

HUDSON BAY COMPANY

Policy to Adapt Activities to Modern Requirements— "Present Conditions Were Undreamed of by First Shareholders," Says Lord Strathcona

The report and annual accounts of the company as submitted to the shareholders are in part as follows:—

The policy adopted last year of dividing the company's business into three departments—land, salesshops, and fur trade—with a commissioner for each, has been justified by the results.

With the object of having the best local advice and co-operation for themselves and the three commissioners, the governor and committee invited Mr. A. M. Nanton, Mr. George Galt and Sir William Whyte, all resident in Winnipeg, to act as a local committee in an advisory capacity, for which their long acquaintance with the North-West fits them. These gentlemen having had this proposition under consideration for some time have signified their willingness to serve, and the governor and committee look forward to considerable benefit to the company from their co-operation.

Further progress has been made towards bringing the sale-shops up to the requirements of the present time, and the governor and committee are able to report that the improved results in this department of the company's business amply justify the more energetic policy now being pursued. At Winnipeg separate and adequate provision has been made for warehousing the goods required for the shops and posts, and in this way greatly increased accommodation has been provided for the retail business. At Calgary important new premises are being erected; at Vancouver preparations are in progress to provide long needed additional room to meet the growing trade there; new stores have been opened at Vernon and Kamloops, and a suitable building is in course of construction at Yorkton.

Amendments in Charter Desirable.

But much more will need to be done from time to time to keep the company abreast of the times, and for this reason it has been considered desirable to obtain such amendments in the charter as will provide the means for the necessary capital expenditure. At the same time this opportunity is being taken to ask for such other modifications as the various conditions of to-day suggest. The draft charter is now before the crown authorities, and so soon as an intimation is received that its provisions will have the Royal Assent, a special meeting of the shareholders will be called to consider its adoption.

To enable the company to retain its position in the fur trade in spite of increasing competition, new steamers are being constructed for service on the Athabasca and Slave Rivers, and the company have also acquired a majority interest in the "Nascope" Steamship Company, Limited, to deliver supplies to, and to bring out the returns from, the Labrador, Straits and Hudson's Bay posts.

The amount at the credit of the trade account on May 31 is £196,070, to which is to be added £121,887 brought forward from 1911, making a total of £317,957. A dividend of £2 per share, to be paid free of income tax, is recommended, amounting to £200,000, leaving the sum of £117,957 to be carried forward on this account.

The amount at the credit of the land account for the year ending March 31 last is £273,267, to which is to be added the sum of £298,556 carried forward in the accounts of 1911, making a total of £571,824. From the proceeds of land sales an interim distribution of £1 per share, amounting to £100,000, was paid to the proprietors in January last, leaving a balance of £471,824. It is now proposed to make a further distribution of £1 per share, absorbing £100,000, making together £200,000, and leaving £371,824 to be carried forward on land account. Income tax is not payable in respect of land sales. The total distribution from trade and land for the year amounts to £4 per share, or £400,000.

Fur Sales Were Satisfactory.

The results of the fur sales were satisfactory, an advance in prices having taken place in some of the most important descriptions dealt in by the company.

Farm land sales for the year ending March 31 last comprised 42,554 acres for \$808,944, an average of \$19.01 per acre, compared with 267,038 acres for \$3,747,768, an average of \$14.03 per acre for the year preceding. Sales of town lots amounted to \$810,690, compared with \$390,156 for the previous year. The total sales amounted to £332,801, compared with £850,258. The receipts amounted to £369,364, compared with £633,150 last year. The payments for surveys, taxes, and other expenses of the land department amounted to £96,096, as compared with £84,593 for the year ending March 31, 1911.

On March 31, 1911, the unsold lands in the possession of the company amounted to 4,022.086 acres, and as during the year 42,554 acres were sold, and 69,277 acres accrued to the

company, there is now on hand 4,049,709 acres, to which must be added 8,874 acres reverted to the company under cancelled sales during the year. Instalments to be paid on sales amount to \$5,458,653, compared with \$5,476,582 on March 31, 1911, and \$4,010,373 on March 31, 1910. Seeding operations and crop prospects are reported to be favorable, and the outlook for the company's land and general business continues good.

The Right Honorable Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, G.C.M.G., Mr. John Coles and Mr. Richard Burbidge are the members of the board retiring, and being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

Lord Strathcona Presides.

Presiding at the shareholders' meeting of the Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Strathcona, last week, stated that the trade results of the company were of a highly gratifying nature.

"While the policy of the board had been to prepare for the time when the fur trade should diminish to insignificant proportions," said he, "events in Canada are moving so rapidly that it recently became necessary to take energetic measures to retain the good-will existing throughout Canada towards the company by the extension of salesshops and branches, which effected a very material improvement."

"Indications for the fur trade point to an average collection in the coming season."

"The land market has remained firm throughout the year. There has been a fair demand at good prices for agricultural as well as town lots. The Winnipeg market continues fairly active. Conditions in Victoria, North Battleford, Prince Albert and Fort William are improving. It is anticipated that the demand for lots in other townsites will be intermittent. The improved state of the Edmonton townsite market resulted in the disposal of lots valued at £902,732. The total land now in the company's possession is 4,058,050 acres."

Prospects of the Coming Year.

Returning to the prospects of the coming year, Lord Strathcona said he thought they might anticipate a fair fur profit, which a few years ago was the company's only industry. With the extension of salesshops, business would be bound to be more profitable.

The conservative policy regarding land sales had been abundantly justified. Had the land been thrown on the market earlier, the company would have sacrificed the future.

In concluding, Lord Strathcona paid a tribute to the loyalty of the company's officers in Canada.

Two of the shareholders urged that the dividend should be ten shillings more.

Lord Strathcona said there might possibly be a better dividend this year. It was his 75th year's connection with the company, and the present conditions were undreamed of by the first shareholders.

Lord Strathcona and Messrs. John Coles and Richard Burbidge were re-elected directors.

CANADIAN AUTOBUS COMPANY

Several conditions were proposed by the Canadian Autobus Company in a conference with the Montreal board of control this week, with a view of obtaining a franchise for operating autobuses in this city. Mayor Lavallee stated after the meeting that the controllers were to meet the company next week to go over their project again. They offered the city, said the mayor, 2,500 paid-up \$100 preferred shares, and were willing that the city should have one or two representatives on the board of directors. As to routes, the company asked for fourteen lines for running their buses, and they would agree to have the first line in use by June, 1913, and subsequently a new line every two months.

The board decided to strike out the clause stating that after midnight, when ten-cent fares are required, no transfers were to be given. This was amended in such a way that transfers are obtainable after midnight.

In a general way it is understood that the company desires to have the exclusive rights to the routes where they operate their cars, and a preferential right to such other streets as the city may decide to open up to autobus traffic.

The controllers listened to what was said as to the advantages of having bus vehicles in Montreal, traversing the city without steel rails, which cut up the streets so badly, and also that in certain European towns autobus traffic was replacing the trolley car as well as the old omnibus.

The by-law controlling autobuses in Montreal which has been adopted by the city council was the base of the demands made. That by-law avoids reference to any company, that being a point for the board of control to decide on later. The Canadian Autobus Company are now making their request in the regular way.