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RAILWAY RECORD FOR 1899.

A Year of Great Progress for the West.

The past year has been one of marked activity in the work of railway building in Manitoba. Many well informed business people are not aware of the extent to which railway building has been carried on in the west during 1899. Many persons will certainly be surprised to learn that railway building has been going on at thirteen different points west of Lake Superior, exclusive of the new railways being built in British Columbia, which latter lines will be considered in a separate article. Twelve of these new roads are within the province of Manitoba. The thirteenth is in Northwestern Ontario, but will practically form a part of the Manitoba railway system, as it is designed to form a link in another through line from Winnipeg to Lake Superior. In the territories west of Manitoba no new railway building has been done, except the Pipestone branch of the Canadian Pacific railway, which was built across the Manitoba boundary and on westward some miles into Assiniboia territory. The southern half of the province of Manitoba is fast becoming a network of railways. There is no part of Canada better supplied with railway facilities to-day, than is the case in the greater portion of the southern half of Manitoba. The new railway work for the year shows a total of 351 miles, most of which is fully completed and in operation. While a number of the new roads are short branches, designed to act as feeders to other lines, in some cases the new roads are of a more important nature. Some are extensions into new territory of important lines, such as the Canadian Northern, which is opening up a vast, rich and entirely new region in northern Manitoba. Then there is the Manitoba Southeastern, which is intended to form a portion of a great trunk line through to Lake Superior, thus providing a third road connecting Winnipeg with the great St. Lawrence system of inland navigation.

The past year in some respects was an unfavorable one for railway building. Labor was scarce and wages high all the season. Notwithstanding the arrival of approximately 50,000 new settlers during the year, there was great difficulty in securing the number of men required for the work. On account of this scarcity of men the work was not pushed ahead as fast as was desired, but this was made up for by the mild, open season

which enabled contractors to work to good advantage much later than usual.

All the new roads, we may say, either open new territory or give better shipping facilities to old districts, the effect of which will be to stimulate the production of farm products. With the large increase in immigration and the rapid extension of railways throughout the agricultural districts of Western Canada, it is evident that this country will soon become an enormous producer of agricultural commodities. The large influx of new settlers will demand the opening of new districts for settlement, and this will mean that more railways will have to be built. Great therefore as has been the progress of the past year, the record for 1900 may show even a larger mileage of new road. Be this as it may, there is found to be a large field for the railway contractor in Western Canada, for many years to come.

The province of Manitoba alone now has over 2,000 miles of railway, all built within the last twenty years.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY.

During the past year the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has carried on new railway construction at no less than seven different points within the province of Manitoba, including the extension of the Northwest Central and the short link connecting the latter railway with the Rapid City branch of the Manitoba & Northwestern. These two roads, it will be understood, are both now controlled by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. This shows that the company has been very active during the year. To mention these various undertakings in detail, we have first two new branches in Southern Manitoba, known as the Snowflake and Wascada branches, respectively. Both these new roads are short feeders to the Deloraine branch, affording better railway facilities to well settled agricultural districts south of the Deloraine branch. These two new branches have been completed and are now being operated. The Snowflake branch has a total length of a little over 17 miles, and the Wascada branch, which starts at Deloraine, is something over 18 miles long.

Moving a little north from Deloraine, we have the Pipestone branch, where a considerable amount of work has been done. An extension of 17 miles was graded on this branch during the summer of 1898, westward from Reston.

This 17 miles was completed during the past year and an additional 23 miles has been graded and is now mostly ironed, making 40 miles of new road added to the Pipestone branch during the year. This branch is giving much needed railway facilities to a fairly well settled agricultural section. About fifteen miles of the new portion of the Pipestone branch, west of Reston, is in Manitoba and the balance of 23 miles is in Assiniboia territory.

Going northward again and crossing the Canadian Pacific main line we come to the Northwest Central railway, formerly an independent line, but now a part of the Canadian Pacific railway system. There has been an urgent demand for years for a further westward extension of this line, in order to give railway facilities to the fine agricultural country lying beyond the western terminus of the road. The endless litigation in which this company was involved seemingly prevented any hope of the desired extension. While the fact that the Canadian Pacific Railway Company has obtained control of the road may not be relished by some, it will, to the residents in the country beyond, who so much desire railway facilities, be a matter for congratulation. The company has extended the line during the past season a distance of twenty-two miles west of the former terminus at Hamiota, and the extension is fully completed and in operation. A town called Minota, has quickly grown up at the new terminus of the line.

As a result, no doubt of the passing of these roads under the control of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company a short connecting link of 100 miles has been built at Rapid City, connecting the Northwest Central with the Rapid City branch of the Manitoba and Northwestern railway. The McGregor-Varcoe branch, construction upon which was commenced during the year, is also no doubt, a result of Canadian Pacific railway control of the Northwest Central. This branch starts from McGregor station, on the Canadian Pacific railway main line and will run in a northwesterly direction to Varcoe, on the Northwest Central. It will form a direct and natural connection between the two roads, at the same time giving additional railway facilities where they were needed, in a well settled farming community. About 24 miles of this new line has been graded, which is about half the length the line will be when finished. No ironing has been done on the branch, and work has been discontinued for the winter.

This completes the list of Canadian Pacific railway operations in Manitoba, west of the Red river. Late in the season work was begun on a new branch east of the Red river. This will