

# The Commercial

A Journal of Commerce, Industry and Finance, specially devoted to the interests of Western Canada, including that portion of Ontario west of Lake Superior, the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia and the Territories.

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WINNIPEG, FEBRUARY 9, 1891.

## Railway Development in Western Canada

The year 1890 has been an eventful one in the history of railway construction in Western Canada. In the case of several railways which it was expected would be pushed forward during the year, little or nothing was done, but progress in other directions was sufficient to more than make up for any disappointments which may have been felt in some quarters regarding certain railway enterprises.

The Winnipeg and Hudson Bay railway, as the most important enterprise of the kind in Western Canada, stands in the same position as it was a year ago, so far as the general public are aware. The people, however, have not lost faith in this undertaking, though the same remark can hardly be made about the men who have been manipulating the scheme, perhaps as much to serve personal ends as to honestly endeavor to advance the project. But though the Winnipeg and Hudson Bay railway has not materialized as rapidly as might have been wished for, yet the people are convinced that sooner or later, the great northern route will be opened.

The Northern Pacific company has not fulfilled expectations as to new railway construction in Manitoba during 1890, and this company has done nothing during the year beyond the completion of its Morris-Brandon branch. The Northwest Central has also again defaulted in its promises, and it is indeed time that Parliament should undertake to deal firmly with this corporation. The company receives a valuable land grant and in order to earn this it should be made to fulfill its obligations in the

future. The Winnipeg and Duluth is another important railway enterprise which has not progressed as rapidly as was thought possible a year ago. At that time it was thought that the road might be completed into Winnipeg by the close of 1890. This has not been accomplished; but good progress has been made with the road nevertheless.

So much for what has not been accomplished during 1890. With what has been done there is every reason to feel more than satisfied. The past year has certainly been a most eventful one in railway construction, and several enterprises have been carried out which will mark 1890 as one of the most important years in the railway history of western Canada. During the year the first railway west of the Red river valley and east of the Rocky mountains, to connect with the United States, was constructed. The first railway connecting British Columbia with the United States was also completed a few weeks ago. The first railway to reach the great North Saskatchewan river and open up that valuable region was completed during 1890, and another railway to the North Saskatchewan was commenced. The first railway construction in the interior of British Columbia, excepting the main line of the Canadian Pacific, was begun in 1890, two railways having been put under construction during the year. These are all important events, and with the other railway work done make up a good record for a single year.

In order to refer briefly to each of the various railway enterprises which have engaged attention during the year in western Canada, we will commence by referring to the Port Arthur, Duluth and Western. This is the only road under construction during the year in the territory between Winnipeg and Lake Superior. Some little work was done on this road in 1889, and last summer construction was resumed. About fifty miles have now been completed. Construction in this region cannot be made as rapidly as in a prairie country, as there is considerable heavy work. The road is intended to develop that rich mineral country lying south-west of Port Arthur. The main line of the Canadian Pacific through this region has been greatly improved during the year, by the filling in of trestles and other works on the line.

MANITOBA.

The principal railway work done in Manitoba the past year was by the Canadian Pacific. The Glenboro branch has been extended westward about twenty-five miles through the magnificent agricultural country of that district. The Canadian Pacific Souris branch has also been extended southwest a considerable distance, and the present terminus of this branch is at Hartney. This makes an extension of about twenty miles on this branch from the point where construction was stopped the previous year.

The Northern Pacific have completed their branch running westward from Morris, into Brandon, and that thrifty town has now its second railway outlet eastward. A good train service has been furnished on this road. This company has not done anything towards extending a railway south-westward towards the Souris coal district, as was expected of it last year.

The Northwest Central has completed the first one hundred miles of its road, but so far it has failed to operate the line. This has been a great disappointment to the settlers in the districts through which the road is now completed. It was thought that certainly the road would be put in operation last fall, in order to move out the crop, but such has not proved to be the case. Farmers quite close to the stations along the railway, have been obliged to haul their grain to the nearest points on the Manitoba Northwestern or the Canadian Pacific, between which two lines the Northwest Central is located. An unsettled legal dispute between the company and the contractors, is given as the reason for the failure to operate the road up to the present time.

IN THE TERRITORIES.

Some most important railway work has been done in the territories during 1890. The railway connecting the Saskatchewan town and district of Prince Albert with the main line of the Canadian Pacific at Regina, was completed and opened for traffic early in October. This road is especially important from the fact that it is the first to reach the great Saskatchewan country. This region has long been known as an excellent agricultural and stock country, but heretofore it has been isolated from the world through lack of railway communication. The earliest settlers who went into the territories, selected locations along the Saskatchewan river, on account of the superior advantages offered for settlement. Important settlements were formed years ago at Prince Albert, Battleford, and Edmonton, and all that has been wanting to increase the importance of these settlements was railway accommodation. Without this it was useless for the settlers to produce any larger quantities of produce than were required for local consumption. The opening of the railway to Prince Albert will add to the exports of the country, as it will afford a considerable number of people an opportunity of shipping out the products of their farms.

The construction of a railway to Prince Albert, under the control of the Canadian Pacific, was commenced in 1889, and the road was completed for a distance of about 120 miles that year. Work was resumed last spring, and pushed vigorously until Prince Albert was reached. The total length of the road is 247 miles. It crosses the south branch of the Saskatchewan river at Saskatoon, where an important settlement was formed in 1832, known as the temperance colony. About Prince Albert is one of the largest and best settlements anywhere in the territories, and the establishment of this large settlement, so far from a railway, speaks much for the value of the district as an agricultural country.

The opening of this railway marks a new era in the history of this great prairie region. It is an event of secondary importance only to the construction of the main line of the Canadian Pacific. As a colonization road it opens up a fine region along its entire length, and it can be extended for hundreds of miles further through as good a country as that now served. The great Saskatchewan can now be reached in a few hours from Winnipeg. In a short time the Prince Albert branch may be expect-