

HOW SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE BUILT THE CUBA RAILROAD

No Subsidy, No Public Aid, No Questionable Political Tactics Used When Great Railway Builder Drove Line Through Cuba.

Late Professor of McGill University, a Chapter from the forthcoming Biography of Sir Wm. Van Horne Reprinted from "Century."

BY WALTER VAUGHAN

After 400 years of Spanish misrule and a century of successive revolutions, the United States had liberated the Cuban people. Spain had finally evacuated the colony a year earlier, and the island was being administered by a military governor, General Leonard Wood, pending the institution of a stable civil government based on popular election. The eastern provinces had been devastated by incessant guerrilla warfare. The cane fields had been largely destroyed, and the cane had been overgrown with weeds and brush. Cattle-raisers had lost everything, and it was difficult to find a cow or an ox. Forests were few and in wretched condition. Mining had ceased; all industries were virtually dead.

The railway system of the island comprised 1,134 miles of railway. Ninety per cent. of these radiated from Havana and were owned by English companies. There were also 965 miles of private railway lines, constructed to carry sugar-cane to the mills. In what are now the three eastern provinces of Santa Clara, Camaguey, and Oriente, the largest and richest in the country and comprising three-quarters of the total area of the island, there were only a little over one hundred miles of small railways. In the days of Spanish dominion every one had conceded the desirability of a line of railway which would connect Santiago de Cuba, Camaguey, and eastern Santa Clara with Havana, the seat of the island's government and the centre of its commercial life. Every principle of politics and economics had demanded communication between the leading cities of the middle and eastern provinces and the western end of the island. But under Spanish rule the construction of such a railway was accepted as impossible.

Decides to Build a Railroad.

Traveling in Cuba early in 1900, in company with General Russel A. Alger, the American Secretary of War, and the Hon. Elihu Root, Secretary of State, Van Horne heard them discuss the desirability, on strategic grounds of building a railway through the eastern provinces, and also the apparently insurmountable obstacle which the former Act had placed in the way of such a project being undertaken as a private enterprise. This legislation had been enacted by the American Congress in order to protect the Cubans and the interim administration from exploitation by promoters and irresponsible speculators, and prohibited the granting of any franchises or concessions of any kind during American occupation. About the same time he met Percival Farquhar of New York, who was the representative of a group which had obtained control of the Havana tramways. Farquhar gave him a glowing description of the interior.

pondering over this situation, it flashed upon Van Horne that there was in all probability no law which would prevent the acquisition of parcels of land or the construction of a railway thereon by their owner. To construct a railway in small pieces in this way, without right of expropriation or eminent domain and with out any assurance whatever beyond his own faith that the future Cuban Government would grant the necessary charter powers, involved great risks and implied great courage. But having hit upon the plan, Van Horne did not hesitate to adopt it.

On his arrival in New York in March he immediately consulted Howard Mansfield, a lawyer of his acquaintance. "Do you know anything of the Foraker Act?" he asked.

"If there's anything in it to prevent an individual or corporation from owning or acquiring lands in Cuba from building a railway on various pieces of such property, taking a chance of ever being able to operate the railway as a whole?"

"No."

"Well, I'm going to form a company to do that, and want you to get out the necessary incorporation papers."

C. R. Government Behind It.

Van Horne's next step was to get

a new railway from the Kootenay Valley to the Pacific Coast. His condemnation was decisive.

"The Canadian Pacific Railway cannot and will not surrender that region to any other company. . . . The only commendable thing I see in this enterprise is the prospect, which should take high rank among imaginative works."

Van Horne's Ideas.

The Cuban Government was not yet instituted, and the people uncertain of the purpose of the Americans and fearful lest they had only changed masters, suspected every form of American activity. But during his visit to the island Van Horne had formed the opinion that they had a fine sense of honor and would respond to fair and courteous treatment. Before starting negotiations, therefore, for the right of way he employed two able and influential Cubans to go through the eastern provinces and explain the good will and intentions of the company and the benefits which the community would derive from its operations. He also addressed courteous and diplomatic letters to the governors of the eastern provinces, giving detailed information of the project. Invariable and impeccable courtesy was to be the keynote of all dealings with the Cubans. He wrote to his chief engineer:

"Deal with them throughout with politeness whatever the provocation to do otherwise may be, for we cannot afford to antagonize even the humblest individual if it can be avoided. Our engineers will give the first impression of the Cuba Company to the people in the districts where they are operating, and they should seek in every way to create among these people a pleasant impression. . . . Any one unable to control his temper and who violates the rule which should be made in this regard should be promptly got rid of. I am anxious that the people throughout the country should become impressed as quickly as possible with the desire of the Cuba Company to treat everybody with the greatest consideration and to deal with them in all matters with perfect fairness."

These methods of approach were richly rewarded. Convinced of the company's goodwill and of the benefits they would receive from the operation of the railway, proprietors gave the land necessary for the railway without compensation. In cases where absentee Spanish landholders were inclined to hold out for payment, their neighbors united in creating a public opinion which forced them to a similar liberality. At the close of the year Van Horne told his shareholders "so far our rights of way have cost us nothing but the salaries and expenses to our agents." When, some time later, President McKinley asked him how he had accomplished the purchase of the right of way and begun to build a railway without a charter, he replied:

"Mr. President, I went to them with my hat in my hand."

"I think I understand," said the President.

To his friends Van Horne explained that whenever he met a Cuban, he bowed first and he bowed last. In these early days of his company he was self-served by his double nationality. Americans contended in the administration of the island had full confidence in him as being one of themselves. The Spanish Cubans, who looked upon Americans with jealousy and suspicion, trusted him as a Briton. They knew that there were no knights in the United States. Discarded Old-Time Tactics.

As, with a fine instinct, he found the royal road to the favor of the Cubans and discarded the sharp and rough-and-ready methods of American railway-building, so he determined at all costs to avoid antagonizing the railway companies already operating on the island. Unsupervised as he was by legal authority, any other course would have been suicidal. Having no charters, he was without power to cross another railway, and he instructed his engineers to carry their line clear south of the Cuba Central Railway, running north from Pinar del Rio.

While his engineers were locating the line and his agents obtaining rights of way, Van Horne was preparing for the work of construction with all his old zest for detail. He shipped construction supplies and materials for assembly at Santiago, Ciegoaguayo and Santa Clara in advance of their use. Grading was begun at both ends of the line in November, 1900, with Spanish and Cuban laborers.

The final location of the railway was on a line which, running from Santa Clara through Camaguey to the port of Santiago, would bisect the greater part of the island and serve as a trunk line for the branch lines running north and south, which cut off-spings. The absence of which could be constructed later. It was not until three years later Ryan could found necessary to follow the water-shed and head the streams, which

widen and deepen rapidly in their descent to the sea upon each side.

In 1901 Van Horne went again to Cuba, to see construction well started and take a look at the interior for himself. Six weeks' work and travel, which included a ride from San Luis to Nipe Bay, strengthened his enthusiasm for the enterprise. Getting off his mule at a point called Pamerito one evening, his valisees caught on theommel of his stock-saddled and he fell heavily to the ground on his back. Mr. Miller A. Smith, the chief engineer, rushed up, exclaiming:

"My God! Sir William, are you hurt?"

"No," replied Van Horne, getting to his feet and dusting himself. "That is the way I always get off."

Progress Made on Line.

With six thousand men employed, as rapid progress was made in the construction of the road as was possible in an undeveloped tropical country. Streams and public highways were crossed under authority of the revocable license, which, as Van Horne widely and publicly announced, but his enterprise "entirely at the mercy of the people of Cuba." But he was willing to do so because of his "faith in the honor and justice of the Cuban people."

On February 7, 1902, the general railway law was promulgated by an order of the military governor. He cited upon the ancient city of Camaguey, then called Puerto Príncipe, for the headquarters of the railway and decided to mark the turning of the first sod at that point with a public celebration. The influence of the officials of a small railway running from the city to the northern coast was excited, however, to prevent the public from attending the ceremony. The attendance was wretchedly small, but undaunted by his chilly reception and determined to win the favor of the people, Van Horne accepted the situation as though every circumstance was propitious. With courtesy deference he handed the spade to Nina Adelina, the little daughter of Mayor Barreras, and she performed the ceremony. On his return to New York he bought her a gold watch, which bore a suitable inscription, and had an illuminating address prepared to commemorate "the interest she manifested in the company's undertaking," and for "so graciously inaugurating its work at Puerto Príncipe." When he next visited the city, bringing with him the watch and the address, the people had come to realize the benefits they would derive from the new railway, and the presentation ceremony which took place in a flower-decked patio, was a genuine festival. Some months later the tide of good feeling had risen so high that he was formally adopted by the civic authorities as a "son of Camaguey."

The grading of the road was completed in March, 1902, but the labor shortage, the non-arrival of the bridge materials, and damage by rains delayed completion of the line. Its estimated cost was largely exceeded, and construction was handicapped by financial pressure and the need for rigorous retrenchment.

Line Opened at Last.

On December 1, 1902, the Cuba Railway was opened for traffic. Then it had taken ten days to travel from one end of the island to the other; now the journey could be made in a luxurious sleeping-car in twenty-four hours. Van Horne, who had gone to Cuba for the occasion, found himself not merely the adopted son of Camaguey, but of all the eastern provinces.

Nobody's Influence Bought.

The road had been built without subsidy or public aid of any kind through a region where, despite an offer of government guarantees, the old regime had been unable to find any bold enough for the task. It was a monument to Van Horne's faith in the honor of the Cubans and in the future of their country. Furthermore, it was a monument to the Cuban sense of honor and fair-dealing. Remarkable, if not unique, in Spanish-American countries, it was built without buying any man or any one's influence. Farquhar, who had an intimate knowledge of the undertaking, said:

"The Cuba Railway was the purest big enterprise I've ever heard about in North or South America. There was not one dollar spent directly or indirectly in influencing legislation or the people. Sir William relied upon the fact that he was supplying a desirable public utility. He merged the company's interests with the community's, and went ahead, buying no man. There was one time I wondered if we could stick to Sir William's rule in this respect. However, we got through, holding to our principles. It was a fine and most rare side of a business of this sort, as creditable to the Cuban people as it was to Sir William."

THE REPUBLICAN SWEEP

Written for The Ontario by Chas. M. Bice, Lawyer, Denver, Colorado

Yesterday the Republican party swept the country in a great political landslide, securing not only its candidate, Mr. Harding, for president, but also electing a majority in both houses of Congress. Long ago the people determined to do this in such an emphatic and impressive manner that the great victory will long be remembered. The people were determined to blot out the memories of Democratic blundering and incompetence of the last six years, to rise free from the associations of those years, and with new leaders and a new executive, take up the problems of the era into which we are emerging.

Before the nominating conventions the Republican party was assured of victory. All that followed these conventions have had but slight bearing on the results of the election. Oratory and pamphletting were useless. The Democratic party was doomed to defeat. The people had decreed a change in the national government and they got it. Before the great war closed, at a moment when the American expeditionary forces were leading the weary allied armies to the victory that was celebrated in the armistice of a week later, the voters defeated the Democratic party and began the work which it completed yesterday. In millions of minds the silent but overwhelming issue was the demand for a change, for an anodyne to war's memories and aftermaths. If it had not come to betide the nation, No other cure was possible for that which allied the country.

The sweeping victory was the result of a wonderful demonstration in mass psychology. Yet it was a silent movement, the least exciting presidential campaign the American people have record of. Most of the trappings of former political campaigns were discarded. Argument was swayed less than of yore. The republic was in a dogged mood. President Wilson's appeal for a solemn referendum on the League of Nations, despite sentimental attachment, went all but unheeded. Less attention was given to those who preached an impossible return to national isolation. Instinctively the people felt that a way out would be found without loss of honor to the nation or to its standing with a world so much in need of its help. A wave of irritation went over the land at some of the statements of the candidates and their main support, but the business at the polls was not

LINDSAY AND LABOR REPORT.

According to the fourth annual report of the Trades and Labor Bureau, the majority of the clients in Lindsay operate on the 19-hour day basis. The Dominion Arsenal, however, is run on a 44-hour week basis. The wages paid in Lindsay are slightly lower than in the larger centers. Laborers, for instance, received 30 to 45 cents per hour during the past summer.

PUTTING IN SPUR LINE.

The C.P.R. is constructing a spur line in Smith's Falls running from the Frost & Wood Company's siding to the plant of the Smith's Falls Maltable Casing Co. at the foot of Bay street.

ENJOYED GREEN PEAS.

The family of G. W. Robinson, Athens, seven in number, enjoyed their most popular dish "green peas" on Monday night. They used peas which were raised on their own farm.

FAINFUL ACCIDENT.

Port Hope friends will be sorry to learn of the unfortunate accident which befell Mr. Charles Smith of Oshawa, a former resident of Port Hope. While working at one of the machines in his canning factory Mr. Smith's right hand was drawn in and before the power could be shut off the third finger very badly bruised. The injuries are very painful and Mr. Smith will be off duty for some time.

WARDEN IS HOLIDAYING.

Warden J. S. Ponsford and Dr. W. G. Anglin of the Portmouthe Penitentiary, are at present absent on holiday, Warden Sanford going on a hunting trip. Mr. Gilbert Smith, Inspector of Penitentiary, Ottawa, is in charge of the local institution during the absence of Warden Ponsford. Everything is running along smoothly at the penitentiary, and it is expected that Superintendent Ponsford will be back in a few days.

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Its a long lane that has no turning. But remember—when the lane turns too often it's an easy matter to lose your way.

WISDOM

Written for the O Pastor of Vic

"And they that be wise as the brightness of the sun they that turn many to righteousness as the star for ever. But so thou thy way thou be for thou shalt rest, and thy lot at the end of the way." Job 3-13

"Daniel was one of the ones under the O.T. discipline. Enoch, who walked with God, who went up to heaven, whom God buried and no man knew his sepulchre unto like Job, who found the will of the Lord to be mercy—one of those who for special reward assigned the end of life. Of other saints chiefly of the great things for them in their lives. Our fixed on their lives, and they went through, on a way saved from. Abraham, Samuel and David and of think of as in the midst of in the thick of life; we do our thoughts most towards to what accompanied it. Is there nothing that we in his life so striking as he belonged to his close. He doubt, a most remarkable as much as any, had gone strange changes; he had been of the strength of faith a power of God to protect and it. To him had been shown, a mixture of clearness and mystery things that were to be on the after him. He was a most able witness to the truth, as he and a living saint of God these things he shares, more with others. The thing which alone, and that which made readers of his awful book with solemn force, is the promise at the end—the clear promise beyond the grave. Daniel was to whom it was given with uncertainty to know what would come of him when the world over."

"We have in the last chapter Daniel their outstanding Isaac comfort."

"The hope of the suffering. Many of them that sleep dust of the earth shall awake to everlasting life, and some to an everlasting contempt." The doctrine of the resurrection the dead is here for the first broadly asserted; and that in way-as to connect it with resurrection and make it an encouragement of fidelity under trial.

"We have also the reward working saint. 'They that shall shine' and among the of the earth decorations and are given to those who have done greatest work of destruction. The Kingdom of Christ it is fast. The places of angels under Him are assigned to the have been like Him in the of their characters, in the sacrifice of their lives, and in the

COMING TO

Written by Chas. M. Bice.

For a half century Great has been a closed shop. Trade is almost a religion over Class consciousness is an act. The man at the top, the legged class so called, puts bars against the fellow below the man or woman at the bottom accepts the situation as a matter course and acts accordingly by being a class conscious organization from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in three generations is not sure to be effective there. Once in sleeves always in shirt sleeves motto of the British aristocrat, geese and proletarian. Trade is not only a religion, it is a well as in that country. Things must be appreciated. vance to understand the individual struggle that is going on in empire.

It is reported that the rank and file of the I.O.O.F. are to join the miners in their strike to be followed by the transport workers would be the "triple alliance" against the British government. If the labor leaders could secure identical workers they would a well entrenched position, in fact a state of war in the union of the Labor party. The aim of the Labor party—Trade Union party—is to change the government and overthrow what is claimed to be constitu