

The Minister of Railways, Hon. A. G. Blair, in an interview said he knew what was coming, as Mr. Hays had discussed it with him on several occasions, but until a definite conclusion was reached by the company he had not felt at liberty to speak of it. In his judgment the development of the Canadian Northwest and British Columbia would be so rapid in the next few years as to afford ample traffic for three transcontinental lines, and he was glad to know that the G.T.R. would seek to share in that development. To build a railway from Gravenhurst or North Bay through New Ontario, across Manitoba and the Territories to the Pacific coast via the Pine or Peace river passes would not be less than 2,500 miles. It was a pretty big undertaking, but it has been done before, and could certainly be accomplished again. The C.P.R. was built in six years, and he thought that with the improvements in mechanical devices and railway construction which have been so marked in the past few years, the new line could be constructed within five years, and at an average cost of, say, \$25,000 a mile. It would cost much more in the section north of Lake Superior and in the Rockies, but that extra expense would be counterbalanced by the cheaper construction across the prairies. He was told that north of the C.P.R. Lake Superior section there was considerable level land, and the cost of building might not be as great there as is anticipated. No assurances had been given as to a Federal subsidy, but he did not suppose the promoters would object to receiving one. He understood several Canadians would be on the directorate, and he would not be surprised if the major portion of the stock would be owned in Canada. Mr. Blair added:—"I have never disguised my own view that if Mr. Booth desires to dispose of his property the Canada Atlantic Ry. should be acquired as part of the Intercolonial Ry. I hold firmly to the opinion that the Government system of railways should be extended to the Great Lakes. If the Intercolonial were projected into Ontario it would show the people of the premier province how deeply their interests are bound up with the Government railway system. However, nothing is being done in this direction at present."

Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President of the C.P.R., said to interviewers for the Montreal

dailies:—"Our Grand Trunk friends are undertaking a very big contract. There is nothing in the announcement that need cause the Canadian Pacific the slightest concern. In this vast country of ours there is room for a great many miles of railway. Twenty years ago when the C.P.R. enterprise was inaugurated, the entire country from Pembroke to the Pacific Coast, a distance of upwards of 2,500 miles, was a bleak waste, practically uninhabited. To-day the C.P.R. operates in that territory over 6,000 miles of railway, main line and branches, and this mileage is being increased year by year. The construction of a line north of us will involve years of labor and millions upon millions of capital. A feature of the announcement is the absence of any reference to Government bonuses or subventions. The G.T.R. Co. has declared its determination to build, so that any aid toward the enterprise from either the Dominion or Provincial governments is not asked or required, and this is just as it should be from the standpoint of the public as well as of existing railways. As Mr. Hays says, the conditions have changed enormously since the pioneer road was constructed, and circumstances that made Government co-operation absolutely essential to the carrying out of the original C.P.R. enterprise no longer exist."

W. Mackenzie, President of the Canadian Northern Ry., was interviewed by the Toronto Globe, but refused to say that negotiations between the G.T.R. and the C.N.R. companies would not result in the absorption of the latter road by the G.T.R. He did say, however, that the G.T.R. Co. had no connection with the C.N. at that date. "The work of the extension of the C.N.R. to the east will be commenced very shortly," said Mr. Mackenzie, "and we intend before long to reach Toronto, Montreal and Quebec and Ottawa. We have already carried on a large amount of surveying work, and are following this up with all possible haste." Upon being asked as to the plans of the railway for the west, he declared that the road would be pushed through irrespective of what action any other company might take. He expected that even in the near future the C.N.R. would be a transcontinental road. "Then Mr. Hays' railway will parallel yours?" said the reporter. "Wouldn't it be better to say 'Mr. Hays' scheme will parallel our railway?'" asked



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