

A Personal Tribute to Sir William Van Horne.

To me Sir William Van Horne's death is a severe blow and irreparable loss; the termination of an intimate friendship of over thirty years which I shall always look back to as one of the greatest privileges of my life.

When, in the autumn of 1881, Mr. Van Horne first visited Winnipeg with Mr. J. J. Hill, who, at the request of the other members of the Canadian Pacific Railway "Syndicate" (as its original directors were designated) to secure the best available man for the stupendous task of building Canada's first transcontinental railway and

at length. In many a conversation he told me of difficulties that were being encountered and of plans for the future that necessarily could not be made public, and I think I can say without egotism that in matters of this nature I enjoyed his confidence to at least as great an extent as any other person not on the company's directorate or in its service, a confidence the respect of which he often spoke of in after years. Looking back over the years that have passed I realize how great was his foresight, how far he planned ahead and how very rarely his judgment was astray.

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The last rail on the C. P. R. main transcontinental line was laid at Craigellachie, B. C., Nov. 7, 1885, after what was described in the directors' report for that year as "Fifty three months of arduous labor, some anxiety and much unfair and undeserved hostility." By a strange coincidence on May 25, 1894, I was at Craigellachie, the scene of Mr. Van Horne's triumphal completion of his great life work, being detained there for some three days by a series of mud slides

917 SHERBROOKE STREET

Montreal
9th June 1894

Dear Brewster -

Very few,
I assure you, of all
the congratulations I
have received have
given me as much
real pleasure as you
for, among other reasons
you were the very
first acquaintance I
made in Canada. I
had not then met Sir
Donald Smith and Angus
was at the time a
resident of St Paul.
When I reached Winnipeg

for the first time early
in October 1881 you
were the very first
man I met on the
station platform and
then commenced an
acquaintance - a friendship
which has never ceased
for a minute to be a
pleasure to me.

I thank you with
all my heart, dear Brewster
for all your kind expressions
and good wishes and
I hope soon to have
an opportunity to repeat
my thanks in person
Sincerely yours
W Van Horne
Acting Brewster }
Winnipeg

organizing its staff, had selected him, I was, among other duties, editing the Manitoba Free Press' railway department, and went to the C. P. R. station to interview him. Vividly do I remember the lasting impression I then formed of him, his commanding presence, his rugged health, his evident determination, his epigrammatic answers, his abundant humor and kindliness.

He assumed his duties at Winnipeg on New Year's Day 1882, and it was part of my work to call almost daily at his office, to which I soon had a clear right of way. Busy as he was, generally working there far into the night, he was invariably courteous and willing to give information as to the company's operations, which he often explained

Mr. Van Horne removed his office from Winnipeg to Montreal late in 1882, but during the construction period he visited Winnipeg very frequently, and after that less often, on most of which occasions I had the privilege of meeting him there, as well as, particularly during later years, in Montreal, and in addition we corresponded frequently. I have an intense feeling of gratitude to him for many personal kindnesses, of great thoughtfulness shown me in some of the happiest and some of the saddest periods of my life, for most valuable advice on many occasions, for much hospitality, including most enjoyable trips over portions of the lines on which I had the privilege of accompanying him, and in the charming sur-

roundings of his own home, and for other unvarying kindnesses extending considerably over a quarter of a century. The last rail on the C. P. R. main transcontinental line was laid at Craigellachie, B. C., Nov. 7, 1885, after what was described in the directors' report for that year as "Fifty three months of arduous labor, some anxiety and much unfair and undeserved hostility." By a strange coincidence on May 25, 1894, I was at Craigellachie, the scene of Mr. Van Horne's triumphal completion of his great life work, being detained there for some three days by a series of mud slides

Few but those who were on the spot in the early eighties have any idea of the col-