

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION IN WESTERN CANADA

NEW MILEAGE FOR THE YEAR 1898

The year 1898 witnessed considerable activity in railway building in Western Canada. Within the boundaries of the provinces of Manitoba alone construction work was carried on on no less than five separate and distinct lines of railway. The list is made up of the extension northward of the Lake Manitoba Railway and Canal Company's railway, familiarly known as the Dauphin road; the construction of the first section of the Manitoba and Southeastern railway; the construction of a new branch in the southwestern portion of the province by the Northern Pacific company; the extension in a northerly direction of the Stonewall branch of the C. P. R.; and construction work on a westerly extension of the Pipestone branch of the last named company. This, it will be admitted, makes a very good showing for new railway work in Manitoba for 1898.

MANITOBA SOUTHEASTERN.

A brief reference to each one of these lines will be in order. Probably the most important of the railways mentioned is the Manitoba & Southeastern, as this line is expected soon to become a portion of a through line to Lake Superior, thereby forming another great trunk line outlet for our grain and other export products. It is therefore more than a local line for the development of the country through which it will pass. The Southeastern will connect with the Ontario & Rainy River railway, now in course of construction in northwestern Ontario, and form the through line mentioned. This important work is not likely to be completed this year, but there seems good reason to believe that it will be consummated within two years.

But aside from the expectation of its becoming a through line, the Southeastern has already done an important work in developing a new section of country, which was previously without railway communication. While railways have been built freely west of the Red River, that portion of Manitoba east of the Red river has been almost entirely neglected. The Southeastern is the first railway for Eastern Manitoba since the Emerson branch of the Canadian Pacific railway (the first bit of railway constructed in Manitoba) was built.

The portion of this railway constructed last year extends from Winnipeg in a southeasterly direction a distance of forty-six miles. This first section of the road is completed and is now being operated. It passes through an excellent agricultural and stock country, including the fine country about St. Anne. The present end of the road is just about where the forest region begins, which forest extends eastward to the Lake of the Woods. Between the forest country and Winnipeg is found the usual Red River valley prairie, interspersed with bluffs.

One result of the completion of this piece of railway is the opening of a new source of supply of wood fuel. A large quantity of cordwood has al-

ready come into the city over the new road, resulting in a reduction in the price of wood fuel which is much appreciated by the consumer. The wood country is brought closer to the city by this road than by any of the other railways reaching wood districts, consequently there is a saving in freight rates.

Another result of the building of this road will be the establishing of large saw mills in Winnipeg. The Rat Portage Lumber company has already secured property in Winnipeg, with the object of establishing a large saw mill in the city. When the road is extended to the Lake of the Woods or the Rainy river, it will provide a means of hauling saw logs from the timber country tributary to those waters, to Winnipeg. The charter of the railway company provides for a special low freight on saw logs and cordwood to Winnipeg so that there is a guarantee that any lumber industry established here will get a favorable freight rate for logs over the road.

The Southeastern has not yet secured terminal facilities in Winnipeg. The trains now come into the city on the Canadian Pacific railway track. The stations located on this road are Lorette, Dufresne, Ste. Anne, La Broquiere and Marchand.

THE DAUPHIN RAILWAY.

Another important railway work carried on last year was the extension of the line familiarly known as the Dauphin road. The official name of this company is the Lake Manitoba Railway and Canal Co., but it has been recently announced that the name of the company will be changed to the Canada Northern, a much more appropriate title for the road. This road is the youngest line in Manitoba, with the exception of the Southeastern, and it has been pushed ahead each year vigorously. Some fifty-six miles of new road were built last year and added to the portion now being operated. This includes the portion of the road extending in a northerly direction from Sifton station.

The Dauphin road has opened up a new and excellent agricultural country, and as a colonization road it is the most important work done in Manitoba since the early days of the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway. Since the completion of the first section of this road two years ago, a large number of new settlers have gone into the districts tributary to the road, and a number of new towns have been established at points along the line. The principal point is the town of Dauphin, which was the centre of an isolated agricultural settlement before the road was built. There are as fine agricultural districts in northern Manitoba as in any other part of the province, and with the railway facilities now being extended in this direction, we may expect that in time the north will compare favorably with the older settled sections of the south in point of population and general prosperity.

About Lake Winnipegosis there is a fine timber country which has been opened up by the construction of this road. A saw mill has been erected at the lake, and thus another source of lumber supply has been established. An important fishing industry has also been established on the lake. The stations located on the new extension of this road are Ethelbert, Garland, Pine River, Selater and Cowan.

NORTHERN PACIFIC EXTENSION.

The new railway work done in Manitoba last year by the Northern Pacific company consists of the construction of a new branch in the southwestern portion of the province. The new line starts from the Morris-Brandon branch of this road, near the town of Belmont, and runs in a westerly direction a distance of 46 1-2 miles. The present temporary terminus of the road is a few miles from the town of Hartney. The road runs through an old and well settled district, and affords additional railway facilities to an excellent agricultural country. The following stations have been located on the new road: Ninette, Duarea, Minto, Fairfax and Elgin. If the road is not extended into Hartney, another station will be established near this town.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY EXTENSIONS.

The principal railway work done in Manitoba last year by the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. was the extension northward of the Stonewall branch, a distance of 20 miles. The object of this extension was to afford railway facilities to the settlers residing in the excellent agricultural country extending northward from Stonewall. A number of settlers went into this district in the early days of settlement here and they have long been working to secure a railway. Two stations have been located on the new line and grain elevators have already been erected at each of these. There is no better mixed farming country in Manitoba than this district and with improved railway facilities it should secure many new settlers. The new stations are Balmoral and Teulon.

THE PIPESTONE BRANCH.

Some work was done in the direction of extending the Pipestone branch of the C. P. R. in Southwestern Manitoba. About nineteen miles of new road were graded, extending westward from the present terminus of the road at Reston. Owing to pressure of other work the company was not able to get the rails laid before winter set in, consequently the road is yet in an unfinished state. Only a few miles were ironed and this has not yet been operated. The Pipestone branch extension, when completed, will afford much needed railway facilities to an excellent agricultural district. No stations have been located yet on this extension.

GOOD PROSPECTS FOR 1899.

Prospects for new railway work during 1899 are good. In fact railway extensions aggregating a greater mileage than was built last year, are already as good as assured. The most important extension in regard to length of new road to be built will undoubtedly be the Canada Northern or Dauphin road, which it is the intention to build as far as the Saskatchewan river, a distance of 120 to 130 miles. This will take the road some distance beyond the boundary of the province of Manitoba, and into the territory of Saskatchewan. It is be-