

From Western Fields.

Transportation Development—Grand Trunk Pacific Construction—Canadian Northern & Port Mann—Grand Trunk Pacific's Progress.

With the approach of harvest the railways have been making their customary extensive preparations for the rush of wheat to the grain ports on the Lakes. Those preparations are now complete and reports from Fort William indicate that everything is in good shape for the rush. There is little fear of a grain blockade—elevator accommodation at the terminals has been increased, and the railways also have better facilities than before. The Grand Trunk Pacific is this year taking a share in the traffic.

G.T.P.'s Progress.

Interviewed in Vancouver, Mr. C. M. Hays has said that the Grand Trunk Pacific management expects to have the main line completed into Prince Rupert in 1912 or 1913 at the latest. The rapidity of construction hinges upon labour conditions, which this year have been very unfavourable. On the main line and prairie branches construction gangs are deficient to the number of five thousand men.

With regard to the proposed branch south from the main line to Vancouver, Mr. Hays intimated that this will not be built until the main line has been finished. "At present," said Mr. Hays, "we have in the field two parties engaged in making a reconnaissance, preliminary to determining the most advantageous route. One outfit is working south from a point in the vicinity of Fort George, the other being engaged in looking over the country extending north from Lytton at the junction of the Fraser and Thompson rivers, a point on the Canadian Pacific Railway. This leaves the question of a route into Vancouver in abeyance. There is no hurry about the matter. We want ample time to study the whole question of productive territory and low grades."

The Scarcity of Labour.

Mr. Collingwood Schreiber, of Ottawa, general consulting engineer to the Dominion Government and chief government engineer of the western division of the Grand Trunk Pacific, takes a less cheery view of the G. T. P. situation than Mr. Hays. To a Vancouver paper he is reported to have stated:—"I see no prospect of the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway before 1914 or even later unless labour conditions improve. It is apparent that white men cannot be secured, for they are not in the country and it is questionable whether the relaxation of the immigration laws permitting the entry of foreign labour from the United States is going to make much difference. If there was a surplus of white labour I would unhesitatingly oppose the employment of Orientals on this national undertaking, but under the existing circumstances I don't see where any objection can be urged."

Mr. Schreiber states that at both ends of the uncompleted line the total men on the pay roll do not exceed 3,200 in number, while an additional five or six thousand labourers could be profitably

employed. The pay, too, is excellent, the ordinary labourer being paid \$3 a day with a deduction of \$5 weekly for board.

Canadian Northern and Port Mann.

Meantime, the Canadian Northern is going ahead with Port Mann, the terminus of the new Canadian Northern line in British Columbia. The railway yards are now being arranged and extensive docks will be built all along the waterfront above the railway bridge. The offices, machine and car shops of the company are to be concentrated at Port Mann, which, it is estimated by Mr. T. F. Darling, assistant land commissioner of the Canadian Northern, will have a population five years hence of at least 7,000 Canadian Northern employees.

A Big Waterway Scheme.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier has this week been faced with a big project brought to his notice by the Nelson and Revelstoke Boards of Trade, reinforced by the Associated British Columbia Chambers of Commerce, and a delegation from Oregon and Washington States, headed by United States Senator Chamberlain. The originators of the scheme seek to open up the Columbia river from the source to the ocean, in view of the opening of the Panama Canal, to create a route of commerce on a water rate basis from the heart of the Rockies to London, New York and the markets of the world. The proposed route will cover 750 miles of riverway from Kootenay and Okanagan districts to Portland, 150 miles being on Canadian territory. The United States has already taken action for some distance under appropriations by national and state governments. The Canadian project contemplates considerable dredging and the building of three or possibly four locks. Statistics prepared by the provincial department were submitted to Sir Wilfrid, showing the potentialities and rapid settlement of the district to be served. The delegation urged the route as a controller of freight rates, if not a carrier of the major portion of the traffic.

The Premier replied that he would ask the Minister of Public Works to have a survey made from Lake Windermere to the boundary, to determine what is required and what the scheme will cost. He suggested that the best way to deal with the matter would be by concerted action with the United States.

Large Colonization Scheme.

Particulars of a huge colonization scheme of a semi-philanthropic nature, promoted by prominent Jewish bankers and merchants of France, England and Russia, have been made public in Winnipeg by a prominent English financial visitor. The scheme is to colonize two hundred thousand of the persecuted Jews of lower Russia on farms which will be prepared for them in Alberta. Agents of the syndicate are understood to have been in the west for several weeks, and to favour a large tract north-west of Edmonton. The present plan is to give the immigrants twenty years in which to pay for the farms.

The total pack of sockeye salmon in British Columbia waters this season is estimated at about 549,000 cases, which is accounted a good pack.