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Topics of the Day

RUMOURS concerning two new Canadian Pacific steamers are again abroad. The story told some months ago is being re-told. It is to the effect that the C.P.R. boats now running between Yokohama and Vancouver will be transferred to the Canadian-Australian route, that the two steamers now running between Canada and Great Britain will be transferred to the Canada-Japan work, and that two new boats will be built for the Quebec-Liverpool trade. This would mean an improvement all around—better boats for each route.

Canada's foreign trade with both Europe and Asia is increasing enormously and so is her passenger traffic. To this is added a great increase in the number of people who are travelling between Europe and Asia by the Canadian route. The C.P.R. can now take people from Liverpool to Yokohama without using any line of steamer or railway but their own. This gives them an advantage of which they seem to be making the most.

Canadians will hope that the rumour is true and will wish Sir Thomas Shaughnessy good luck in his progressive work.

Evidence is accumulating that Mr. J. J. Hill's threat of building a transcontinental line from Lake Superior to the coast through Canada was merely a threat. The task of satisfying his own patrons has become decidedly acute. All along his lines the people have been raising a continuous cry about lack of shipping facilities. He now admits that the United States West needs twenty thousand miles of new railway, much new equipment and a great extension of terminals. The trade is advancing faster than railway facilities. Mr. Hill estimates that for this additional construction and extension, five hundred millions of dollars will be required. During the past six years the annual value of agricultural products of the United States has almost doubled; other industries have developed in proportion. The population has increased by some nine millions.

This great development is keeping Mr. Hill mighty busy in his own sphere, and he is not likely to do anything titanic in Canada. He will undoubtedly push northward some feeders, for that is not expensive in a prairie country. Still there is no immediate prospect that he will be a serious competitor with the three great Canadian lines.

The great development in the United States West is paralleled in the Canadian West. Here, too, there are the same great problems. Our West needs more railways, and more equipment on the present roads. The wheat crop has doubled in a short time and wheat is only one kind of material which requires transportation.

The railway building in Canada in 1907 will probably be greater than ever was known in the history of the country. The amount of money being invested in railways and their equipment was never so large. It is a great era, with money, men, horses and food products at boom prices.

Speaking of horses, an Ontario horse-buyer who is purchasing for the West, says horses never were so valuable. The growth of electric railways in Ontario was expected to drive down the price of horses, oats and hay. The farmers feared that result—but it never came. These commodities, if the noble animal may be included in that general term, were never so high-priced.

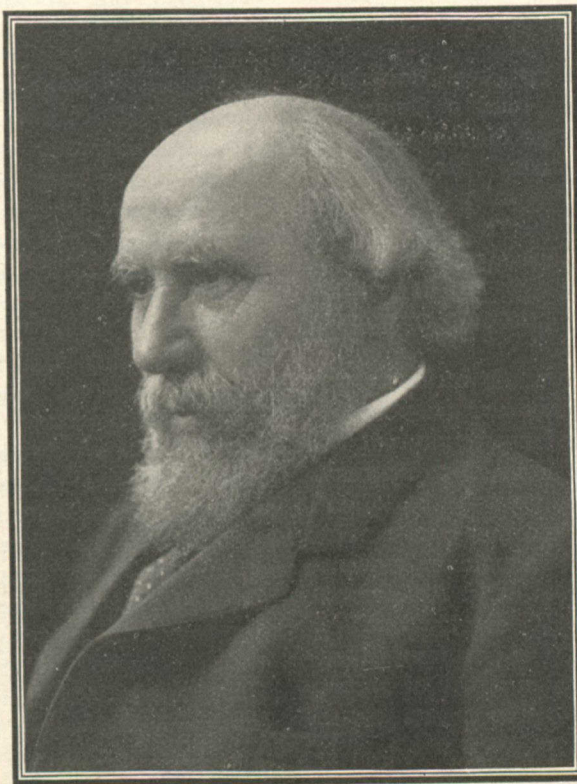
Steam-ploughs and traction-engines are being resorted to in the West, but the demand for heavy horses keeps up. The West cannot produce as good horses as the East; or at least it cannot produce them as easily and as cheaply. The range horse is good for saddle and road work, and some of them are brought East. He is too light, as yet, for heavy agricultural work.

The movement among the Toronto manufacturers to build houses for their working-men is to be commended. If labouring men are forced to pay high rents, they must have high wages. If they are huddled together in unwholesome surroundings their labour-value will deteriorate.

In Great Britain and the United States, especially in the former country, this problem has received much attention since Sir Titus Salt built the model town of Saltaire, outside Bradford. Since then the Cadburys have built Bournville near Birmingham, and Mr. Lever, the soap manufacturer, has created Port Sunlight. Other manufacturers have built working-men's houses in great rows and blocks in proximity to their factories. Even in Canada, in Montreal, Hamilton, Thorold and other manufacturing places, certain firms have found it necessary to assist their men in getting proper homes.

Undoubtedly much will be heard of this movement in the various industrial centres. Toronto is perhaps the first to inaugurate a movement for the building of houses by a general building company composed of numerous manufacturers. This experiment, and its effect upon wages, the supply of labour and the quality of labour, will be watched with keen interest by both workers and capitalists.

Under the provisions of the new act governing the granting of Provincial subsidies by the Dominion, of which notice has been given by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the increases to the various Provinces, on the basis of the last census returns, will be as follows:—Ontario, \$789,485; Quebec, \$599,866; Nova Scotia, \$177,659; New Brunswick, \$130,000; Manitoba, \$142,530; British Columbia, \$215,000; Prince Edward Island, \$65,345; Alberta, \$48,329; Saskatchewan, \$136,210.



Mr. J. J. Hill.
President of the Great Northern Railway.