

The Transformation of Port Arthur which in C.P.R. construction days was called Prince Arthur's Landing.

# THE WEST IN 1881—AND NOW

*With Extracts from a Book Written by Mr. W. H. Williams, who in 1881 was a Writer on the Toronto Globe*

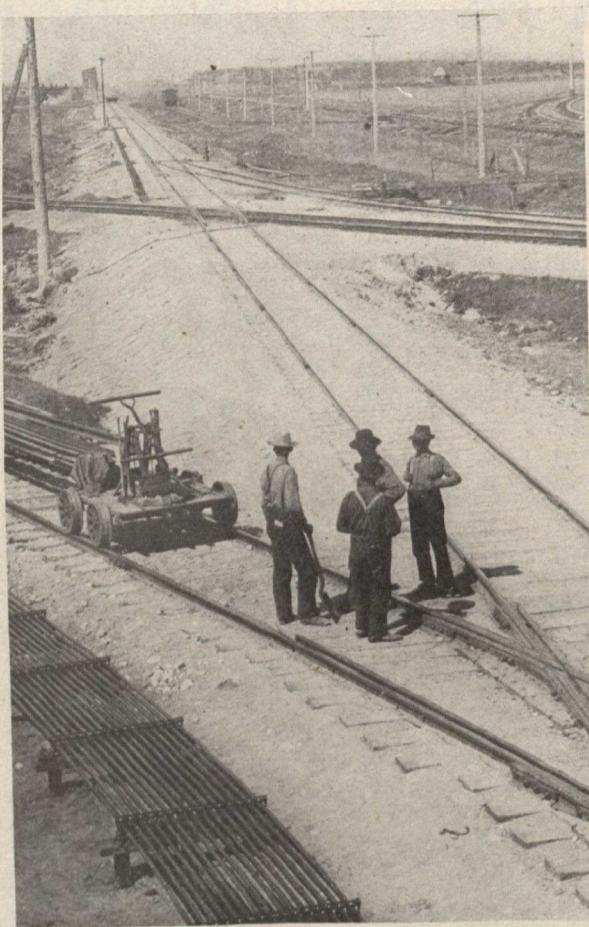
THE West that is—most of us are beginning to know that. The West that was—is very quickly passing away. One of these fine days Canadians as a people will begin to realise that once we had an outpost land full of epical interest and rugged virility and splendid poetry. We have heard and seen about the wheat and the elevators and the race of the railroads; we have seen the upcoming of the young cities by hundreds on the plains; we are conscious that the West is becoming no longer a limbo of undiscovered things, but an empire of communities which one of these days will hold the balance of population in Canada.

All this is very well. This is modern Canada. Earl Grey has just got back from a tour of the western provinces and the Yukon. He has been entertained at state and social functions. He has seen in the West as much upholstery and up-to-date-ness as in most eastern towns and cities. A few years ago Lord Minto went out when there was less; and he was beautifully jolted up from Calgary to Edmonton over one of the roughest railroads in America. Even that was luxury and ease compared to the epochal entourage of Lord Lorne in 1881—which it is the business of this article to portray—in part. Lord Lorne saw the West with his own eyes; went over the trails by saddle and buckboard; saw the land of no railroads; the land of fur posts and Indian camps; of half-breed shacks and buffaloes. He saw a buffalo hunt. He entertained thousands of Indians and listened to Indian legends; visited Poundmaker and Piapot and the chiefs of the six tribes down in the south-land hills. From Prince Arthur's Landing—now Port Arthur—to Winnipeg by the new C. P. R. as yet scarcely ballasted; thence to Portage la Prairie; from there north over the trails with an outfit of guides and an artist, a retinue—and a scribe whose business it was to write up the trip, and right well he did it; a journey, so far as the scribe was concerned, lasting from July till December; by means of which he saw all the towns that the trails ran into: Fort Carlton, Prince Albert, Battleford—thence across plains to Calgary, antedating the new route by railroad; from that down to Macleod in the cow hills; then up to Morley in the foothills; back to Calgary and then home, leaving the scribe to complete the long, tortuous traverse back to Winnipeg via Edmonton, Battleford and the Touchwood Hills.

## The Change of Twenty-Odd Years.

*Tempus fugit!* Twenty-odd years ago there was very little Brandon; no Regina save a spot called "Pile-o'-Bones"; no Saskatoon and no Lethbridge; no North Battleford and no Lloydminster; no Wetaskiwin and no Lacombe; not even a Dauphin or a Yorkton, a Medicine Hat or a Moosejaw—except a shack and a tent or two. There was not a single railroad running north and south; nothing but the "streak of rust" to Winnipeg and after that—trails; carts and camps and Indians; a Winnipeg of the boom time—a wooden Winnipeg with no wheat; a Calgary of cow camps and of tents—in short, just about everything that has since begun to pass away, and that makes it of the most absorbing interest to modern Canadians to read and to see what like was that vast limbo of Rupert's Land and the territories of which the capital was then old Battleford.

Extracts only from Mr. W. H. Williams' en-



Where Three Transcontinentals Cross.



Land on this old Hudson's Bay Co. Trail now Main St., of Winnipeg, is worth \$3,000 to \$4,000 a foot.

gaging book are given in this and an article to follow. The few modern pictures serve to show the contrast between the old and the new.

## Port Arthur as it used to be.

"Early this morning the beautiful little town of Prince Arthur's Landing was astir and busy with preparations for His Excellency's departure. A train, consisting of three flat cars, the caboose—facetiously christened by the contractors the 'Pullman,'—a wood car, and a powerful Portland locomotive, was in waiting opposite the Queen's Hotel, and by six o'clock the baggage was all aboard. The train moved off amid tremendous cheers from the large crowd assembled to witness its departure, and went rattling swiftly away. At Fort William a large crowd assembled to meet the train, His Excellency being lustily cheered as the train pulled up at the crossing. There was some delay here, as a box car, loaded by the caterer for the trip over Section A, had to be added to the train. The train was now made up as follows: Directly behind the locomotive was a flat car carrying an extra supply of wood, then came a box car containing the caterer's supplies, then a flat-car furnished with seats, then the 'Pullman' which had been handsomely fitted up with carpets, sofas, easy chairs, etc., then another flat-car furnished with seats and fitted with a neat, light awning, and last of all a flat-car furnished with seats.

## Railroading in 1881.

"Leaving Rat Portage on the evening of the 1st inst. I was taken by canoe to a point on the Canada Pacific Railway, about three miles west of the village, and nearly opposite to Mather & Co.'s handsome sawmill. After waiting there for about an hour and a half I had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Mackenzie Bowell (who was also starting for Winnipeg), seated in a hand car along with our baggage, and whirled away down the track about a mile and a half to where we were to meet a construction train. Arrived at the spot, which was just at the edge of a cutting, we had to wait about an hour before the train came along, and the mosquitoes were uncommonly active. Darkness came along before the train did, but at last a loud, shrill whistle announced the approach of the locomotive, and in a few seconds more on she came pushing thirty flat cars loaded with gravel ahead of her. The cars were none of them very heavily loaded, and with the aid of a gravel plough and a steel wire cable the ballast was quickly transferred from the flats to the fill. We were then invited to take seats in the driver's cab, and a run to Ostrasund was made at a rattling pace. It was the first time Mrs. Bowell had ever ridden on a locomotive, and it was the first locomotive that had ever carried a Cabinet Minister's wife.

So far as I could judge, about half the distance had been traversed, when arriving at a way station, we were informed that a sink hole had been developed in a piece of particularly soft muskeg since the evening before. At six o'clock on Monday night the rails at this point had been two feet above water, but that morning the water was found to be two feet above the rails. To meet this difficulty Mr. Schrieber sent a despatch to Cross Lake ordering a locomotive to meet us at the opposite side of the sink hole. Our locomotive was then put behind the passenger coach which it shoved slowly toward