

THE COMMERCIAL

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A NEW RAILWAY POLICY.

The announcement by the government made from Ottawa that the government had decided to secure the construction of another transcontinental railway as a government work, created great interest throughout the country. The announcement was received with general favor by the more progressive element among the people, and in fact by nearly all classes. It was hoped that the government had at last decided that the old custom of bonusing private corporations to build railways must cease. The details of the government measure were couched with much interest, and as time wore on, with impatience. The next step was the resignation of Mr. Blair, Dominion minister of railways. Mr. Blair's resignation showed that there had been lack of harmony in the cabinet over the railway proposals, and this probably explains the reason to some extent at least for the delay in making the government proposal public. The papers published in connection with Mr. Blair's resignation, gave some insight into the plans of the government, sufficient at least to cause uneasiness to those who had hoped that the government intended grappling with the railway question in a vigorous manner, by undertaking some clear-cut scheme for a government road. It was hoped that when the measure was presented in detail it would be round less objectionable to independent, thinking men than it was to Mr. Blair.

The plan of the government in connection with the proposed transcontinental road have now been presented in full, and the result is certainly very disappointing. The enthusiasm which was created throughout the country by the government's proposal of a road, has been cruelly scotched by the presentation of the plan in detail. Instead of a government road, we are to have a combination of government and corporate work. Mr. Blair has aptly termed a hybrid. This combination between the government and a corporation is a bad thing to start with, and is likely to prove anything but beneficial from a political point of view. The arrangement between the government and the corporation seems in many respects backward, if not actually impractical.

There must also be great disappointment to those who had hoped that the coming of railway corporations had come to an end. The Grand Trunk Pacific corporation, which is undertaking this remarkably planned work, is to receive enormous assistance from the country. The measure seems to be altogether in favor of the corpora-

tion. It is irrelevant to compare this railway with the cost to the country of the Canadian Pacific. The situation is entirely different now to what it was then. Besides this, we should have learned something in the last twenty years in the matter of dealing with corporations. It is to be feared, however, that we will have a great deal to learn yet, for the same old plan seems to prevail. The country is to stand the cost and hand everything over to a corporation to reap the profit. In this case it looks as if the government, which has started out with very high resolutions, but had become frightened and turned the matter over to the corporation. The premier's declaration that the country requires at this juncture a bold and fearless policy of transcontinental development, must fall very flat in view of the almost humiliating manner in which the government proposes to turn over everything to a corporation. It is not a reasonable argument in favor of this arrangement that it will cost the country very little less than the Canadian Pacific Railway did. The servile government press, which, of course, is expected to show an exuberance of delight over the measure, is devoting its energies mainly to showing that the Grand Trunk Pacific is not to be bonused as heavily as some other corporations were. This is very poor argument. The objections to the measure which forced the minister of railways out of the cabinet, will be shared by many independent minds throughout the country. The government, as Mr. Blair points out, undertakes to build the expensive piece of road between Moncton and Winnipeg only, in which the "bold and fearless policy" which the premier talked about, instead of vacillating. Instead of deciding to build the road, the ministers appear to have become alarmed at their own boldness and decided to build only half road, which instead of operating the road, they have to operate the road is built, to actually subsidize the corporation to take it off their hands. But this is not all. The government is to build the more expensive portion of the road, which the corporation is to be subsidized to build the less expensive and profitable portion.—The portion which will yield a profit almost to the completion.

After a careful study of the situation, we cannot but express great disappointment in this matter. The first announcement in this matter, from Ottawa, aroused hopes which have not been fulfilled. The government measure, we feel certain, is not what the country hoped for. The general favor which the first announcement received, throughout the country is in advance of the cabinet on this question. The country is evidently ready for a "bold and fearless policy," but the government is not yet equal to the occasion.

EARLY CLOSING.

The retail clerks of Winnipeg are not getting a deal from the police department in regard to enforcement of the early closing-by-law. They have been told in effect that the police are not responsible for this work and that if they want the law enforced, they must look after it themselves.

It is a most singular thing if the operation of Winnipeg has made a law which it does not consider worth enforcing. It is certainly not a very dignified position for the city to be placed in by its police department, for it seems that the trouble lies in the hands of business men on the part of the police, and the city accepts the police ruling in the

matter it might better repeal the by-law. It should be considered very bad policy to make laws and excuse the regular municipal machinery from the duty of enforcing them.

There is sufficient weight of public opinion behind this movement for keeping the stores closed after six o'clock to warrant the city in going any reasonable length to see that the movement of its by-law are carried out. The extra cost and trouble would not be great and the moral effect of a few convictions would be such as to deter all but the lowest classes of storekeepers from committing this offence. There would also be such an amount of undesirable advertising attached to a conviction under this by-law as would keep merchants from infringing the rules.

The clerks are pursuing the sensible course of taking this matter to the private and public, and will be successful even though they will secure publicity and will enlist the sympathy of the people. When the question has been thought out we feel quite sure that the council will see what an utterly illogical position the police department is placed in, and will take steps to have the matter set right.

EXPORT BUTTER TRADE.

Advices by last English mail, both private and public, are very unsatisfactory concerning Canadian butter. The Montreal Trade Bulletin, the values quoted being very low, some on this side. There has been some speculative buying, however, for the purpose of making a good stock, to be brought out later on; and this has helped to remove some of the depression. It is no doubt that the recent purchases here, also been of a speculative nature for account of the export of butter for storing on this side, to await future instructions. Stocks here are heavy, the value estimated being about 125,000 and 150,000 packages, a considerable portion of which is known to be held on English account, and therefore not for sale on this market. Notwithstanding the quietness of the situation, there appears to be confidence in the future of the market on both sides of the Atlantic. Of course, the season is approaching the time when the exports of Irish and Russian butter to the English market make a rule fall off very materially; and it is no doubt to this period holders are looking for a realization of their profits. Of course, stocks appear big just now; but if anything of a good export demand springs up, and shipments go out at the rate of 25,000 to 30,000 packages a week, as they did last summer, the market soon reduce them to a normal basis. Sales of Canadian creamery have been very low in London, and at 92s and 93s for finest, while fine do has brought 88s to 90s per cwt. The low prices of butter will scarcely warrant the prices that have recently been paid at country points. The imports of Canadian butter to the United Kingdom last month ending June 30 were 9,242 cwt, as compared with 24,023 cwt for the corresponding month last year; and for the six months ending June 30, they were 64,837 cwt, against 87,000 cwt for the same period last year, showing the large decrease of 21,911 cwt.

THE NEW EDISON BATTERY.

In his laboratory at Jewellery Park, Mr. Thomas A. Edison announced to the reporter of The Wall Street Journal and his new storage battery is now being manufactured by the Edison Electric Company for delivery to automobile manufacturers. "The battery is a real success," said Mr. Edison. "All we require of the operator is that he shall keep it charged with distilled water. It will require no further attention on his part, and the tests which we submit it undergoes it has passed with a few it out of order." One of the tests applied by Mr. Edison to his battery is to throw it out of the third story window to the rocks below. If it survives this treatment, he

says, it is then ready for shipment, and "it will even stand the test of shipping," facetiously remarked the inventor. "It is not a battery that that test is rather a severe one."

Mr. Edison stated that he recently carried out a test of his new storage battery with his storage battery, placing the same weight of battery in the machine. It is found that the Edison storage tanks engine, etc. This amounted to 200 pounds, and by actual operation it was found that the battery would carry the machine 3,600 miles. This was deemed to be large, and in excess of any other battery of the automobile under the test was being conducted, and the weight of the battery was reduced 600 pounds by the removal of extra cells, and, even with this weight in the machine, it was found to largely exceed a desirable limit of travel capacity, and the advantage of reducing the weight of the batteries 50 per cent. was now under consideration.

Arrangement has been made with the manufacturers of automobiles for carrying the batteries on their machines.

Mr. Edison is now engaged in experimenting to determine the best form of frame for an automobile battery, of long-distance and endurance capacity which shall excel in the market. In the course of his experiments he made a tour in an automobile through the roughest country roads known between Orange and Philadelphia, and returned to his laboratory with a number of interesting experiences as to such rackmounting as is encountered in an ordinary tour. The result was to demonstrate the weakness of the inventor's intention to set the battery in a frame to act as a shock absorber as to strengthen and stiffen the frame-work against the shock and concussion to which the worst roads, developing a suitable long distance battery.

SENECA RIVER.

A Minnesota correspondent of the Oil, Fuel, and Drug Reporter, writes as follows of the Seneca road market: "The receipts at the St. Paul and Minneapolis markets to July 29 are about 20,000 pounds in excess of receipts for the same date last year. The large receipts are accounted for by the high prices quoted at the beginning of this season, and the work of the diggers. Last year the season was closed at about 30¢ per pound, but this year it has advanced to the high point, to 45¢, to the diggers, and for a long time past it has been expected, and for several weeks before wheat, barley and flax came out, the chances are as good as certain that the weather being very favorable for digging. Local dealers who have sold up, and several of them have quite a few tons booked ahead for August delivery, and for that reason are very anxious to book any orders not unless at more than present market quotations. The receipts from Minnesota to New York this week are 21,000 tons, freight paid, also four tons from St. Paul, and 21,000 tons from St. Paul and sold at 51¢, f. o. b. St. Paul, and one ton for export at a price understood to be 57¢. The market for choice Minnesota coal is 15¢ per ton, and similar prices for other grades. This season is very bright, yellow, red, and thorough, and the Canadian market is not so good as it usually is much poorer than the Minnesota coal. It is almost impossible to make the Canadian coal (the Donkohors and half-bred Indians) clean from its property. One ton, Manitoba, to a local dealer at 48¢. There are spot deliveries.

The battleship King Edward VII, launched at Devonport on July 23, is the largest in the world. Its displacement is 16,250 tons, or 350 tons more than the Louisiana now being built at Newport News. She is 350 feet long on the ways at New York. The Engineer News gives the dimensions of the King Edward VII. Her length is 350 feet beam, and 26½ feet draft. Her engines will develop 18,000 h. p. The Krupp steam turbine will be used to 12½ inches thick. The armament will consist of four 12-inch guns, four 8-inch guns, and 12 3½-inch guns of smaller calibre. Her estimated weight is 16,250 tons, and she will carry 950 tons of coal and crew of 1,000 men. The cost is given at \$7,600,000.