

ACROSS CANADA BY THE NATIONAL

(Jottings by the Way).

By a Special Representative of the B. C. M.

There are said to be some places in Ireland today where it is not safe to acknowledge oneself a "Nationalist." However that may be, it is not only safe, but eminently comfortable and enjoyable to be a "Nationalist" in Canada when one has a transcontinental journey to make. Learned economists may differ as to the theoretical wisdom of Government ownership, but the ordinary traveller after even one experience of the new Canadian National line, will be content to believe that in practice the Government can meet the traveler's needs quite as effectively as can any privately owned corporation.

Leaving Vancouver at a convenient evening hour, from the palatial depot on Main Street (a pledge, we trust of the ultimate adornment of the whole reclaimed area of old False Creek flats) one enjoys a quiet hour "slowing down" after the bustle of departure.

The city slips by in glimpses of tramcars, vistas of gleaming streets, wet pavements reflecting and multiplying the lights; a minute or two at a busy junction, then the rumble of the heavy train over a great steel bridge, where one senses rather than sees the murky flood of the mighty Fraser; then the quiet and dark of the country, the rain drops still pattering on the car windows. One looks up to see the smiling face of the genial porter, and presently with curtains hung and lights subdued, one snuggles down in a most comfortable berth, the seasoned traveller to a sound night's sleep, the novice, perhaps, to listen to the noises of the speeding train, and far into the night to watch the fleeting lights that pass.

The morning's first light finds us following the beautiful valley of the Thompson, presently skirting Kamloops Lake, (an enlargement of the river), at the upper end of which the train stops for a moment close to the buildings of the Tranquille Sanitarium, where kindly welcome, encouragement and help are dispensed to many sufferers from the great "white plague". Then on we go to Kamloops, through a beautiful valley thickly dotted with fruit ranches, many of them irrigated, and producing, we are told, some of B. C.'s finest fruit. At Kamloops Junction the line swings up the valley of the North Thompson, and until midday that river is kept in view. One is struck by the numerous Cascades and waterfalls, representing vast resources of water power waiting to be harnessed to the wheels of industry and commerce. Here and there old fashioned log houses remind us that in this district we are nearer the primitive modes of life—far from the busy metropolis; while swaying wire bridges, crossing the river at intervals recall our own Capilano Canyon. In the afternoon we cross and recross the head-streams of at least five important rivers. A magnificent lumbering country, with great valleys of huge cedars, as yet untouched by the axe of the lumberjack. Later the mountains become more rocky and rugged and presently we are shown just where Mount Robson "lifts its majestic shoulders fourteen thousand feet, (more or less), into the clouds." This last phase may sound like poetic exuberance, but unfortunately, it is sometimes a sober fact, and we have to draw upon our remembrance of a former visit beneath more sunny skies, and imagine that, beyond yon grey impenetrable wall of cloud and mist those "majestic shoulders" aforesaid, really do "rise". Lucerne, the highest point on the National line is not far from Mount Robson, and ten miles farther on we cross the provincial boundary, and so "to bed" in Alberta.

The second morning one must rise betimes to get a little relaxation at Edmonton, where a fifty minute stop is scheduled. Already the mountains are left far behind, and the rolling grass country, dear to the heart of the stock-raiser, is in ev-

idence. In the station-yard at Edmonton, a real cow-boy performs various "stunts" with his lariat, roping a passing cyclist, throwing the rope into a whirling loop and jumping untouched through the loop, all much to the delight of an interested audience at the car windows. Out of Edmonton, East, the train runs to Winnipeg over the tracks of the Grand Trunk Pacific, stopping only at divisional points to change engines and crews. The day and night between these points will seem monotonous to some, especially perhaps to those who find delight in the varied scenery of mountain, stream and forest, with which B. C. abounds. But behind the seeming monotony of grass-land, summer fallow, and stubble is the romance of the world's daily bread. For here is the granary of an Empire! Time and again, as far as the eye can reach, we see row upon row,—mile-long row, and longer—of wheat in the "shook". Occasionally a late harvester is busy with the binder laying low the last of the standing grain. Much more often a hurrying group of teams, waggons and men, strive to keep supplied the hungry maw of a noisy "thresher" that, belching forth a dusty flood of straw and chaff from its long, chimney-like blower, upon a fast growing "stack" on the one side, pours a steady stream of clean golden wheat into the great grain-waggons, that, like army supply trains, "trek" across the prairie to the nearest elevator.

Who can help being stirred by such a sight! What visions it calls up! Think of the scores of huge elevators that store this golden flood, the hundreds of trains and ships that transport it safely over land and sea, the thousands of mill wheels

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