

making a dead set on a desk drawer where there was a fresh box of cigars which with jocular pertinacity he opened.

He believes in smoking, as a genial pastime; as part of the rhythm and the lubricant of life.

"Two things else I've always been thankful for," he said, as he lighted up—and by this time he wouldn't have cared if all the car-makers and car-wheel men in Christendom were outside the door.

"Thank heaven for a sense of humour!" he said.

And he looked it. Some men are thankful for a sense of humour on the same principle that a very old spinster all flubdubbed in powder and rouge is glad she feels so young. D. B. Hanna has got it—real native and abiding humour which has helped him through many a tough scrimmage and over many an otherwise demoralizing day's work.

"I always pity a man who has no fun in his makeup," he said. "There's a laugh lurking in half the things we have to do in this busy age. It's fine!"

And he laughed as he said it. On a schedule basis I guess D. B. Hanna spends about half his time laughing or its equivalent. He does it without effort; as a natural part of his conversation. But he never was flippant. Scotchmen seldom are; or if so they go the limit. Hanna's mirth is spontaneous. He evolves it from the day's work. With a hundred chances a day to lose his temper he keeps it marvelously well and diffuses good humour among other people. There's much in the way men laugh. I knew a sour farmer who seldom laughed; when he did he laughed so hard he had to stop work, like the Mississippi steamboat that had to stop the engine to blow the whistle. Hanna laughs as he works. That's why he is able to change front and tack and back up and go ahead, here a half-moon curve, there a heavy grade—but always moving something. And he is a big, hefty man, whose movements are as swift as a prize-fighter's.

"And what's the other ingredient you are thankful for?" I asked him.

"A love of music," he said; not quoting Shakespeare.

On the guarantors' list of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra you will find the name of D. B. Hanna; and in his own way he has been an impresario.

"I was once—a choir leader," he said. "That was out west, when things were so quiet we were glad to sing once in a while to keep our courage up. Heaven help the man with no music in his soul!"

On a toss-up between a psalm tune in the kirk and a strathspey—commend D. B. Hanna to the lively piece. There is no adagio about him. I guess he has an ear for "Annie Laurie" and "Mary of Argyle" and "Bonnie Sweet Bessie" and "Ye Banks and Braes"; but when the bagpipes strike up and the fiddles fetch forth a reel—watch him.

Spontaneously he turned to railroading; about which he knows more than about music—for he is in the position of a man who studies the game on all sides. Fundamentally he has to do with building new roads—expert in the buying of drills and steam shovels and raw, restless labour in the camps. What a camp boss he would have made! The navy who, under D. Blythe Hanna, wouldn't stretch himself to an unbroken series of cheerful days' works as naturally as a fiddlestring tauts up for a tune—would be too dead for a new country. And if he had time he could tell more about the real gospel of labour than all the I. W. W. camps on the Pacific Coast. For he has all his life been shouldering with the left-movers; himself moving things.

But he said little as to this. His time would be short. In a few minutes a bank meeting. Seven times the secretary came in with messages and reminders and requests for interviews and calls on the 'phone.

HE reverted to the question of rates. Somewhat summing up his evidence before the Commission he spoke in ton-miles; remembering the day when on the early lines the rate per ton-mile had been three or four cents; now in the same territory—seven-tenths of a cent per ton-mile; how it costs less to move a hundredweight from Edmonton to lake ports now than a few years ago it cost to move it from Winnipeg.

"Never has been known in any country such a reduction in freight rates!" he said.

"And—is the reduction to go on?"

"How can it?" he said.

And he proceeded to show the economics of the case. For there may be romance and adventure about building great lines of railway hooking up remote parts of the earth to the world's traffic; but in the case of the general manager operating both a construction system that spends money and a working system whose necessary aim is to make money that has to be spent, it's the cold facts and figures that have to be taken into account.

"For instance, if we were like some short lines I know of—I don't speak merely of the Canadian Northern, but of all trans-continental lines interested in both local traffic and through traffic—we could afford to cut our rates still further and be safe. If, for instance, we were carrying coal up and ore down, our rolling stock would be busy both ways, and we could keep rates to a minimum. But when we have to send back empties—you can see the difference."

"How does that affect the problem of manufacturing in the west?"

"As a general principle," he said, "extensive and variegated manufacturing is more economically done in the east. The freight on a case of boots, for instance, is not much of a factor compared to the total cost of production. So with many other articles of common use. Time is more. But that can be adjusted. I don't believe the west can ever hope to duplicate the east in manufacturing. Mind you, I don't say the west can't manufacture. The west can. Wherever there is power and raw material and labour—manufacturing must take place. But it's a case of local development as part of a general evolution. The west is growing in population and consumption now very much more rapidly than in manufacturing. I don't expect to see eastern manufacturing decline because western manufactures develop."

In fact the argument seemed a good deal like the electric road compared to the railway and the automobile to the horse. In an age of automobiles and electric roads more steam roads and more horses are needed than ever before; because of general development.

"However, Mr. Hanna"—and here I was sure he would agree right off the reel—"you believe in mixed farming?"

"I—certainly—do!"

And he went on to show how deep-rooted was his belief in varying the farm methods of the west; quite as enthusiastically as though he had been a C. P. R. man boosting the irrigation belt.

"At the same time," he said, "I can see how the western farmer at the present time prefers wheat which he can raise with a minimum of labour even at a high risk, to hogs and cattle and roots and fruits and so on that take much more personal care and cultivation. But isn't it almost a national

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## The Great Gas Well at Pelican Portage, Alberta

By FRANCIS J. DICKIE

FOR fourteen years four million feet of consumable gas a day has been escaping from the great gas well at Pelican Portage, about 170 miles in a direct line north-east from Edmonton.

An enterprising body of men, guided by A. W. Fraser, who has since become a famous magazine writer, discovered the gas possibilities of Pelican Portage. In 1897 Mr. Fraser determined to find out whether the indications of the formation were

borne out by the strata below. In July of that year he commenced to drill. In October the first gas strike was made.

The present flow of gas in the well was struck in October, 1898, at a depth of 675 feet. An attempt to cap the well was made three years ago, but failed, the tremendous pressure blowing off the valve. Oil drillers use all the gas they need, and the remainder necessarily goes to waste.

It is about a year since the Calhoun Oil Company, Limited, took the leases over from the Government and secured considerable acreage. Mr. J. C. Calhoun, the president, has announced his intention to pipe the gas to Edmonton.

Mr. Glen C. Foster, one of a party of newspaper men who recently made a trip of inspection to the gas well, has this to say of the wonderful place concerning it:

"Up there they go to bed by gas, sleep by gas, get up by gas, cook by gas, eat by gas, read by gas and work by gas. Gas piped part way up the hill where they are drilling furnished heat for a forty-horse-power boiler. This boiler in turn supplies steam power that keeps the oil outfit going twenty-four hours a day, and generates electricity for all the buildings and tents in connection with the oil camps.

"We lay down with the noisy gush of the escaping gas close to us and, with our beds in a semi-circle to the flame that shoots high into the air, we read books; and though it was a bitterly cold night the air about was balmy as a tropical night."

In all these years there has been no diminution of the flow from the natural gas gusher at Pelican. Three years ago a government test with a pitot tube got a pressure of 600 pounds per inch. On September 27th a hydraulic gauge was put on and showed a pressure of 225 pounds to the inch.

According to experts, who viewed the Medicine Hat field and the fields in California, the Pelican field's flow will be practically inexhaustible and will continue to flow until such time as the body of

petroleum which generates gas has been exhausted. Though the cold in these regions is sometimes intense, the temperature dropping as low as 60 below zero—at which point petroleum freezes—the gas has never been affected.

Now that a strong company, some of which are Edmonton's largest financial magnates, are taking hold, the gas in all probability will be harnessed to the will of man.



This Gas Gusher, About 170 Miles North-east of Edmonton, Has Been Flowing for 14 Years.



Gas Spouting from Oil Well in District from Which Gas May be Piped to Edmonton.