

THE GRAND TRUNK

CANADA'S PIONEER RAILWAY.

66TH ANNIVERSARY

A GREAT NATIONAL ASSET

THERE is no great institution in Canada to-day more worthy of the public sympathy than the Grand Trunk Railway, "the Old Grand Trunk," the pioneer railway of the Dominion. That railway system, for many years an integral part of the business fabric of Canada, is observing this year its sixty-sixth anniversary.

The design, the building up and the welding together of this wonderful structure, whose lines of steel now stretch through the country in every direction, are not surpassed in forethought, skill and human interest by any transportation concern on the American continent. A detailed recital of such would form one of the most interesting and important chapters in a complete history of Canada. Comparatively few people, it is safe to say, outside the railway community, are aware of the complexity of this great undertaking, whose name has been a household word in Canada for two generations. It may therefore be a matter of astonishment when one learns that there are about one hundred and twenty-five companies having original statutory existence, which have been merged since into this great system of transportation, and thus become parts of a harmonious whole, either through direct fusion or by long term leases for exclusive use.

Yet the Grand Trunk is taken more or less as a matter of course. Whatever the psychology of the thing, that is the fact. A railway man, talking of this very thing, said the other day:

"The Grand Trunk, in its relation to the people of this country, is like the old arm chair at home. When a visitor comes in you show the latest piece of furniture in the house, and extol its beauties. But when you are looking for a quiet rest you sit in the old chair. You enjoy its comfort and then you forget all about it until the next time you want to use it. Same thing with the Grand Trunk."

CANADA'S PIONEER LINE.

Seeing that it was practically, if not actually, Canada's pioneer line, the history of the Grand Trunk is the story of early day railroading in the Dominion. One of the most interesting epochs in Canadian history is that in which transportation by rail was first mooted and became an active, living reality. During this period many economic changes and improvements were accomplished in Canada. The whole municipal system was thoroughly organized, education was placed in tune with the most approved principles, the feudal tenure in what is now the Province of Quebec, a great barrier to progress, was abolished on equitable principles, representation of the people in Parliament was reformed and extended, civil and criminal laws were revised, amended and coded, reciprocal free trade in natural products was established with the United States, and the canal system perfecting the navigation of the St. Lawrence was completed. In the year 1846 there was in reality only one railway, of 16 miles in length, in the whole country, but in about a decade after that there was completed and in operation about 1,750 miles, of which the main trunk line was that of the present Grand Trunk Railway, by which the trade of the Great Lakes was secured and brought to the Atlantic at Portland, and to the ports of Montreal and Quebec for export overseas.