

The local legislature of Manitoba assembled this year for the first time, and simultaneously the agricultural, educational, and religious interests of the province began to take shape for future development. The population of Winnipeg was now estimated at 500 souls, and two years later, when it had reached over 1,500, an agitation commenced for the incorporation of the place as a city. To advance the scheme a newspaper was established, and though strenuous opposition was offered by several officials of the Hudson's Bay Company and some large landed proprietors, who feared taxation on their property, the vulgar mob supported it in their desire for incorporation. Noisy meetings were held, the Legislature was petitioned, and a measure introduced, but the landed proprietors had the ear of the legislators, and the Incorporation Bill was thrown out. One night, however, some unknown individuals caught the Speaker of the House, and administered to him a taste of tar and feathers. The Government, finding the people determined, did as all Governments must do under such circumstances: the Incorporation Bill was passed, and the city of Winnipeg sprang into existence. During all this time the fleet of steamers on the Red River had been steadily increasing, and there were now some half-dozen plying on its waters. The daily stage was also continued, and these improved means of communication caused a rapid increase in the area of settlement. Still it was slow work, especially as, after arriving in Winnipeg, settlers could only move further westward by the use of the ox-cart or wagon. But the railway was fast approaching. Mr. George Stephen, the Hon. Donald A. Smith, and Mr. James J. Hill, now amongst the principal promoters of the Canadian Pacific Railway, had obtained possession of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway, and were pushing it with remarkable energy in the direction of the Canadian North-West. It was through the efforts of these gentlemen that the first railway train was run into Winnipeg in 1878, and from that time a new era dawned on the North-West. Still, of that great country the threshold only had been reached. We have seen how the ox-cart gave way to the stage, the stage to the steamer, and the steamer to the railway, and yet Winnipeg was but the resting-place of settlers: the great wheatfields to the West remained comparatively unknown. The Canadian Government had, however, entered into an agreement with British Columbia to build a railway across the continent to the Pacific Ocean, and were bound to carry out that undertaking. Governments are not, as a rule, good railway constructors, and this the Dominion found to its cost. After repeated failures and heavy losses the Canadian authorities finally concluded to give up the attempt, and hand the work over to a private company; and in December, 1880, an agreement was entered into with the present Canadian Pacific Railway to undertake the building of the road. In the following spring (not quite three years ago) work was commenced in earnest.