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A Good Speculation

A Trip Over the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway

At the time of my visit, says a correspondent of the London Times, 666.8 miles of the prairie section of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway were being operated by the construction department for the benefit of the settlers and of those who were building the towns along the line—nearly all these towns were non-existent last spring—or looking for business there. The track, which is practically an "air line" and will provide the shortest and easiest route between Winnipeg and Edmonton, reflects great credit on the engineers and contractors. There is no gradient anywhere exceeding 2.5 in 100, and curvatures of any kind are conspicuously absent, while all the construction work has been carried out much more carefully than is customary with builders of railways, even trunk lines, in Western Canada or the Western States. The ballasting was not finished when I left Winnipeg for Wainwright, the fifth and last divisional point on the completed line, and the train was not allowed to attempt to make quick time, the company being unwilling to risk the lives or limbs of its passengers—a policy of caution which might be commended to the notice of many American railway corporations. Moreover, it traveled during the daytime only, so that the journey up took a whole week, which included, however, a week-end spent at Watrous, certainly the prettiest of the infant towns along the track. Farmers did not mind the train's easy progress, for to them the coming of the steel trail meant that they could at last market their grain, and the value per acre of their homesteads (which could now be made into homes) had been multiplied four or five times. To the storekeepers it meant that thanks to the closer settlement of the new future, their trade would be doubled or trebled and a system of cash transactions rendered possible. Nor did these men object to the proximity of other lines, primarily freight-collecting tentacles, knowing that the new line is to be a transcontinental track, which alone could introduce the factors of competition and so bring about a reduction in freight rates.

obstacle to agricultural settlement, a shallow soil with too much sand in it, and here and there rendered useless by closely-set boulders. From Portage la Prairie up to Rivers, the first divisional point 142 miles from Winnipeg, the new transcontinental railway passes through a well-settled country of long-demonstrated fertility. For example, it crosses the richest portion of the Carberry district, one of the very best wheat-raising areas in Manitoba. Here and there is a patch of sandhills, the fragmentary dunes and beaches of the vast vanished lake which, in one era of geological time—the historian's centuries are the geologist's days—covered the whole of the North American prairie region. But the good land was never very far away. Much the same may be said of the country between Rivers and Melville (270 miles west from Winnipeg), which is the second of the divisional towns, the characteristic feature of which is a railway round-house with its several straight chimneys. Everywhere the famous black soil is seen, and vast unfenced wheatfields appear, on which lie heaps of straw, or rather, straw-dust cast out in a cloud by the steam-thresher. For twenty miles after leaving Touchwood the line passes through hills or high-rolling prairie (as though the plains had been stirred into billows by some tremendous storm), but all, or nearly all, of this district could be profitably cultivated.

The Saskatoon District Further on the hills are smaller, the earth waves become mere slow ripples, until the train runs out into the vast treeless levels of the central prairie region for which Saskatoon with her many converging railway lines and four great bridges over the South Saskatchewan is the chief distributing centre. The actual experience of the settlers in this mid-way territory has confuted the belief in its worthless nature which was generally current in the West during the years 1895-1900. Nor has the alleged lack of rainfall ever led to the loss of a crop there. Ten years ago these mid-way lands could have been bought for \$1 an acre, or even less in blocks of any size. Today they are worth from \$10 to \$30 per acre, according to their distance from a railway and the same to the westward. In the Saskatoon area had a fairly good wheat crop. A third delusion of the past was the idea that a change in color of surface soil from black to brown (which often occurs as one passes from one district into another of this vast wheatfield) was a change from fertility to sterility. Emigrants from Ontario would, as I remember well, apply the term "sand-lots" to the brown loam localities. But experience has proved that the wheat crops on such soil are equal, both in quantity and quality, to those raised on the black loam. And farmers assert that the brown loam in the admixture of sand is actually a protection against frost. Professor J. Macoun, of the Canadian Geological Survey, who has studied agricultural conditions in Western Canada since 1872, when there was no settlement outside Red River (now Winnipeg), accepts their assertion as correct. In seeking for a scientific explanation he arrived at the belief that the brown soil "is a naturally warm one, and that the heat is retained at night instead of being lost by radiation as in the case of black soils." The credit of disposing of all these erroneous ideas must be given to the American settlers with their forty years of experience of the art of prairie-farming and of what constitute a first-rate prairie soil. Except for a few stony or boulder-strewn patches about certain lakes all the land from Touchwood to Earl (466 miles from Winnipeg), which is the stopping place for Saskatoon, is suitable for wheat growing. There is room for thousands of new settlers, and here at any rate the Grand Trunk Pacific is a colonizing road.

Possibilities of Fruit Growing For many miles beyond Earl the country is a series of dead-level wheat-fields. Afterwards sandy tracts appear, together with alkaline flats among small lakes and swamps. Then the train runs into another good district, which is well settled. Beyond Eagle Creek settlement is sparse, but the land looks good up to the Bare Hills (not "Bear Hills," as most maps have it; the absence of trees and brush is the origin of the name), though the American or Canadian settler is likely to avoid so "pevy" a country. Yet the uplands are not too steep for the plough. Further on the line runs into a region of salt lakes; the soil is generally excellent, but good water is not always easily obtained. More often than not it can be found on the surface or by sinking shallow wells. Bad saline water is the inevitable result of going below the surface drift into the underlying clay. At Unity (584 miles from Winnipeg), where the Grand Trunk Pacific crosses the Saskatoon-Wetsask branch of the Canadian Pacific railway, the American settler is busy at his work of agricultural pioneering. On either side of the greater Lake Manitoba, a vast expanse of salt water, the country is rough and full of sand-hills, about a hundred yards away, leisurely retiring. The bush was so thick that the grass so high that he could not get a fair opening for a shot. At the same instant, Leo evidently decided that he had sufficiently on the reserves of his patience; he turned, with a angrily blazing, his head up toward the sky, and with a cry of "Blast it, with a steady aim Buxton sent a heavy 377 ball into the line of the quarry, shot that entered just inside the front of the shoulder, ranged through the lungs and had Buxton left him the lion would have been dead in a few minutes. Leo, however, notwithstanding he knew that he delivered a mortal wound Buxton was unshaken and it is in such a way again, with the effect of rousing the dying monarch, which rose and chattered.

At this crisis, while hurriedly throwing a spare shell into his empty gun, Buxton observed that the stoek, which had been broken off in an encounter with an elephant and had been mended with string wrappings, had become so loose as to be unusable, he was obliged to try the nerve of the steadiest man. Lacking ammunition, Buxton was obliged to take his rifle and his gun and fired as the lion rose at him, and naturally missed, for he came from the lion's throat till the woodwork beneath the barrel, the hammer of the trigger guard became scarred by the lion's teeth. Then ensued a struggle between a dying lion and a man who knew himself to be as good as dead if for an instant mind or nerve failed him. Buxton held the rifle, the thrust of the rifle barrel in his throat he sank two of his claws into the instable, and in the distributing point four and six inches above the hand, and held his hold until both went down. Thus dragging at the arm that held the gun in his throat the lion really caused a deeper thrust. Meantime the bear went digging with his loose forepaw at the hand that held the rifle and tearing Buxton's leg with his hind claws. From the start of the struggle Buxton's Somali shikari had been trying to shoot the lion over the shoulder, but he was set at "safe," and this, through excitement, the Somali failed to do. He dropped the gun and literally sprang upon the lion's back, so biting his ears and pounding it about the eyes with his bare hands that it whirled to earth together, the Somali between the lion, and under both, the Mautser. At last released, Buxton painfully pulled the Mautser free, and with it blew the lion's brains out, all so the very nick of time the Somali followed from fatal wounds. Dr. Hall, the resident physician of Juba Falls, has seen the carcass of the lion. He spite the fact that with iron nerve he ate that once cauterized his thirteen fingers with the hot metal of the Mautser and had thus saved himself from the carbon poison of the claws, the purchase of the market, has not been a bad investment—for the noble Duke's family, and he has reason to congratulate himself on the wisdom of his progenitors. Just how the Bedfords originally obtained these valuable tracts of land has been described by Edmund Burke.

RISKS OF BIG GAME HUNTING

By many sportsmen the African lion is considered to be the fiercest and most dangerous of animals. The lion's mane is not only a protection against the sun but also a protection against the sharp claws of his prey. The lion's mane is not only a protection against the sun but also a protection against the sharp claws of his prey. The lion's mane is not only a protection against the sun but also a protection against the sharp claws of his prey. The lion's mane is not only a protection against the sun but also a protection against the sharp claws of his prey. The lion's mane is not only a protection against the sun but also a protection against the sharp claws of his prey.

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Winnipeg and Edmonton

About 20 town sites have been surveyed along the Winnipeg-Edmonton line, and several thousands of the lots have already been sold. The company has wisely refrained from "booming" particular town-sites, as has been the custom of several American railway corporations, nor has settlement therein been checked by placing high prices on the lots. In such matters moderation is the best policy for the filling up of the country benefits a railway much more in the long run than grasping at immediate profits. It is impossible, of course, so say how many of those town-sites will be so successful as a glance at the physical map of the West has been, or ought to have been, sufficient to enable one to gauge the future prospects of an urban settlement. From the very first it was obvious that Chicago, because of her strategic position at the lower end of lake navigation and midway between the agricultural West and the manufacturing East, was destined to become the cross-roads city of the United States and the greatest distributing and collecting centre on the continent. No exact parallel to Chicago exists in Western Canada. Winnipeg, together with Fort William and Port Arthur, the growing twin-ports at the upper end of lake navigation, may be said to constitute the Canadian equivalent of the huge midway metropolis of the United States. Winnipeg's strategic position at the eastern entrance to the Canadian

prairie region, and the existence of Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, which prevent railways entering along more northerly routes, makes her a cross-roads city and guarantees the continuance of her rapid growth (114 per cent in the last five years) in population. Also Edmonton must develop eventually into a city of the first magnitude. She is the distributing centre for the largest and best mixed farming country in the West; she will be brought into touch by the Edmonton-Prince Rupert section of the new Transcontinental with the richest undeveloped mining districts of British Columbia; and finally she stands in the same relation to the vast territory north of the Saskatchewan valley as that which Winnipeg occupies in regard to the region between the international boundary-line and the Saskatchewan river and its northern branch.

Promising Towns Strategic points of such consequence are not to be found along the prairie section of the Grand Trunk Pacific. But it is highly probable that cities of secondary importance, as large as Brandon, or Regina, or Calgary, will show up here and there in its fertile territory. Saskatoon, for example, is already the capital of the central prairies. This charming little city has grown very rapidly, not only in population, but also in wealth and length of commercial reach, since 1903, when I saw the beginnings of her present prosperity. In that year Saskatoon had crossed the South-Western railway and was a bustling community of about a thousand people. Today the city has a population of twenty-six and seven thousand, and now that she is on an ocean-to-ocean railway her development will be even more rapid than it has been in the past. It has been arranged that the city shall be the seat of the University of Saskatchewan, and no healthier or more pleasant locality could have been found. There are other promising towns along the line. A railway round-house with its hundred or more employes is often the germ of a notable city in the West, and I found busy settlements of from three to seven hundred workers at each of the five divisional points, Rivers, Melville, Watrous, Biggar, and Wainwright. These towns are named after officials of the company, and as far as possible the appellations of the stations between two divisional points are arranged in alphabetical order. One regrets the absence of Indian place names, which are often musical and generally romantic. It must be remembered that few, if any, of the towns on this section of the railway existed last spring.

TAX ON LANDED ESTATES

A recent London despatch says: English landowners are getting worried, particularly those holding large estates. The government is said to be about to put a tax on all landed property, and London property holders are trying to see how they can avoid the burden. One of the most worried men in the British metropolis is the Duke of Bedford, who owns 250 acres of the richest city lands on earth. His annual income has been estimated at more than £1,000,000. To the ordinary mortal there should be no cause for anxiety with such a revenue for monetary anxiety with such a revenue. He has sent out notices to many of his tenants that leases are not to be renewed save under exceptional circumstances.

Some Phases of Hindoism Mr. Krishna Gobinda Gupta, a member of the Council of India, read a paper before the British Society of Arts on "Some Phases of Hindoism." Sir George Birdwood presided. Mr. Gupta said that more than 70 per cent of the total population of India were Hindoos, and their religion was the oldest of the four great religions of the world and the most comprehensive and adaptable of them all. Octopus-like, it had swallowed up and assimilated the various cults and faiths that had from time to time appeared on the soil of India, Islam and Christianity being the only two faiths which had successfully resisted. Orthodox Hindoism played an important part, was its principal feature. It had many cults, many sects, each having its special gods and goddesses, but all combined to venerate the entire Hindu pantheon. The one special characteristic which distinguished Hindoism from all other religions was its caste system. Nowhere else in the world could anything be found resembling the caste system. It was a social system, and every effort was made, especially among the higher castes, to marry a girl before the age of puberty. In India 78 per cent of the population were Hindoos, and it remained to be seen how far its powers of adaptability and assimilation, which had stood in such