

Electric vs. Steam Power

PROBABLE EFFECTS ON CANADIAN INDUSTRY

By Economist

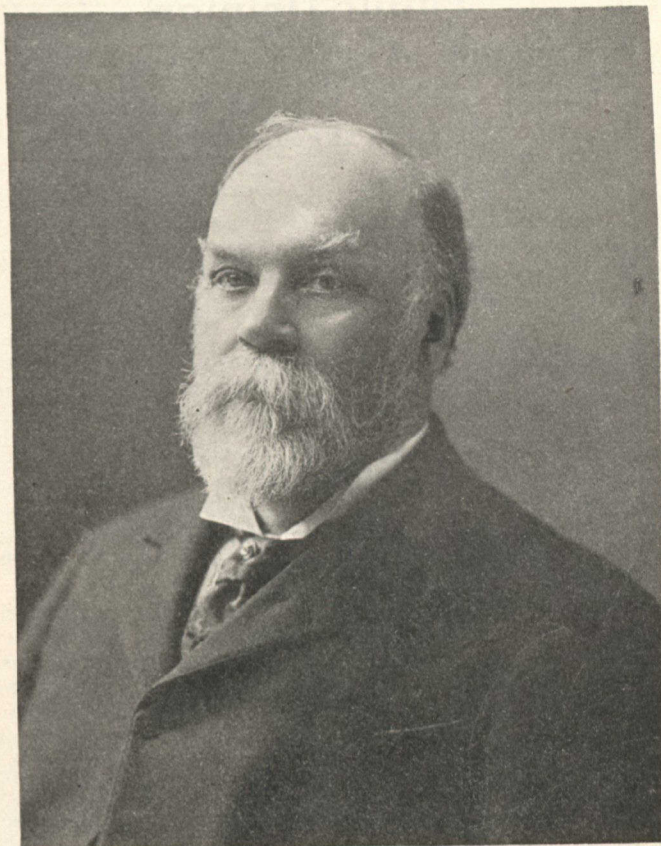
THE question of electric power is one which must be further considered although much has already been said. Its effect upon our industrial organisation and upon the people generally is worthy of serious consideration.

The enormous water powers which have been going to waste in Canada may now be directly and economically converted into industrial motive force. No other country is so well equipped by nature as Canada for utilising such power. A far reaching result of this will be its influence on the distribution of industry. The concentration of population in great cities and the growth of urban at the expense of rural population is a vexing question in all countries. The influx of population which Manitoba has received has, for the most part, gone to the cities and towns. While there are many factors co-operating, the growth of the modern industrial town has been helped on by the fact that steam is a relatively wasteful motive force. A surplus of such power can readily be developed in an industrial plant; but there is no effective means of distributing this surplus. It has therefore proved economical to concentrate industry so as to utilise such power to the full. But whenever it has been possible to utilise electric power, "white coal" as the Italians call it, it has been possible to decentralise industry. In Canada this will mean that the small producing centre will be able to more effectively compete with the large centre. From this will come the advantages of lower wage cost, proximity to raw material and the ability of the manufactured material to stand relatively higher transportation costs.

So far as concentration of population is attributable to the cost and waste of steam power the process will be stayed. This will be an advantage not only to the smaller producer, but also to the farmer since there will be more markets at his doors. A great field of use is in the realm of transportation. To convert coal into heat units and to use this in the creation of steam motive force means that not more than five per cent. of the efficiency of the coal is utilised. Under adequate arrangements electric traction is economical. With the steam engine the load may be said to be always at the maximum; while with the electric traction the load adjusts itself to hourly changes in the demand for power. On short distance service steam locomotives are forced, between stops, to get up to seventy miles an hour, in order to make the schedule. And in this there is much waste; for there is no way of utilising surplus power. The experiments which the railways are making show their appreciation of this. The developments in the transmission of power in Lombardy and in California show how great a territory may be made tributary to a power plant.

Mr. Timothy Eaton

THE greatest retail merchant in Canada passed to his rest on Thursday last after only a few hours' illness. The funeral was one of the most impressive scenes ever witnessed in Toronto, evincing the people's high regard for the successful business man and for the employer of thousands of working people. Its significance was even deeper; it proved that no man is judged of the people by single acts but by his course of conduct over a series of years. Mr. Eaton lived a kindly and useful life, though he took no part in politics and was never known as a "public man." He came into contact with the people quietly and unostentatiously, dispensing hospitality, friendly help and charity with religious zeal and unassuming generosity. In this way he



The late Mr. Timothy Eaton.

became known as a good citizen as well as a generous employer and, when the last word had to be said, the people spoke through their actions with no uncertain voice.

The Eaton business, as it grew from a small departmental store to be one of the greatest on the continent, naturally aroused opposition. The small merchant, with his costly methods of handling goods naturally found it hard to adjust himself to new conditions. After the adjustment was fairly compassed, the resentment passed away and the complaints to-day are few. The department store was recognised as a modern institution which would have come into being in Canada under some other man if it had not been developed by Mr. Timothy Eaton. That it did come through a man of his high ideals and broad sympathies was undoubtedly best. No word has ever been said against his commercial integrity. He played the game hard but he played it fair. He has performed his part, and the account is closed. A strong, determined and successful business man has written his name large on the pages of Canada's business history.



The concourse of people in front of the residence of the late Mr. Eaton, on the occasion of the funeral on Saturday last.