

centres, and especially in the Iron and Steel trades. The requisition for railway supplies of every kind is greater than at any previous period and will almost at once tax the locomotive and car shops to the utmost. All this means that the labour market will improve from day to day, and that our idle population will be quickly absorbed. Such an estimate of the situation takes no account of the tremendous public works under contemplation upon which not a blow has yet been struck. The new Quebec Bridge, which will cost little less than ten millions, will be put in hand at once. Construction work on the Grand Trunk Pacific east of the Great Lakes has barely started. It is, however, to the extreme West that all eyes are turned and during the next ten years the section of country lying between the Calgary and Edmonton railroad and the Rockies, and still further North to the Peace River country, and South to the International Boundary line, together with the Northern portions of British Columbia now being traversed for the first time by transportation routes will be the theatre upon which the destiny of Western Canada will be decided. The growing importance of Canada west of the Lakes is the predominant factor in Dominion affairs even now: within ten years it will have settled the fate of Canada. What the result of Western predominance will be, can only be conjectured, but it may safely be predicted that the filling up of the West will mean the immediate establishment of industrial and manufacturing centres, the development of natural resources, and the supplying of the Western market entirely from Western products. This will alter the whole problem of politics and economics, and the transportation problem will be worked out not from Montreal but from a point at least two thousand miles West. The dream of the future is an industrial West, for no country ever yet attained greatness which confined itself to husbandry, or which exported its raw material that it might be manipulated by others. The genius of civilization is the conversion at ones own door of nature's gift of raw material

into the finished accessories of that civilization. Practically there has been no attempt at this in the West: the reason is not far to seek. All capital for investment has had to be sought in the East, and as in the United States so in Canada Eastern financial institutions have been able to direct and control Western development. This condition passed in the United States from ten to fifteen years ago, and as a consequence there has been a gradual and persistent moving westward of the centre of population and influence. The same thing will happen in Canada. The development of the West is continually enriching it to the point when independence of Eastern financiers will place it on the high road to prosperity. There is however, this great difference, between Western Canada and the Western States, the latter is practically devoid of the two prime essentials of industrial life—good coal and good iron. As a consequence it must still import its iron and steel products from the neighbourhood of Pittsburg, but Western Canada contains unlimited deposits of coal and iron ore equal in every respect to those which have made Pittsburg world-famous, and when the psychological moment arrives this will be found to be the determining factor in the future of the West.

Irrigation. The Western Canada Irrigation Convention held in Vernon last month was chiefly notable for a very valuable expert address delivered by Mr. J. S. Dennis, the well known Land Commissioner of the C.P.R., and the Manager of the C.P.R. Irrigation System. Mr. Dennis pointed out that the North-West Irrigation Act, which has proved so beneficial to the Prairie Provinces had been in operation for fifteen years. He instituted a comparison with the Water Clauses Consolidation Act of B. C., much to the disadvantage of the latter, which he considered cumbersome, and calculated to provoke litigation. Mr. Dennis pointed out that one of the greatest obstacles in the way of irrigation in British Columbia was the fact that nearly every