

doing with the chief seaports & lake ports of the U.S. In proposing to utilize the east end of the harbor Mr. Tarte is moving in the right direction, but he should go further, & ask Parliament to assume the debt incurred for past, present & future improvements. That done, & the C.P.R. induced to co-operate with the Government in founding a fast passenger & freight service, so that wheat may be shipped direct from Manitoba & Fort William, Minnesota & Duluth, to Liverpool by the St. Lawrence route, Montreal will once more be in the running as an ocean port; while the farmer of the Canadian Northwest, together with the farmer of Ontario, will be benefited to a very important extent indeed.

Miscellaneous Navigation Notes.

A marine slip costing \$8,000 to \$10,000 is being built at Rat Portage, Lake of the Woods.

The steamer *Filgate* has been purchased by the Montreal & Cornwall Navigation Co. & will be run as an excursion boat next season.

The Toronto agent of the Dominion Steamship Co. states he has been advised that the line will run between Liverpool & St. John, N.B., this winter, owing to the breach of its relations with the G.T.R., in consequence of which it will not make Portland, Me., its American terminus.

The latest addition to the Sincennes-McNaughton line fleet is the powerful tug, *Virginia*. She was built for work in the Lower St. Lawrence & carries surface & salt water condensers. She is built of oak, lined with pitch pine, is 107 ft. 3 in. in length, has a beam of 24 ft. & a depth of hold 10 ft. 8 in.

The Canadian-Australian Steamship Co. is said to be applying for an increased mail subsidy, based upon the large increase in the bulk of the mails since calling at New Zealand ports. The Dominion Government was at first not particularly impressed with the claim, but investigation has shown that not less than 300 to 400 bags of mail matter are carried on each trip from New Zealand, & there being no room for them with the other matter from Australia, state-rooms have to be utilized for their storage.

A London, Eng., cablegram says: "The plans for the short steamship route between Milford Haven, Wales, & Paspebiac, Que., are progressing. The Canadian Steamship Co., working in conjunction with the Atlantic & Lake Superior Ry. Co., has announced that, pending the completion of a line of 21-knot steamers of the 1st-class, steamships of a somewhat less power have been chartered, with which to make the journey between Milford Haven & Paspebiac in a little over 4 days. The Ry. Co. is completing docks at Paspebiac for the largest ocean steamers, & the Great Western Railway Co. of Eng. is arranging for special express passenger service to London."

There is likely to be further competition in the steamship business between the Pacific Coast & Japan & China. A line from San Diego, via Honolulu to Yokohama & Hong Kong, is said to be an assured fact, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Ry. working in close connection with it & probably giving it financial assistance. The Co. has been incorporated as the California & Oriental Steamship Co., capital \$5,000,000. It is said negotiations are on for the purchase of 2 vessels in England, that there will be sailings from San Diego every 25 days, & that the service will include Manila if that port is ceded to the U.S. Some years ago the Santa Fe operated a line of steamers across the Pacific. The venture, however, was far from successful. Since then the road has been asked to put up money for steamship lines, but has so kept out of the business until now.

ELECTRIC RAILWAYS.

British Columbia Electric Railway Co.

The 2nd ordinary general meeting of this Co. was held in London, Eng., last month. The Chairman of the Co. in addressing the meeting said: I regret we are again obliged to forego the pleasure of recommending a dividend. Your directors have come to the conclusion that, although we have a small surplus profit in hand, it is more prudent to apply it to reserve fund than to divide it up amongst shareholders. I am aware shareholders are getting tired of constantly remitting money to B.C., & receiving no return upon it, but I heartily trust this will be the last occasion on which I have to meet you without recommending, at all events, some small return on the money you have invested. I feel myself how disheartening it is to have remitted, as this Co. & its predecessors have, upwards of £400,000 without ever having drawn one single penny out of B.C. up to the present day. I feel that I am trespassing on your good nature to a certain extent & on your confidence in the country in asking you to remit another £100,000 for the Benefit of Vancouver & Westminster. I am, however, emboldened to do this by the very satisfactory assurances & willingness to subscribe further money which many shareholders have shown, & by their inclination to back their opinion as to the great future which is in store for B.C. by subscribing further capital. I feel, too, every confidence that the smaller shareholders will come forward just as liberally as the larger ones have done when we have the opportunity of applying to them to take up their proportion of further shares.

It is a pleasure to be able to state that in spite of our not being able to give you any dividend this year, the issue of our £100,000 of stock has already been practically assured. This money we propose to devote towards putting Vancouver into a satisfactory position with regard to electric power, as we shall have done in Victoria by September. I think there is no doubt we shall have as fine & liberal an installation of electric power in these two cities as is possessed by any cities of their size in the whole world. We are helping ourselves as well as helping them in taking these steps, because by promoting the prosperity of these cities we insure an increase in business, & the advantages to a city of having a cheap, regular & reliable electric supply immediately tends to increase its prosperity, & consequently attracts fresh settlers inasmuch as it enables it to compete with all the other cities who are competitors. By this means we enable our cities to do their business on the cheapest possible terms, as an efficient power enables all branches of business, whether it be manufacturers, mills, or any other works where a power is needed, to compete successfully with the commerce of the world.

Our improvements for the year, besides the construction of the Vancouver Power House & the construction of an entirely new metallic circuit for power business, & the increase in the power itself involved, includes the construction of 2 small additions to our railway. The first is an extension from Westminster City to the small town of Sapperton. Although at present we cannot say that we expect to earn more from it than the amount of interest on the cost of the construction, yet our board are desirous of meeting their constituents as far as they possibly can in all such matters where we are not actually losers, & we hope that the construction of the branch will induce fresh settlers & fresh business to spring up along it, & thus make it a paying investment in time. The second extension is a very small one, being the Denman Street Line in Vancouver, from Robson street to the beach. This is a very short extension, but one which

the board believe will prove a considerable increase of traffic in the summer months.

One word as to the criticisms which have been levelled against our management. We have heard a great deal said about the very large proportion which our expenses bear to gross revenue when compared with similar companies in Canada. I have taken out a list of the principal companies' percentages, & I find they run from the Toronto Railway's 48.81% & the Montreal's 55.05, the Ottawa Electric Railway 67.67 & we ourselves show 68.01%. You will see, however, in our figures that the heavier expenses are shown in the early months of the year, and since then we have made steady improvement, & we trust we shall be able to reduce the expenditure at any rate to 63% during next year. No effort on our part will be wanting to bring about such a result. I am afraid I cannot hold out to you hopes of doing as well as such big companies as the Montreal & Toronto, or even as well as the London, Ont., company, which has, if anything, a smaller constituency than our own. At the same time, no effort of ours shall be wanting in our endeavor to reach this state of economy, & if we cannot succeed in it this year it will be our aim to do so in the future, & there is some encouragement to the shareholders in the fact that there is substantial room for improvement in this respect. When we do succeed in making this improvement it will mean a near dividend for the shareholders.

The Co. has had on the whole a good year. The returns have been very satisfactory in proportion to the population of the cities, & as I have said, the percentages of expenses have been gradually decreasing; but in order to make the necessary economies we have had to expend a very large amount of money on construction & improvements of electrical apparatus. Electrical science has developed so rapidly that the apparatus installed 7 or 8 years ago is now out of date; & while not being useless, it is very uneconomical, & all companies are replacing the obsolete types with new types of machinery, which in a short time show large economies in fuel & labor. For this reason our company will undoubtedly do better hereafter owing to the many improvements already made. For one thing, these improvements have made our securities a sound investment; but I do not forget that our shareholders have not yet received the benefit of our labors, & this is accounted for by the fact that we have been obliged to sink into fresh improvements every penny we have succeeded in earning, although we have employed the very strictest economy in our daily operations. And this course, I fear, will have to be pursued for some years; but we may notwithstanding be able to give some return to our shareholders on the money they have invested in this Co. in the near future. It only remains for me to move, "That the report & accounts be received & adopted, & that the surplus of profits be apportioned as recommended therein."

The motion was adopted, as was also the proposal to raise an additional £100,000. R. M. Horne-Payne & F. S. Barnard were re-elected directors. It was decided to make the new issue of stock in £10 shares.

The official test of the new plant which the Co. has installed at Goldstream, near Victoria, took place Aug. 23, the power being turned into the station at Rock Bay. The work was not then quite completed, but the trial was in every way satisfactory & indicative of the extent of power available when the plant is fully completed. The *Victoria Times* says the work of installing this extensive plant, which has occupied several months, was undertaken & carried out by the Co. itself. A number of Eastern Canadian & U. S. companies had contracts for the supplying of wire, machinery, etc., but the work as a whole has been conducted by the Co. under