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A Railway to Hudson Bay. A railroad to Hudson Bay, an enterprise long talked of, appears now to be in process of realization by the Algoma Central Railway Company. The line starts from the town of Sault Ste. Marie on Lake Superior and will be more than five hundred miles in length. Already thirty miles of the road have been completed and its construction is said to be proceeding at the rate of a mile and a half a day. Most of the capital invested in the enterprise has been supplied by Americans, but the Province of Ontario has encouraged it by large grants of land, and it is said the Company hope to secure a subsidy from the Dominion Parliament. In addition to the construction of the Hudson Bay line, the Algoma Company has other important enterprises in hand, being engaged extensively in mining, lumbering and shipping on the Lakes. One of the objects of the Hudson Bay Railway is to furnish a through route to Europe by way of the Arctic Ocean for the shipment of grain. Whether grain can be advantageously shipped by that route is somewhat more than doubtful. But, apart from that consideration, the promoters of the enterprise appear to have faith that it will pay returns for the money invested. For one thing it will open up to settlement a fertile and now finely wooded region of large extent in Northern Ontario. And the road is said to be yielding a considerable revenue from the very start on account of the rich timber lands which it is opening up. Large quantities of timber are already being hauled down to Sault Ste. Marie. A part of this material, no doubt, will be consumed by the pulp mills there, but the output of lumber will be enormous. The road runs for hundreds of miles, it is said, through forests of birch, maple, balsam, poplar and white pine. Curly birch, which sells for 40 cents a cord along the road, commands \$40 a thousand feet in the United States. Elm wood can be cut for 10 cents a cord there and sold on the American side of the line for \$25 a thousand feet. Thus it will be seen that handsome returns are to be had from the investment from the very outset. The region about to be developed is also rich in mineral resources. There are great beds of gypsum and extensive deposits of iron and copper, representing almost fabulous wealth which in time will be developed. The railway company proposes not only to build suitable hotels at a number of points along the route, but also to establish a first class seaside resort on the shores of the Hudson Bay. Game and fish abound in that part of the world, and will attract sportsmen, and the climate and scenery will present other charms to the tourist. It is said that the road is being constructed in a very substantial manner and its building is expected to occupy about three years.

Furnace Bricks from Glass-works Refuse. The Scientific American states that Dr. Ormandy of St. Helen's, near Liverpool, has recently discovered a process whereby good furnace bricks can be made from glass-works refuse. In view of the very large quantities of this refuse material and the value of the product into which it is proposed to convert it, the discovery, if the results do not disappoint expectations, will be one of considerable commercial importance. St. Helen's, which is only a few miles from Liverpool, is not only the centre of the English chemical trade, but contains a large number of glass-works. The millions of tons of refuse which have accumulated around the glass-works heretofore have been treated as of no commercial value. The refuse consists mainly of spent sand, minute particles of glass and about three per cent of iron from the various processes, and it has hitherto been considered that the presence of the iron prevented the use of the material for the manufacture of bricks. Patents have been taken

out to protect the process and a large firm has engaged Dr. Ormandy's services. After testing the value of the discovery by experiments, the firm is now putting up an extensive plant for the manufacture of the bricks. They are about the color of silica bricks and can be glazed. It is claimed that they will stand a great amount of heat.

Light and Power from Niagara. If the people who lived at the beginning of this century had been told of some of the things which would be connected with the every day life of people living at its close, what fairy tales they would have seemed! If some seer had told the people of that day that their grand-children would be able to cross the Atlantic in a week or less, and then in another week cross the continent to the Pacific coast, and all with scarcely more sacrifice of comfort than one suffers in his own parlor, he would have been judged a fit candidate for a madhouse. And if he had foretold that by the close of the century men would be converting the power of Niagara into electricity and sending that subtle force to cities many miles distant, to light them with a brilliancy almost like the sun, to afford power for the printing presses and many factories and for the carriages in which people would ride to and fro upon the streets, his doom would certainly have been sealed. Yet these and many other things as wonderful have come or are coming to pass in these days. We do not know that Niagara is as yet actually utilized for the running of street cars, at a distance from the Falls, but the matter of employing electricity, generated at Niagara, to operate the street railway system of Toronto is being discussed. The proposal may not be carried into effect, but there appears to be no doubt as to its feasibility. The president of the Toronto Street Railway Company, however, expresses doubts whether power furnished from Niagara would be sensibly cheaper than it is as now produced in Toronto. So also if the power can be furnished cheaply enough, Niagara will light Toronto.

A Great and Growing People. A recent article by Mr. J. H. Schooling in the Pall Mall Gazette, discussing the growth of the British Empire in the nineteenth century, shows that the increase of territory in the colonies and dependencies has been from 2,000,000 to 12,000,000 square miles, and this increase has been made in all parts of the world, America, Asia, Africa and Australia. The increase of population is not less remarkable. In 1800 the population under the British flag, outside the United Kingdom, was about 100,000,000, of which only 2,000,000 were white. Now, at the end of the century, the figures given for the total population outside the United Kingdom are 349,000,000, and 12,000,000 of these are white. The area of the British Isles is now only about one ninety-sixth of that of the whole Empire as against one-sixteenth at the beginning of the century. The acquisition of territory by Germany and France, though large in itself, is far less in proportion than that of Great Britain. The territory under German control is five times as great as the area of Germany, and France, though she has been colonizing as long as Great Britain, has acquired colonial territory only eighteen times greater than her own area. And while Great Britain has been planting great colonies and extending so vastly the area of her Empire in all parts of the world, her domestic population has increased much more rapidly than that of either of her great rivals. The population of the United Kingdom has increased during the century from 15,000,000 to 41,000,000, or 173 per cent, while that of Germany has increased from 21,000,000 to 55,000,000, or 162 per cent, and that of France from 27,000,000, to 39,000,000, or only 45 per cent. When it is considered that this increase has taken place in the face of a large

and continuous emigration which has gone to enrich, not only her own Colonies, but still more largely the United States of America, it must be admitted that these figures indicate an immense vitality in the British stock.

Passing to the consideration of the development connected with the other great branch of the English speaking race, it is found to be scarcely less wonderful. At the beginning of the century the area of the United States and its possessions was something less than 828,000 square miles. At the close of the century, by virtue of successive processes of expansion, that area is approximately 3,700,000 square miles, in both hemispheres and in three of the globe's five zones. The population has in the same space of time increased from less than 6,000,000 to about 90,000,000, the overwhelming majority being, of course, white, and speaking the English language as their native tongue. While the territorial growth of the United States has been therefore less than that of the British Empire, the growth in population has been proportionately much larger. These two great powers then, as the New York Tribune says, easily out rank all others in growth and present magnitude "They do so, each of them, taken separately. Taken together, in a classification of the world according to languages, they have a most impressive supremacy. At the beginning of the century the English language was, in point of numbers, one of the minor tongues. It was used by perhaps 21,000,000 people, and was considerably surpassed by the French, German and Spanish languages, and probably also by the Italian. Today it is the language of about 130,000,000, or of nearly twice as many as any of the others mentioned. German coming next with about 65,000,000, Spanish with 55,000,000, French with 45,000,000 and Italian with 35,000,000. Even Russian, which is scarcely ranked among the cultivated languages, is not used by as many as is English, nor is it at all certain that any one of the various distinct languages used in China and India surpasses English in the number of its users. We shall not incur the reproach of extravagance, then, if we reckon that the English language is to-day used by more people than any other language in the world. When we consider from what a small beginning this fact has been developed in these hundred years, the expectation of a practically universal language within the next century seems by no means overstrained, and when we bear in mind the enormous ethical, social, commercial and political influence of language the future promise of the English speaking race expands beyond all measurement."

South Africa. The news from South Africa continues to be of a very unpleasant character. The Boer General DeWet is making a great reputation as a military leader. He manages to make successful attacks upon British positions, conduct masterly retreats, strike heavy and sudden blows in unexpected quarters, and finally, when cornered, fight his way through the British lines. According to despatches from Cape Town, the Boer invasion of northern Cape Colony has become a very formidable affair and is causing much uneasiness. It is stated that a railway bridge to the south of De Aar has been destroyed and that no Cape mails had reached Bloemfontein for three days. The Dutch element in Cape Colony is said to be much elated over the southward movement of the Boers and to be boasting that the whole district of Victoria West will join the raiders. A dispatch from Lord Kitchener of Dec. 22, expresses the opinion, though not very confidently, that the Boer movement into Cape Colony, has been checked. "Of the two forces which entered the Colony," he says, "the eastern is still north of the Zoutspansberg range, while the one that entered west appears to have been turned in the direction of Britstown and Prieska. Our troops are getting around both bodies and a special column is also being organized, which will be dispatched immediately when I know where its services are most wanted. The Boers have not received much assistance in Cape Colony, so far as my information goes. We have armed some of the colonists, who are assisting our forces. Railway and telegraph communication has been much interrupted by the very bad weather." It is said that the British government is asking Australia and New Zealand to send additional contingents of mounted troops to South Africa, and if this is the case it is not improbable that Canada will be given an opportunity to contribute her quota.