

IS THERE A RAILWAY MUDDLE?

AFTER Confederation had been accomplished as a legislative act, the scattered provinces, including British Columbia, were connected from sea to sea by the completion of the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific Railways. Yet even then there was room for the gibe that the newly united provinces resembled a bundle of fishing rods tied at both ends. Almost the entire population lived on the sea coast or upon tidal waters or fringed the northern shores of the great lakes. The Canadian Pacific Railway, it is true, furnished a highway between British Columbia and Eastern Canada, but it traversed the southern portions of Manitoba and the north-west territory and did not at any time get far away from the international boundary line.

Big, indeed, was the problem presented to the newly formed Dominion of Canada. How was she to develop, to people and to make productive her vast inland Empire?

There were vast territories in Northern Ontario and Quebec, but little explored and sparsely populated, and there was also a great last west extending from the great lakes to the Rocky Mountains. The latter, though thinly peopled, and at that time unproductive, promised great possibilities. It was a country equal in size to the combined areas of Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the British Isles. There were, and are, unproductive lands in Western Canada, it is true, but it must be remembered that there are lands in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany for which no use has been found after hundreds of years of settlement. Up to date wheat growing has been the main industry of the prairie provinces, and lands have been rejected as worthless unless adapted to cereal cultivation. But as time goes on, many other uses will be found for the land, and there is no reason to doubt that with the urban growth that must accompany the development of the country, we may some day find a population of 35,000,000 people in Western Canada. The worked out lands of Germany and Scandinavia, with less acreage between them, sustain an exclusively agricultural population of 24,000,000.

Not unnaturally, therefore, the work of developing and building up the great inland empire of Canada began in the country west of Lake Superior. There the colonization roads were built about which we have said so much, but those roads only for a time preceded population. The railways were soon fully occupied in building branches for the accommodation of settlers. So great was the influx of settlement that within a few years it passed the end of steel. Western farmers became railway lobbyists who did not ask—they demanded—that assistance be given to lines which would carry their grain to market. They appointed deputations to wait upon the Government and the railway companies, pointing out in unmistakable language their transportation necessities.

The colonization railways proved the value and extent of the resources, but something more was necessary to realize the great productive possibilities of the West; the country required adequate means of reaching the outside world to market the crops, and for the purchase of its requirement of manufactured commodities. Settlers were pouring in, not all of them, however, of British birth or even of English speech. It became, therefore, most important, if this inland empire were to be an integral part of Canada that more railways run east and west across the Dominion.

BY the beginning of the century an insistent and vehement demand arose for the construction of transcontinental railways. Eastern merchants and manufacturers were anxious to sell to the West, but they did not fully realize how they were handicapped by lack of transportation facilities. In the West were many people who had moved from Eastern Canada, and they were strongly impressed with the national spirit and strove to make the people of Eastern Canada understand the gravity of the situation. Mr. Frank Oliver, in the Session of 1903, from his place in the House of Commons, plainly pointed out to the East its dangers, in the terse language of the West:

"Now, let us point out just how and where your throat is cut. It is a matter of notoriety that in Western Canada the importation of United States machinery for agricultural purposes has increased in recent years far beyond the increase of our population. Your manufacturers of Eastern Can-

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IV.—OUR INLAND EMPIRE

By C. PRICE GREEN

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ada are not keeping pace with the increased population of the West in their sales. Now, why is this? There is no difference in the protective duty, and there is no difference in the freight rate over our eastern lines. The difference is because the manufacturing centres of the United States which supply those articles, are situated so close to the Canadian boundary, and enjoy the lowest possible freight rates from the Atlantic Coast; they are, therefore, able to put their products into our wheat fields at a rate that you in this end of the country cannot compete with under present circumstances."

The business men of Eastern Canada were quick to act. The Boards of Trade and municipalities passed resolutions, presented petitions and waited upon the Government. They demanded that railway facilities be furnished to enable the manufacturers and merchants of Ontario and Quebec to more fully participate in the benefits of trade with Western Canada. While the Western farmers asked for branch lines and more branch lines, the Eastern manufacturers asked for additional lines east and west across the continent.

There was also the question of how the Western farmers were to get their crops to market. The United Kingdom was admittedly the ultimate purchaser of our grain and flour. We might sell our wheat in the United States, but only to have it later on transhipped to Europe either as wheat or flour. But that would involve the crop being largely handled in the United States, and far-sighted men even then perceived the importance of having our Western grain find its way by an all-Canadian route to the sea.

THE services required in the exportation of the Western crop are more varied than is usually supposed. The grain markets commission, appointed by the Saskatchewan Government, which reported, in 1914, estimated the cost in connection with 1,000 bushels of No. 3 northern wheat shipped through a country elevator in Saskatchewan, hauled to Winnipeg, there sampled and graded by the Government, sold on commission to an exporter, hauled to Fort William, unloaded, weighed, received in store, cleaned and insured at a terminal elevator, inspected out to a lake steamer before the close of navigation, carried to a Georgian Bay or Lake Erie port, unloaded through a transfer elevator into a railway car, hauled to Montreal, unloaded from the car into a transfer elevator, loaded thence into a steamer, and carried to Liverpool or London, as \$304 in 1909 and \$346 in 1912. And remember that those charges are assessed against a thousand bushels of wheat! This is the usual route through which Western grain is marketed, and, based on these figures, 39 million dollars are earned in moving a normal wheat crop available for export from the prairie provinces to the seaboard.

The business of transporting and marketing grain is second in importance only to that of growing grain. Multiply by thirty cents the millions of bushels now carried, and that will be carried when the country has reached its full productive power; make due allowance for reductions in charges that will be effected as a result of cheaper services, estimate the proportion that is distributed within the country by way of wages and materials and you have at least one reason why the nation should assist in building up highways of commerce across the continent within the Dominion.

In short, colonization roads built up the West. Then it was agreed that transcontinental railways were needed to knit the East and West together; to keep the lines of trade within the country and within the Empire.

But how were the new transcontinental roads to make their way from tide water to the wheat fields of the West?

A glance at the map showed an immense territory north of the line of settlement in Ontario, which had for the most part been left in its primitive state. This country was referred to as a "gap" which required to be "bridged" that East and West might be united. And, in truth, it was a sort of "no man's

land" from the car windows of the railway which traversed its southern boundary along the north shore of Lake Superior. But back over the "divide," only fifty miles or less away, lay a vast country, the resources of which were yet to be revealed.

IN the year 1900, the Ontario Government published a report of exhaustive surveys that had been made of the resources of New Ontario. The people of Canada were astounded that there was found to be in the northern portion of the Province of Ontario a territory "larger than the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Delaware combined" . . . nearly all of which was adapted to cultivation with a climate "not unsimilar to that of the Province of Manitoba" . . . and possessing "an abundance of wood for fuel, building and commercial purposes and many falls on the rivers and streams which could be used with advantage in the creation of economical power." It was estimated by the Government Commissioners that there were in the unorganized districts of Ontario, north of the Canadian Pacific Railway, 270 million cords of pulpwood; and, in addition, a very considerable quantity of merchantable pine timber.

The Ontario Government, in building the first section of a long-talked-of line to James Bay, uncovered the rocks and laid bare the rich silver and cobalt area of the Cobalt district. The copper and nickel district, first developed in the neighbourhood of Sudbury, was found to extend northward, while literally mountains of iron ore are to be found in the hinterlands of Northern Ontario.

The fifteen years that have elapsed since the comprehensive survey by the Ontario Government in 1900 have witnessed but a slow development of the resources of the hinterland of the province. But this has been due to lack of transportation and not to inherent defects in the country. The fertility of the soil and the favourable character of the climate have been proven by actual cultivation and settlement. The 1915 Year Book of the Ontario Government refers to the work of its Northern Ontario development as follows:

"The experimental farms and plots were operated this season in continuation of the work started last year. Clover, alsike (?) and timothy grew in great abundance on all the different farms. Fall wheat did well wherever it was tested and averaged from 27 to 35 bushels per acre. Twenty acres of oats yielded 55 bushels per acre.

"Ground Hog Illustration Farm. At the garden plot on the bank of the Ground Hog River, where all classes of vegetables were tested, very good results were obtained.

"The following varieties of potatoes were planted and yield given: Delaware, 234 bushels per acre; Irish Cobbler, 198 bushels per acre; Germari No. 1, 240 bushels per acre; Early Eureka, 175 bushels per acre.

"The conditions necessary for the more speedy settlement of large areas of good farming land in Northern Ontario were never so favourable as they are to-day."

BUT ten or fifteen years ago there were people who clung to the theory that the settled portions of Ontario were separated from Manitoba by a great "divide" just as men for half a century insisted that a desert yawned between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. It was seriously argued that the Grand Trunk should stay in the East and the Canadian Northern remain in the West, leaving the country for all time with but one transcontinental railway. Some insisted that freight rates could only be lowered by double-tracking the Canadian Pacific north of Lake Superior, and giving running rights to the National Transcontinental or any other road that might thereafter desire to carry freight and passengers across the continent. Northern Ontario and Northern Quebec were to remain in the possession of the wild animals and any Indians that might still survive.

Fortunately, the Province of Ontario had enough faith in its north country not only to build a colonization road, but to grant aid to any privately-owned company that would open up New Ontario to settlement. The Dominion Government was also anxious to assist in colonizing the hinterlands of both Ontario and Quebec. Instead of double tracking the existing railway along the north shore of Lake Superior, it was decided to build two new railways in the interior, the three railways (the two new ones traversing the "clay belt"), being approximately an average dis-