

Canadian Pacific Railway Company's System Extended to Victoria.

The Company Acquires Land Grant of Million and Half Acres on
Vancouver Island.—Plans for Its Settlement.

Address of Mr. J. S. Dennis to Council Victoria Board of Trade.

(Reproduced from the Victoria "Times" of July 7th, 1905.)

An announcement of the plans prepared by the C. P. R. for the development of their newly-acquired holdings on Vancouver Island was made to the council of the Board of Trade this morning by J. S. Dennis, the company's land commissioner and assistant to the second vice-president. While Mr. Dennis did not indulge in any pyrotechnics nor manipulate the hot air valve, he said enough to arouse the most buoyant optimism in the people of Victoria. He outlined fairly exhaustively what course the company would pursue to render productive that practically *terra incognita* known as the E. & N. land grant, and plainly demonstrated that although the big transcontinental corporation have had possession of land and road a trifle more than a month they will not let a solitary blade of grass peep above the surface beneath their feet before starting their ponderous machinery in motion.

The announcement of the company's plans came in the form of an address by Mr. Dennis to the Board of Trade council. President S. J. Pitts was in the chair and of the council members there were present, Jas. Forman, John Nelson, E. E. Billingham, Capt. J. G. Cox, Steve Jones, T. M. Henderson, W. T. Oliver, R. B. McMicking, T. W. Patterson, D. R. Ker, R. E. Gosnell, and Secretary Elworthy. The chairman explained that the meeting was called to hear from Mr. Dennis what plans the C. P. R. had in view relative to the

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAND
and in what particulars the Board could

lend assistance in the prosecution of this enterprise.

Mr. Dennis, who was accorded the deepest attention during his remarks, said that in accepting the invitation of the president, his particular object was to explain the plan the C. P. R. had in view for the development of their interests on Vancouver Island. At the same time he advised that the people should not expect much from the company at once. Although the C. P. R., as all were aware, had recently acquired the E. & N. railroad and the land grant they did not desire the latter. They already had six million acres in the province, and their experience had been that they paid out more on it than they had received. However, they hoped for a change of conditions in this respect, and no doubt it would come.

One of the reasons that prompted the C. P. R. to acquire the land grant was the possibility of a large measure of colonization. Were the conditions on Vancouver Island similar to those in Prince Edward Island it would soon be the garden of America. But this was not the case. The land in question was broken and heavily timbered and it would require time and thought to know how to

INDUCE PEOPLE TO COME HERE
and settle. In this connection he had taken the position that Victoria's situation with relation to the land grant was analogous to that of Calgary. A large tract of land lay to the east of the latter city. The soil was good but the land was not considered desirable. The com-

pany in fact had refused to accept lands there because they did not think them any good. Ultimately, however, they agreed to take a solid block of three million acres and install a system of irrigation. It was a great experiment, but purely an experiment, involving the expenditure of five million dollars. But their efforts were markedly successful and the land was being colonized in a rapid way. The result was that in a short time Calgary had been converted from a town into a thriving city.

Victoria occupied a similar position with respect to the E. & N. land grant. Unless this were developed and colonized a great brake would be placed upon the city's prosperity. If, however, the property were developed and settled it would give rise to a great amount of trade. The question that now engaged the attention of the company was "What shall we do?" There was no doubt in his mind that if they had 100,000 acres of cleared land adjoining the E. & N. that could be divided into plots of forty acres he would feel safe in guaranteeing to place a settler upon every sub-division within twelve months.

Mr. Dennis then explained what was being done in

THE WAY OF COLONIZATION

in the vicinity of Bellingham, in Washington. The Board of Trade there wanted settlers on the land in the vicinity. The land had been cleared and an advertising company started which had resulted in an astonishing development in the way of settlement. On this trip, Mr. Dennis continued, he had brought out Mr. Brightman, of Brightman & Brown, of St. Paul, the company's advertising agents. Mr. Brightman understood the conditions of land colonization thoroughly, in fact it was he who conducted the advertising campaign for the Bellingham people. Mr. Brightman accompanied him (Mr. Dennis) to Seattle, and Portland, recently and also took a run up to Bellingham. He had sent the speaker a statement of the results of his Bellingham advertising campaign, which surprised him. At his office he

said from sixty to seventy-five inquiries were received daily with respect to the land in Northern Washington.

Mr. Dennis then described the manner in which land was being settled beyond the mountains and said he would be greatly disappointed if they did not get 100,000 people from the States this year. But in Manitoba and Assiniboia as well as in the States there were people who had accumulated wealth under strenuous climatic conditions. They now

DESIRED BETTER CONDITIONS

in this respect and would willingly come to British Columbia if they could get the kind of land they wanted. This he knew because in the last six months the company had been selling land in the Columbia valley, Kootenay and Okanagan. The climate of this province attracted them. If they had the land there would be no trouble in getting the people. But as yet they didn't have the land on Vancouver Island.

When the C. P. R. acquired the E. & N. land grant comparatively little had been done in the way of exploring it. The company decided to find out what they had and to that end had organized four or five parties to thoroughly explore it. He had brought out the company's chief land examiner, a man of thirty years' experience, and the chief timber cruiser. Parties would be organized with headquarters at Victoria, Nanaimo, Alberni and Comox, and they would be kept busily at work for the purpose of preparing a proper map to show the timber and agricultural areas, and report how to best develop the grant. They would be dispatched on their task at once.

Then as soon as they had located areas suitable for settlement, they would set aside a few thousand acres for

EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES.

That is, they would see what could be done in the way of clearing and rendering it fit for colonization. In clearing very satisfactory work was done in Washington. First a contract was let for clearing, the timber was cut into

saw logs—as much as was adapted for the purpose—and the remainder became cordwood. Logging engines were used and rapid progress was made. The land was then given a preliminary ploughing to clear the surface and make it attractive to the settler.

That was the plan he desired to have followed on Vancouver Island. He didn't think the farms should exceed one hundred acres; in fact those of sixty or eighty acres would be better. Preliminary to this stage, however, a great deal of good could be done by advertising. They therefore proposed to issue a pamphlet dealing generally with Vancouver Island. The C. P. R. had very complete channels for advertising and could consequently give the Island prominence in a wide radius. A thoroughly up-to-date publication would be prepared, one that would be

IN CONCRETE FORM

so that everybody could read it without trouble. He had arranged for a special photographer to take the field and secure a complete set of pictures. The first pamphlet, as he had stated, would be general, calling attention to the position of the Island and laying particular attention upon its climate—its chief asset. Later the matter would deal with the agricultural and timber possibilities. But the advertising publications should give publicity to the fact that this was a timbered country. They didn't want the people to expect that they could come here and meet with no obstacles in this respect.

Mr. Dennis then recounted the difficulties the company had encountered in colonizing the lands across the mountains. Rival railroads on the south, becoming alarmed at the formidable proportions of the movement, began to convey the impression that the area of settlement was near the North Pole and the climate terribly rigorous. In settling the three million acres at Calgary they carried out a very comprehensive advertising scheme. The States across the line were divided into canvassing districts, and energetic representative agents conducted a house to house and farm to

farm canvass. They did not ask the farmers to believe what they said, but agreed to convey them to the scene and

LET THEM EXPLORE FOR THEMSELVES.

This was done, and settlers were secured. This was the policy that ultimately would have to be adopted here. But he hoped the people wouldn't expect too much from the acquisition by the C. P. R. of the holdings on this Island. Of course it was likely that the advent of a big corporation like the C. P. R. would accomplish more in the rapid development of the land than the late owners, but it must not be expected all at once. They had only entered into possession on June 1st, but as could be seen they were going to do all they could to develop it intelligently without delay.

There was no question that if the C. P. R. were to develop the land grant as proposed they would have to extend the Island road. Another exploring party was to be placed in the field in addition to the timber and land parties, and when the latter had found suitable areas reconnoitring surveys would be conducted to ascertain the best way of building extensions or roads to them. While the operation of the E. & N. railway didn't come under his control, he felt certain that Mr. Marpole and his staff would

CORRECT WHATEVER DEFECTS

now existed. The road bed and power equipment were in good shape, but the old passenger cars needed improving, and this could be done quite readily in view of the additional rolling stock the company had to draw from.

As far as Victoria was concerned, all he would say was that the management, and C. P. R. officials realized that success in operating the E. & N. and other lines depended upon the maintenance of harmony between the merchants and the road. While of course differences between them would possibly occur from time to time, he felt satisfied that the relations would be generally harmonious. What the company asked of the merchants was sympathy and good will in carrying out this work. The Board of Trade could materially assist the com-

pany by incorporating in their annual reports, condensed extracts of the literature that the company would be distributing, as was done at points in the Territories, and by becoming a medium for the distribution of advertising matter. To be perfectly frank with them he could say that the time would no doubt come when the C. P. R. would have to ask the support of the Board in several different ways. When they did they could be judged by what they had done in keeping their promises.

Mr. Dennis then dealt with the tourist traffic, and emphasized the great good that would result from its development. He described the two classes of people who made up this tourist movement, namely, those seeking land for settlement and those who had made money and were travelling for pleasure. He pointed out that owing to its manifest advantages

THE TOURIST TRADE

should be made to centralize at Victoria, an opinion in which both Mr. Marpole and Capt. Troup concurred.

He then referred to the various excursions that had come and were coming here, making especial allusion to the trip of the Washington Press Correspondents—an excursion organized by the company. He announced that about the end of next month there would come to British Columbia a very important body, the editors of the agricultural journals of the United States. Two years ago the company had organized an excursion through Manitoba and the Territories of American agricultural editors, and a vast amount of good had resulted from it. This year the party would be even more extensive, representing a constituency of eleven million readers. They would spend a day in Victoria and a day on a trip up the E. & N. line. When definite dates were fixed he would ask the Board to entertain the visitors in some way during their stay in this city.

Mr. Dennis then touched upon what he considered a delicate subject, namely, the trouble the C. P. R. were having in connection with their shipping from

this port. He knew there were two sides to every question, but in this instance he did not think the company were unreasonable in their attitude. Considering the large interests the company had here the fact that this was the headquarters of the coast shipping department, and that the company had done their utmost to centralize the tourist traffic here, he thought they should have every

REASONABLE ASSISTANCE

they could ask for. That was what they expected to get. Capt. Troup had taken the matter up at Ottawa, but could get no relief. If the company were asking for anything unreasonable, Mr. Dennis again pointed out, they should not receive it.

Mr. Dennis's remarks as reported here referred to the difficulty between the C. P. R. shipping officials and the local shipping master with reference to the matter of licence for masters, the particulars of which have already been published in the Times.

On behalf of the Board of Trade, President Pitts thanked Mr. Dennis for his address. The Board would do their utmost to assist in the Island development. They would also willingly entertain the visiting editors. In regard to the trouble in shipping he would appoint a committee to interview the shipping master and Capt. Troup, the committee to consist of W. T. Oliver, Capt. Cox and Stephen Jones.

In reply to a question by D. R. Ker, Mr. Dennis said that the question of improving the E. & N. shipping facilities was receiving attention. The station accommodation would be considerably enlarged, while it was the intention to move the land office from its present location to the ground floor, and to put it in an up-to-date condition.

To Mr. Forman, Mr. Dennis said that in the Bellingham district the cost of clearing some of the land was as low as thirteen dollars an acre, but that which was timbered ran from \$25 to \$50 per acre, which in his opinion was a very moderate cost. It sold at \$60 to \$75 per acre.