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THE FIFTEENTH YEAR.

The present issue closes the fifteenth year of the **MONETARY TIMES**. As this is the largest volume, in respect of bulk, yet issued (1620 pages) so we hope it will have been found by our readers to have contained the largest amount of information, suggestion and criticism.

A large part of the work of such a journal as this is necessarily critical. We cannot be always "prophesying smooth things," and do not wish to be. For when a journal ceases to be outspoken with respect to abuses and real grievances, it abdicates one of its most essential functions. Nay, our experience has confirmed what was already well known: that however much those whose toes are trodden upon cherish the process at the time, the result is usually to be seen in increased respect for the critic, provided his views are just, and a larger influence for his utterances. Hence we have the pleasure of numbering among our admirers and supporters to-day, those who have most warmly and indignantly resented the arguments or strictures we had in previous years deemed it our duty to make use of.

Unscrupulous adventurers, dishonest traders, the whole tribe of deadbeats, dislike and occasionally decry **THE MONETARY TIMES**. But this is something to be proud of. Imitators are found who will snarl at imperfections, real or supposed. Narrow-minded politicians, or purblind bigots may dissent from views which they either misunderstand or cannot afford to express. Such differences do not alarm us. Sometimes, too, though seldom, we have had to lament giving pain to those who through misfortune—oftenest, however, by violation of economic laws—have become subjects for our animadversion. Still the increasing number of firms and incorporated companies which we have the satisfaction of counting among our patrons, and the thousands of intelligent subscribers and readers of this journal on both sides of the Atlantic, are

sufficient approval of its course and influence to stimulate us to further efforts in the cause of impartial journalism and fearless criticism of wrong-doing amongst high and low.

THE GRAND TRUNK AND GREAT WESTERN LEASE.

The arrangement between the Grand Trunk and the Great Western railways has, after no long delay, been signed. It is in the form of a lease; the Grand Trunk being the lessee and the Great Western the lessor. But the transaction means a great deal more than would ordinarily be implied by the execution of a lease. The Great Western not only surrenders its independence: its very name will cease to exist. Of the Great Western nothing but its history now remains. The two corporations have been rivals ever since they came into existence, and the rivalry was sometimes marked by the acrimony born of adverse interests. The Great Western, the older of the two, viewed the appearance of the Grand Trunk on the scene as a rival, and each did what it could to injure the other. Both roads were aided by Government funds; part of the advance to the Great Western was remitted; of the advance to the Grand Trunk nominally nothing was written off and practically everything.

Of the two roads, the Great Western has, on the whole, had the more prosperous career. For a long time it paid a good dividend; the Grand Trunk shareholders never got a shilling return on their capital. They were allured to subscribe by the most enticing of prospectuses, put forth, we doubt not, in perfect good faith, by which they were encouraged to hope for exceptionally high dividends. The miscalculations of the promoters were greater than ordinarily occurs in American railways, and they must have been based on very inadequate information. The weak point was in estimating the working expenses far below the rate which experience proved had to be paid. The Grand Trunk was for a time perhaps somewhat handicapped by a government representation in the directorate. But there is no reason to suppose that that representation had any controlling influence on the management. And the sacrifice of the Government directors did not bring a dividend. So that the case presents no evidence of value on the question of Government control of railways; for there never was any Government control of the Grand Trunk, and the abolition of Government directors did not put the road in a better condition financially. The Great Western was never subjected to even the

semblance of Government control; and its last days have been worse than its first.

The Great Western, no one can now doubt, showed too much of the ambition which seeks to command traffic by contributing to the construction of numerous branches. It allowed itself to be goaded into those expenditures by local rivalry, of which the managers perhaps scarcely understood the motives. As a rival of the Grand Trunk its influence was, locally considered, confined to a small area; and for through traffic the two roads were not more rivals than many others which the united companies will still have to encounter.

This lease gives the Grand Trunk practical control over the western peninsula of Ontario. All the outspread arms of the Great Western, by which it hoped to gather in local traffic, are henceforth devoted to the service of the Grand Trunk. The last battle between the two companies was fought over the control of the Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway. The Great Western, just before it made a surrender of itself, snatched a nominal victory by means of a reckless bid, which the shareholders of the broken down road, forming the prize, clutched at. That bad bargain the Grand Trunk must now, we presume, father. But the monopoly of the Grand Trunk will not be absolute, even over the western peninsula. There is still the opposition of the Canada Southern at one point, and that of the Credit Valley is likely henceforth to count for something, under the connections it is understood to have formed. The practical evils likely to arise from the union of the Grand Trunk and the Great Western will be mitigated by the competition of these roads, unless some traffic agreement be made among them, which is possible, but not probable.

Neither of the two companies which this lease welds into one, was in a prosperous condition, at the time of the union. The shareholders of both were suffering. It is unfortunate, in every point of view, that this state of things should exist. Nobody would grudge the companies the benefit of any economies the union would produce, provided he were certain that the union would not be otherwise used to the disadvantage of the public. The question of railway monopoly now present, on this continent, is pregnant with future troubles, possibly with disaster; for it may be taken for granted that the public will not always patiently submit to be robbed, under whatever form, by railway monopolies. But the crisis will come in the neighboring States before it reaches us; there the struggle will first take place. If the legislatures prove corrupt, of which there is always danger when unscrupulous men controlling untold