



THE PHILOSOPHER

It is already an assured fact that the year 1909 is going to break all records in railway building in Western Canada. Taking Canada as a whole, the expenditure on construction that has been planned for this year will reach \$90,000,000. There was an addition of 1,248 miles to the railway lines of this country during 1908; the present year will see no less than 4,327 miles under construction. Within a few months trains will be running between Edmonton and Port Arthur. Grading is finished 150 miles west of Edmonton. The Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern will do a great deal of construction this year, which will increase the interlacing of railway lines on the map of Western Canada. Taking a national view, the important feature of the active railway development is the strengthening of the links connecting Eastern and Western Canada. The routes extended and projected will bring closer together the sections divided by Lake Superior. Instead of only the line around the rocky coast of that fresh-water ocean, there will be other links between West and East. While every new region of our vast Dominion is being served by railway construction, Canada is being solidified commercially.

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT.

It was Queen Victoria who, to dispose of the rivalry between Toronto and Montreal, fixed upon Ottawa to be the capital of this Dominion. The Commonwealth of Australia, in like manner, is to have its capital in the "bush," instead of either Sidney or Melbourne having that honor. It is likely, too, that the confederation of British South Africa, which is on the eve of being formed, will have its capital on the veldt, as the "up country" people have a certain jealousy of Cape Town. The people of Australia are following the same course as was taken in the United States when, instead of New York, or Philadelphia, or Boston being made the national capital, Washington, in the "bush," was decided upon. There is to be a federal district nine hundred miles square, in the Yass-Canberra country in New South Wales, and in its centre, on the Murrumbidgee River, which is described as a noble stream, but has an atrocious name, will be the capital, for which a name has not yet been selected. It is only right that the capital of a country should be centrally situated. If the fathers of the United States and of our Dominion could only have looked into the future, they would have located the capitals at Chicago and Winnipeg respectively.

IN REGARD TO CAPITALS.

No matter what Government has been in power in this Canada of ours, the Post Office Department has always been liberal in establishing services in the newer parts of the Dominion. Many have viewed this as wholly an act of generosity, a bid for the business that was to come. But postal business does not depend wholly on population. Thus in the matter of business done, the order is as follows: Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Prince Edward Island. People in the old settled Provinces are surrounded by their friends and relatives, and therefore do not need to write, but in the West the new settler has relatives in the old Provinces or the Old Land, and he can only communicate with them by writing.

There has been a vast amount of discussion of the divorce statistics of the United States for the past forty years which were published last month in a bulletin issued by the Census Department at Washington. The most extraordinary utterance on the whole subject which has come to the Philosopher's attention is the report of a lecture by Professor Willcox, of Cornell University, who argues that the result of the million and a quarter divorces granted in the United States in the past forty years, and of the rapidly increasing annual divorce rate, is not injurious to the sanctity of the home or lowering to the moral tone of the country. He says that he is convinced that comparatively few divorces are because one of the parties desires to marry a third person. The Philosopher, from some study of the matter, is inclined

ABOUT DIVORCE.

to think otherwise, while at the same time, of course, recognizing the plain fact that not a few divorces are simply a matter of justice. By and large, the end sought in most divorce cases is happiness. Persons who have not found happiness in the married state seek it anew in freedom. Statistics showing the success or failure of this quest would be useful. The veracious testimony of persons who have been divorced would, however, be difficult to secure. The Philosopher's impression is that in almost all cases the happiness they are seeking turns out to be a new form of unrest. Many of the divorces obtained in the States are of persons who have been previously divorced. A man or woman who cannot find a reasonable earthly equivalent for happiness in an ordinarily prudent marriage is probably doomed to discontent anyway.

The Philosopher has been turning over the pages of the annual blue book issued by the Dominion Government containing the full list of unclaimed bank balances, with the amount, and the name of the person entitled to the amount, in each case. By the law of Canada, the banks must turn over to the Government every balance in regard to which the owner has given no sign within five years. The Government publishes its list annually, and the owners of any balance can secure it by proving that he is the owner. In many cases these unclaimed balances must be regarded as revealing the existence of an unusual variety of queer people among the many varieties that go to make up this queer old world of ours. Some of these depositors are no doubt still living, and moved by a variety of strange motives, or sheer lack of motive, to neglect or abandon their property. Most of them, however, are probably dead, or have wandered away in a state of forgetfulness, or have lost their minds—secretive souls whose relatives knew or know nothing of their affairs, or lonely souls without relatives who have passed on out of this world. In Great Britain the banks publish no statement of unclaimed balances and the Government leaves them in undisturbed possession of the money. Our way in Canada is a better way.

UNCLAIMED BALANCES.

Back of Edmonton there is a region of great extent which will some day be filled with settlers. Last fall the Dominion Government had a party making Indian treaty payments throughout that region, and the accounts they give of what they saw are surprising. The farthest point northward touched by this party was Lac du Brochet, about four hundred miles north of Prince Albert and seven hundred miles north of the international boundary. Mr. W. J. McLean, the head of the party reports that there they found potatoes growing. At Pelican Narrows, two hundred miles south of Lac du Brochet, was found a garden filled with corn, carrots, beets, onions, cabbage and cauliflower. At Cumberland House and the Pas, gardens were a matter of course. Farms were found at a distance seventy miles north of Prince Albert. The country is rich in minerals. Mr. McLean noted indications of copper, silver, iron and mica. At Lake La Ronge, there have been recent discoveries of gold, and a rush of gold-seekers is expected in the spring. Water powers were passed which would supply a great city with power, and for a good part of the way the journey was through spruce timber. It is evident that north of Prince Albert there is a country second only to the Mackenzie and Peace River valleys.

BACK OF EDMONTON.

Newspaper dispatches tell of the efforts of liquor sellers to obtain licenses in Northern Ontario. But the Ontario Government is wisely refusing to increase the present number. The steady progress of the movement for the abolition of the bar throughout Ontario is shown by the fact that in 1874 there were 6,185 licenses in that Province, whereas at the present time, though the population of Ontario is nearly twice as large as it was in 1874, the total number of licenses is 2,500. The Government only evinces ordinary political wisdom in running with public sentiment. It is a recognized fact that Cobalt is the most orderly mining camp in the history of mining camps on this continent, and the acqui-

sition and maintenance of its good name is due to the fact that there has never been a liquor license in the place, and "blind pigs" are ruthlessly rooted out. There is a clause in the Ontario Mining Act which forbids the issue of a liquor license within six miles of a mine employing six or more men. Experience has taught the advisability of keeping whiskey and miners apart.

Human inventiveness is busy, as it was never busy before, in devising engines of destruction for use in warfare on land, on sea, in the air, and in the depths under the sea. In all the military nations military men are giving up their habitual conservatism and showing every readiness to try new inventions. It was not ever thus. The knights who fought in armour hated the introduction of gunpowder. Wellington fought against giving up the flintlock. In our own time the breech-loader, the magazine rifle, and later the submarine met at first with opposition. But it is different now. Electric guns, aerial torpedoes to be launched from airships and other startling novelties are devised, and all are largely seized upon and their practicableness investigated. It is a pleasant optimism to believe that each new invention will make war impossible. War will never become impossible; but it is sure to become unprofitable. It will be no single invention, as romancers dream, which will bring the assurance of peace, but the slow accumulation which will make war too ruinous and too ghastly to be risked. Thus will human inventiveness triumph even over war. But it will be the destruction of property rather than the increased deadliness that will be the determining factor.

INVENTIVENESS IN DESTRUCTIVENESS.

In sizing up the growth of Western Canada, it will not do to overlook the growth in Western New Ontario, which is the link between East and West, and partakes of the characteristics of both. The development of the country lying west of Lake Superior and of the district north of the height of land north of Lake Superior is now proceeding; that development is spread over so wide an extent of territory that it is difficult to judge how great it is, but the growth of Fort William and Port Arthur is evidence of what is going on in the country behind. In the former town 424 buildings were erected last year, as compared with 353 the year before, the majority being residences, and a number of large public and private buildings being included in the list, among the latter school buildings worth \$100,000, a Presbyterian church costing \$60,000, and a handsome Masonic Temple. All Canada will benefit by the filling up of the country Western New Ontario, and the rapid growth of the Lake Superior ports gives gratifying proof of what is going on in that region.

Lord Morley's speech in the House of Lords on the situation in India constitutes a serious appraisal of the white man's burden in that part of the globe. Nothing could be more convincing than his setting forth of Great Britain's responsibility to the millions of India who are struggling towards the light of civilization. At one point in his speech he said: "I, for one, am not what is commonly known as an Imperialist, but I emphatically affirm that to pre-empt this great movement among a people ranging in their stage of transition from a European fifth century in some parts, in slow, uneven stages, up to the twentieth century in others, to be the guides of this movement is not only humanity but a great national honor, and one of the most glorious tasks ever confided to any Government." There can be no doubt that Great Britain for a long time to come must continue to rule India for India's own good. Nor can the United States leave the task in the Philippines, until the inhabitants have gone through the slow process of fitting themselves for self-government.

THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN.

The Dominion Analyst's staff of investigators at Ottawa are investigating the Paris green that is doled out to the industrious potato bug. A like enquiry at Washington has demonstrated the fact that the bugs of the United States have been fed on impure, adulterated and ineffective poisons. Much of the Paris green sold in the country to the south has been shown to contain less than half its bulk of the deadly arsenious oxide. The bug eats merrily away at such Paris green, and thrives on it, while the manufacturers of the stuff grow rich. If such is found to be the case in this country, Parliament should follow the excellent example that is being given in the United States, where such impure bug poison is being legislated against. This is in line with the pure food laws. The bug is entitled to pure poison, and should get it.

A PURE POISON LAW.

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