

CURRENT TOPICS.

The G.T.R. General Managership.

The retirement of General Manager Hays is not only a serious loss to the G.T.R. Co., but to the Canadian railway service generally & to the Dominion. In the ordinary course of events it was hardly to be expected that he would remain permanently with the G.T.R., the highest office in its service being a general managership, while on the other side of the line there are so many roads with the tempting position of president to be secured by practical men. But it was thought that he would be likely to remain here at least a few years longer, until the various betterments he had planned had been carried out.

In the five short years since Mr. Hays came to Canada he has accomplished great & in some instances marvellous work. The record of this was given so fully in our August issue that we will not refer to it now further than to briefly point out that the physical condition of the property has been enormously improved; the permanent way has been changed in alignment, gradients & structures, so as to permit of the hauling of vastly increased loads & the making of better time; buildings, structures, &c., have been modernized, & one out of three most important works undertaken has been completed, the rebuilding of the Victoria bridge, while similar work on the International bridge & the building of general offices in Montreal are well under way. Equally great improvements have been made in the equipment & in the operation of the line.

In the financial branch excellent paying arrangements have been made with the C.P.R., with the Wabash, & with the Intercolonial for running rights, the Central Vermont & the Chicago & G.T. have been reorganized & put on a sound basis, with the almost certainty that the financial results will be eminently satisfactory, net earnings have been largely increased, & the stock, &c., of the Co. has appreciated many millions during the past five years.

No doubt Mr. Hays was fortunate in taking hold of the G.T.R. just when times commenced to improve & some of the credit for the changed financial position of the Co. must be attributed to that cause, but the larger portion of the improvement is undoubtedly due to the changed methods he introduced & to the work of the able staff with which he surrounded himself.

Mr. Hays' relations with the public have been singularly happy. He has confined himself strictly to his duties as a railway official, has never obtruded in any other capacity & has been uniformly courteous in his administration.

Personally we desire to express our warm appreciation of Mr. Hays' unflinching readiness to co-operate with us in furnishing the latest reliable information about the affairs & operations of the G.T.R. At the very first he realized our desire to publish the fullest & most authentic information possible, & saw that it was to the interest of the Co. to furnish it. In the first interview the writer had with him, Mr. Hays said he fully appreciated the importance of a railway paper securing absolutely reliable information & that he would prefer to be asked for it, no matter how frequently, rather than have incorrect or incomplete matter published. As a result our relations with him have been of a most pleasant nature. No matter how often we requested information, he never advanced the "I can't be bothered" plea, or failed to reply promptly, his practice in this respect being in marked contrast to that of some other railway officials, though we are glad to say they are few in number, who either fail to reply to civil enquiries or answer so tardily that when it does come to hand it is of no use.

In expressing regret at Mr. Hays' return to the United States we are sure we are correctly voicing public opinion in Canada.

The appointment of Geo. B. Reeve to succeed Mr. Hays came as a great surprise, his name not having been among the several which were mentioned by the rumor mongers. When he retired from the General Traffic Managership of the Co. last spring it was thought that he would not enter the railway service again under any circumstances. He had been with the Co. for 40 years, was understood to have amassed a comfortable competence, he received a liberal pension from the superannuation fund, & he had a charming property in Southern California to which he retired with the intention of spending the balance of his life. His selection is a tribute to his undoubted great ability & the appointment has been received with enthusiasm. Though an old servant of the Co., he is one of the new school in his methods, his location at Chicago in the C. & G.T. service has given him an international experience, & there will be no cessation of the vigorous policy of management introduced by Mr. Hays, in which Mr. Reeve took part for over four years. While satisfactory on the ground of efficiency, the appointment is extremely popular with the public & with the officials & employees of the Co.

It may be interesting to reproduce the remarks made by President Sir Rivers Wilson at the semi-annual meeting of the Co. last spring, when he said:—"I am sorry to have to announce to you that our General Traffic Manager, Mr. Reeve, after a long & successful & faithful service of 40 years, is about to retire from our service—he will retire on May 1 next. It is a matter of the most sincere regret to us that he is leaving us, because his services are quite of an exceptional character. He is a man who has been devoted to our interest for very many years. He has brought intelligence of a high order to bear, & the result of his work has been most valuable & most useful to the interests of this Co. I think it is only due to him & it will be only interesting to you, that I should read to you the words of Mr. Hays in announcing to us the most regrettable circumstance of Mr. Reeve's retirement. He writes this:—"Mr. Reeve has filled the position of telegraph operator, agent, train despatcher, soliciting for freight agent, division freight, & finally General Traffic Manager, in which position he has performed the duties of the office energetically & faithfully, & to the credit of the Co. he represents," & Mr. Hays goes on to say—"I need hardly say I shall part with Mr. Reeve with extreme regret. I have never had an officer associated with me in the position occupied by Mr. Reeve, in whose judgment, zeal & fidelity I placed greater confidence. His long connection with & consequent familiarity with the traffic conditions of the property have made his services highly valuable." Well, that tribute from Mr. Hays, than whom there is not a better judge on the continent of America, is a very high tribute indeed to the value of Mr. Reeve's services. We shall part with him with the utmost possible regret."

Wide Rail Base.

An important departure, the result of which will be watched with interest, is being made by the G.T.R. on the second track which is being laid between Hamilton & Niagara Falls. The new rail is the American Society of Civil Engineers' standard 80-lb section, in every respect except that it has been added to the width of the base, & 1/8 in. to the height (in the base), making base of rail 6, instead of 5 in. wide, increasing the bearing surface on a tie with 8 in. face from 40 to 48 sq. in. or 20%. By this very large increase of bearing surface, it is hoped to prolong the wearing

capacity & life of cedar ties from 20 to 25%. The additional steel used in the rail, in order to provide the wider base, makes the weight 90, instead of 80 lbs. per yard.

Government Railway for Manitoba.

Several deputations from Western Manitoba have recently waited on Provincial Premier Roblin, urging additional railway construction. Mr. Roblin is reported as having said that for some reason neither the C.P.R. nor the N.P.R. intended to increase their lines in the Province. He stated definitely that the Government would build a road, but was not prepared to say what the route would be. He would, with his colleagues, give the matter immediate attention, & the road would be constructed in districts where the greatest good would accrue to the greatest numbers. In speaking at Morden recently Hon. R. Rogers said the Government was determined to secure a 10c. wheat rate to Lake Superior, although it might take some time to do so.

The "Soo" Line's Improved Position.

By reference to the half-yearly statement of the C.P.R. Co. to June 30 last, it will be seen that the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Ry. Co. has been enabled to pay back the balance of interest advanced to it by the C.P.R. Co., amounting to \$638,846.80. This is a very satisfactory showing for the subsidiary line, which is a valuable feeder to the parent system, & which may reasonably be expected for the future to take care of itself, notwithstanding the predictions of the croakers who have been pointing to its construction & acquirement by the C.P.R. Co. as a mistake. We have always looked on the acquirement of the "Soo" line as an evidence of sound foresight on the part of the C.P.R. management, & results are endorsing this opinion.

Extension of the Intercolonial.

At the recent farewell dinner to Mr. Hays in Montreal, the Minister of Railways was very emphatic in expressing his desire to see the I.C.R. extended westward. It will be seen by the report on another page he said the road was not going to stop at Montreal, & predicted its extension to Sault Ste. Marie. It looks as though this question would be a live one during the term of the recently elected parliament.

Acetylene Gas on Steamboats.

Capt. Donnelly, in speaking at the recent dinner of the Canadian Electrical Association in Kingston, said that in inspecting a steamboat a short time since he found it lit by acetylene gas, which was contrary not only to Canadian marine laws, but to all reason, as it can only be safely used in a dry & cool place, & such an atmosphere is not found on a steamboat. This is a matter that steamboat owners will do well to bear in mind.

The Michigan Central Ry. has raised its telegraphers' salaries about 15%.

The Secretary of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has received a letter from the Department of Railways to the effect that in future before any change in railway rates, classifications or regulations is endorsed by the Government a committee of the Association will be given an opportunity of expressing the views of the manufacturers regarding the proposed changes.

As a train was moving out of a Scotch station, a man in one of the compartments noticed that the porter in whose charge he had left his baggage had not put it into the van, & so shouted out to him:

"Hi, you old fool! What do you mean by not putting my luggage into your van?"

The porter replied: "Ah, man, your luggage is ne'er such a fool as yourself. You're on the wrong train."