

What the Railways are Doing

A Great Railway Building

The current year will be, more than any other, a year of railway construction for Canada. There will not only excessive mileage constructed, but several of the roads to be built will be extremely important. Everything, in the public eye, is overshadowed by the G. T. P., but construction work of considerable magnitude is to be carried out also by the C. P. R., the Canadian Northern and the Great Northern. The direct line of the Canadian Pacific from Winnipeg to Edmonton will be finished, and will be opened for transportation, as will also the new main line of the Grand Trunk to the same city. The former will have, as a result of the year's operations, a double track on a portion of this through line to Edmonton. To match this and to make provision for the rapidly increasing traffic, the double tracking of the Canadian Pacific from Winnipeg to Fort William will be brought to a successful termination. The work of the Great Northern will be confined to the completion of the work which is already in hand, and no new mileage will be constructed with the exception of that which is being carried forward in the far west.

The larger sums of money will be expended by the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk Pacific, both of which will be engaged in very important enterprises. The undertakings of the C. P. R. embrace from ten to a dozen separate contracts. To the east of the city of Winnipeg work will be carried forward on the main line to Fort William, where the concluding work will be done on the double tracking. About one-half of the track on this new line has been laid, and the rock work is pretty well complete. The total distance to be built between Winnipeg and the lakes amounts to 418 miles, and the work remaining to be done consists chiefly in making the large fills along the line.

The entire new work of the C. N. R. during last season amounted to 270 miles, and it is possible that work to the same extent may be undertaken this year. In any case, there is an immense amount to be done in the way of betterments of existing tracks and the completion of the lines which were originated last year.

On the Grand Trunk Pacific steel will be laid between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie for a distance of about forty-five miles, thus complet-

ing the line between these two points. The gap in the track between the present western terminus of the track in the Touchwood hills and the present eastern terminus of the portion of the line running east from Saskatoon will be closed, giving a connected line from Winnipeg to Saskatoon over which ballasting trains can be operated at once.

Officials of the company expect that the line will be completed between Saskatoon and Edmonton during the current year. The great impediment in the way of its completion is the construction of the Battle River bridge. Were it not for this bridge, there could be no doubt regarding the construction of the completed line, since one hundred and fifty days will lay all the track. Work on the Battle River bridge cannot, however, be well begun until the line of rail has reached that point from Saskatoon, a distance of two hundred and four miles. Three to four months will be required to complete the permanent bridge over the river. Should it appear that in view of the length of time required for the construction of the bridge, there is danger that the line will not be completed into Edmonton this year, the track laying machines will begin work from the Edmonton end and will push on the track laying from the Clover Bar bridge eastward.

On the Grand Trunk Pacific west from Edmonton, the work will be done under the direction of Foley, Walsh & Stewart, the contractors for the construction of the dump for a distance of 126 miles. The same contractors will build the dump for a distance of six miles east from Edmonton to the big bridge at Clover Bar. Large forces of men will be engaged with the usual working in both directions from the city. On the Pacific coast Foley, Walsh & Stewart will also probably be engaged in building the line from Prince Rupert to a point one hundred miles distant.

This section is an interesting one, owing to the fact that the larger portion of it is along the shore of the ocean and the shore of the Skeena river. Sixty miles of the line is of this nature; and vessels with supplies can reach the point of operation at any time. Much of the work is heavy rock cutting along the shore of the ocean and the river, but it is expected that the work involved could be completed in a comparatively short time. The value of the contract is under-

stood to be in the neighborhood of \$7,000,000.

East of the city J. D. McArthur will be engaged in the completion of his contract for the construction of 247 miles of the National Transcontinental, and Foley Bros and Larson will probably complete the construction of a line two hundred miles long, running from the head of the lakes in a northwesterly direction to the main line of the National Transcontinental. Almost 5,000 men are engaged in the work of the contract of J. D. McArthur at the present time, and during the summer there will be about 10,000 engaged.

The Grand Trunk Pacific railway, Winnipeg to Prince Rupert, will be approximately 1,740 miles in length. The Lake Superior branch, extending from Fort William to Lake Superior Junction, on the main line of the eastern section (of the Transcontinental railway) will be 200 miles long. Of this total mileage of 1,940 miles, there is at present 1,000 miles under actual construction, including the entire Lake branch, and the main line between Winnipeg and Edmonton.

About 800 miles of grading have been completed, and 470 miles of rail laid, of which 200 miles is ballasted.

During last year there were employed in connection with the construction work over 22,000 men and about 6,000 animals; the expenditure in labor and material being in the neighborhood of \$12,000,000.

The total mileage so far constructed by the Great Northern in Manitoba amounts to 173 miles, as follows: Neeche to Portage, 78 miles; Walhalla to Morden, 22 miles; St. John to Brandon, 73 miles. No announcement has been made yet about its new work.

In the far west, the Great Northern is gradually extending its lines in Southern British Columbia, and is now operating a train to Keremeous. This line will be pushed westward along the banks of the Similkameen river this season, and the Canadian cities of the coast will without doubt be eventually reached by this route.

These details refer only to the railway construction in the West. Work on the eastern half of the G. T. P. is being done under Government supervision, and will also be extensive. There should be no chance for a man who can work with his hands, to be idle this summer, in Canada. What this all means to Canada in the way of setting money in circulation is hard to imagine.