an occasion unquestionably destined to mark a new and important era in the development and prosperity of Vancouver Island. He might even go further and say that this day marked an eventful epoch in the history of the whole province of British Columbia and the Dominion of Canada. He was inclined to think that his introduction as minister of railways was perhaps a little premature, but he could only express the desire, if it should be that he were appointed to that responsible office, that he would realize to the full his sincere wish to be of every assistance possible in the successful carrying forward of this great undertaking. He hoped that the accomplishment of the company's undertaking would meet with no obstacle, and that those present might soon assemble again to celebrate upon the completion of the Vancouver Island section of the line, an event as satisfactory and auspicious as the present.

A series of photographs which are no doubt destined to have their own particular part as exhibits in the history of Vancouver Island, were first taken of the twentieth century were taken; souvenir hunters quickly possessed themselves not only of the spade used by His Honor, but also of the sod itself, most equitably divided; and an adjournment was taken to the nearest construction camp, where all who had gathered to witness the afternoon ceremonies were entertained at luncheon as the guests of the railway company. The catering was in the hands of Mr. James Bell and the collation was of the best. First Mr. Bell acted as toast master, and speeches of justified optimism marked the interesting occasion. The toasts were but five in number: His Majesty the King, the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Canadian Northern and those captains of industry, Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Mann, Vancouver Island, and Premier McBride.

"Most Eventful Occasion." In proposing the health of His Honor, former Lieutenant-Governor, Hon. Edgar Dewdney made a most felicitous and appropriate short speech, in which he referred to the occasion that had brought the happy company of the day together as one of the most eventful in which he had had the pleasure of participating during his fifty years of residence in this Pacific Province. He expressed his full appreciation for the significance of the occasion, and noted that while he had had the pleasure of turning the first sod in connection with the inauguration of two railway enterprises, he had never seen such a function as had fallen to His Honor, Lieutenant-Governor Paterson, more capably performed.

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