

Intercolonial, the rates on which, though lately increased ten per cent., are still exceedingly low; thirdly, the 1,500 miles from Quebec to Winnipeg will yield little freight and attract few settlers until all the western lands are occupied; fourthly, the 500 miles from the Yellow Head Pass to the Pacific coast will entail immensely heavy work, with a problematical return, and, finally the best sections of country through which the line will pass are already supplied with branch lines, or main lines by the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern, and the stretch from Edmonton will be dominated by the two senior systems before the Grand Trunk Pacific can reach that territory.

As against this the report of Chief Engineer Lumsden to the Transcontinental Railway Commission is interesting. Mr. Lumsden says the country from Moncton to Weymontachene is more or less settled, and from Weymontachene westerly 100 miles it is very rough and broken. After crossing the headwaters of the Obaska Lake, the country is generally much flatter, and from here to the boundary between Quebec and Ontario, 120 miles, construction will be comparatively easy. From the Ontario boundary westerly to within 10 miles of the Kashkagama River, 402 miles, the country consists of clay loam, with here and there sandy ridges, small areas of muskeg or swamps, but these latter are only covered with from two to four feet of moss, with clay sub-soil. There will be considerable bridging here. A large portion of the country north and south of the railway is well suited for settlement. From the Kashkagama River to Lake Superior Junction the country is rough and broken, there being little or no agricultural land west of Lake Nipigon. From the Junction westerly for 185 miles work is very heavy and consists largely of rock cuttings and timber trestles, with only a few areas of timber land of merchantable value. To Winnipeg, 66 miles, the road will pass through prairie land, the latter portion being excellent farming land.

There is another unimpeachable witness as to the possibilities of what Mr. Farrer calls the "hyperborean desert." President Mackenzie, of the Canadian Northern, has announced that that line between Sudbury and Port Arthur will pass north of the Canadian Pacific through twenty-five million acres of territory covered with timber growing on clay soil suitable for arable farming. Mr. Mackenzie knows what he is talking about.

The pessimist is only happy when he is miserable. The next step will be a regular jeremiad predicting that Grand Trunk Pacific trains will not earn enough money in Northern Ontario to pay for their axle grease. The "hyperborean desert" is quite a rich phrase, when you remember the history of railroad enterprise in northern latitudes. It is a waste of breath to recite the story of the falsification of the doubts and fears of the pessimists of thirty years ago about the prairie country. There were also inveterate pessimists when the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railroad was projected, but as the Canadian Pacific discovered the nickel mines of Sudbury, so the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario line unearthed the riches of Cobalt, and in its infancy, earned a revenue which has surprised its builders.

The mistaken viewpoint of Mr. Farrer is also clearly indicated in his lament that the Grand Trunk Pacific between Winnipeg and Edmonton will have

Canadian Northern on its north, the Canadian Pacific on its south. It must surely be a long time since the able correspondent traversed the West. He must have temporarily forgotten that it does not take an enormous breadth of grain producing country to support a railroad. The Canadian Northern, for instance, is building a line from Brandon to Regina to connect with the road from Regina to Prince Albert, which it recently acquired from the Canadian Pacific Railway, and is placing its rails between the Canadian Pacific main line and a branch which runs east and west, few miles south of the Pipestone creek. The Canadian Northern does not build branches for the sheer pleasure of seeing empty trains run through deserted districts. It has a very lively sense of the benefits of five per cent. There is plenty of room for the Grand Trunk Pacific, and there will be plenty of business for it. It will make great demand on the country's engineering resources for many years to come.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The city of Winnipeg has overwhelmingly endorsed the Government policy of independent telephones for the city and the Province. The by-law authorizing the establishment of the independent system in municipalities of Manitoba has been carried in a minority of the districts, sufficiently large to ensure the ultimate dominance of the independent policy. Where it failed to carry, there appears to have been no lack of sentiment in favor of the principle. But, as is always the case with a proposition emanating from a party Government, there were criticisms of the method pursued by the Roblin administration; which, in places where the Government is not in favor, strongly militated against the adoption of the by-law. It is a pity that a question so important to the commerce and convenience of the population should become in any degree the sport of party politicians; and be conditioned by the kindness with which the Government's action in other affairs is regarded. On the whole, independent telephony has done remarkably well in Manitoba. The only wise point of view from which to regard matters of this kind is the extent to which a public service makes the transaction of business easy. The telephone is not an end in itself. By quickening transactions, it saves money, and makes money, and should, therefore, be made as cheap as possible. The question is not fundamentally a question of "the people" versus monopoly. It is a question of everyday business efficiency. The more efficient and cheaper the service can be, the greater will be the demand for wires and instruments, the manufacture of which means prosperity for important industries which this journal desires to flourish.

* * * *

Elsewhere will be found an announcement of the impending publication in book form of Dr. Stansfield's articles in "The Canadian Engineer" on electric smelting. The book will mark an epoch in a new industry, and will undoubtedly be the best of the kind yet produced. Indeed, there is no book extant which treats of electric smelting in anything like the comprehensive way which has distinguished Dr. Stansfield's articles in this journal. The material will be revised and brought absolutely up-to-date by those whose processes are described. It is hoped to include in the