

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway

CANADA'S NEW HIGHWAY ACROSS THE CONTINENT TO BE BUILT BY THE GOVERNMENT.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

MONTREAL, Nov. 12.—I have just had a long talk with Mr. Frank W. Morse, the vice president and general manager of the new trunk line which the government of Canada is building from ocean to ocean. I say the government, for although the road is being engineered under the Grand Trunk Pacific railway management, and although it will really belong to that company, it is being built on government guarantees, and the eastern half of it by government engineers and on government contracts.

It is the biggest single job any government has ever undertaken, with perhaps the exception of the Trans-Siberian railway and the Panama canal. Its building will be as difficult as that

Grand Trunk between Toronto and Montreal, and that is as good as any Siberian was made with rails which were far too light for the traffic, and the whole road must now be rebuilt. So Prince Hilko, the Russian secretary of railroads told me when I talked with him about that line just before the war with Japan. The Canadian Pacific was originally laid with fifty-six-pound rails; that is, with rails which weighed 56 pounds to the yard. This has all been changed, and the road now has the heavy rails and all the improvements of the New York Central or the Pennsylvania. The Grand Trunk Pacific is being laid with rails which weigh eighty pounds to the yard, and its grades will be the least, so Mr. Morse says, of any transcontinental line. The road will be completed in 1911.

HOW CANADA BUILDS RAILROADS.

Before I tell you the story of the

A Talk With the President About It—Thousands Already at Work—Where the Road Will Go—Canada's New Wheat Belt and Its American Settlers—Edmonton, the Future Metropolis—Port Simpson and the Trade with the Orient—Vast Pulp Forests and Fine Lands—How the Road Climbs the Rockies—What the Road Will Cost and Other Matter.

prairies, and to three-fourths of the actual cost of construction when it goes over the mountains.

A GRAIN CHUTE TO THE GREAT LAKES.

"But is there no land grant with the railroad, Mr. Morse?" "Not on the main line. We have a branch going down through New Ontario to Port Arthur. This is known as the Lake Superior branch. It will be used merely as the outlet of our great wheat traffic to water transportation, and will rather be a mighty grain chute than a passenger line. For it we get from the provincial government \$200 in cash and 6,000 acres of land per mile. "But is it not dangerous to agree to pay 3 per cent on any road built by any government? The chances for graft and hoodlums will be great."

"Not in this case. The railway must be constructed under our supervision, and all contracts for work and supplies will be competitive. We can even bid upon the work ourselves, and we shall be vitally interested in making the cost as low as is consistent with good work, as we have to pay an interest upon it for 50 years."

"What becomes of the road at the end of that time?" "The government agrees either to take that branch of it, giving us operating rights with the western division and the Grand Trunk system, or to renew our lease for another 50 years."

THE COST.

"What will it cost to make the road?" "It has been estimated that it can be built for \$125,000,000. This is supposed to be the eastern division can be built for \$30,000,000 a mile, and the mountain section for from 50 to 60 thousand dollars a mile. This is what our surveys show to be the probable cost. The prairie section of the line can be built for \$20,000 or \$25,000 a mile."

THE CLIMB OVER THE ROCKIES.

"How about the grade? Do you not have a big lift in getting across the Rockies?"

"No; we will have a better grade than any other continental line. Our grade will nowhere be more than four-tenths of one per cent, or 20 feet to the mile. That means less than six inches anywhere in 100 feet. This is on the prairie section. In the mountain section it will be 20 per cent less than that of any other road over the Rockies."

"What will be your highest pass?" "Less than 4,000 feet," replied Mr. Morse. "The Canadian Pacific has to lift its through trains to 5,230 feet; the Great Northern to 5,202 feet and the Northern Pacific to 5,567 feet. The Union Pacific crosses the mountains at a higher altitude than any other road. It goes up to 8,247 feet, and the Atchafalaya, Topeka and Santa Fe rises to 7,523 feet. The Southern Pacific crosses at a little over 5,000, but it falls in one place 200 feet below tide water. We shall have the lowest lift, and hence can operate at a lower cost."

"Will you have trouble getting over the mountains?" "The chief trouble is in going down the Pacific side. The grade is easy from the prairies to the top, but we shall have to wind and twist and that down the western slope."

"As I understand it, the western division will belong entirely to the Grand Trunk?"

"Yes; it will be constructed by the Grand Trunk Pacific company, with the government guarantees, as I have stated. On the mountain section the government will pay the interest on the amount of its guarantees for the first seven years, and if there should be a default of interest during the next three years it will pay that also, but must last payment will be capitalized and eventually paid back by the company to the government."

THE NEW WHEAT EMPIRE.

"As to the prairie section," continued Mr. Morse, "that will pay the interest on its bonds from the start. That country is so rich that settlements will spring up all along the road, and we shall be hauling out millions of bushels of wheat and other products within a year or so after the rails are laid. I don't dare to describe the richness of that region to the full. Any man who takes the truth about it to a stranger is looked upon by the latter as a visionary or a liar. We have there the richest wheat lands upon earth; better than those of the United States, better

than any others of the world. This road goes through a strip of virgin soil which will raise 25 bushels and more wheat to the acre, and that strip contains four times as much wheat land as all the wheat-growing lands of the United States. About 100,000,000 bushels of wheat were harvested in the lands of that region which are now accessible to railroads this year, and the country has hardly been touched."

THE AMERICAN INVASION.

Americans and other immigrants are coming in by the thousands. Husky young fellows with two, three, five and ten thousand dollars apiece in the pockets are buying lands and settling. I met scores of them, wherever I went, out there along the line of our road. All they wanted to know was whether the road would be actually built; and when I told them there was not a doubt of it they said they would go ahead and buy. They have bought, and buying is going on everywhere there today."

EDMONTON AND ITS FUTURE.

"How about the towns along the line of the Grand Trunk Pacific?" "The road is not yet laid out, and the townsites are not settled. It passes, as I have said, through Winnipeg, and also through Edmonton in Alberta. Edmonton will, I believe, be the metropolis of that new wheat region. It will probably surpass Winnipeg. The region about there will grow wheat, and also many other crops. The country is underlaid with coal. If a citizen of Edmonton dies before he settles, and his moving, and his stock with his first crop, and had money in the bank. I don't mean to say that that is a common occurrence, but it is what one young man did."

RIVAL CITIES.

"What is the size of Edmonton?" "It has about 7,000. Strathcona, just across the Canadian border, is about 4,000. The two places are bitter rivals. If one can't get a certain thing it wants it is bound the other shall not have it, and fight to prevent it. The two places are much as St. Paul and Minneapolis were years ago. They should unite and work together. It is somewhat the same with the four-milling and exporting towns of Port Arthur and Port Williams, on Lake Superior. They are close together, and their rivalry is as bitter as the feuds of the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee."

PORT SIMPSON ON THE PACIFIC.

"What is to be the future of your terminal on the Pacific?" "There will be a great city there," said the vice president of the Grand Trunk Pacific system. "We have not yet picked out the exact spot, but we shall soon do so and our plans will be such that the town will be a beautiful one. It will be so arranged as to admit of expansion along rational and artistic lines. The best of landscape gardeners will aid us, and the port will be beautiful, as well as most conveniently and commercially arranged. The whole city will be planned out upon paper before a street is surveyed; it will be done somewhat as Dalby was planned by the Russians before it had city railroad or citizens."

"What kind of surroundings has Port Simpson?" "I don't know," replied Mr. Morse. "I was there last year. The trip north from Vancouver is as full of grand scenery as any part of the Norwegian coast. That is what travelers say who have visited both places. The climate is more pleasant than in Dalby is affected by the Japan current, and the vegetation is green all the year round. The islands are mountains, and you wind in and out among them under great walls of green. It is indescribable."

THE SHORT CUT TO JAPAN.

"Do you expect to command a fair

share of the oriental trade?"

"Most assuredly we do. We shall have the shortest route to the orient and the shortest cut from western Europe across North America to Japan, China and Siberia. All the great trans-Pacific steamers sailing by the northern route from San Francisco, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle and Vancouver have to go about 500 miles northward along the line of the great circle on their way to Japan. They have to come to our latitude to cross over by the shortest way. We save all that distance. We can make the trip from Port Simpson to Yokohama in at least one day less than it can be made from any of the other Pacific coast ports. Our trip across the Atlantic is also shorter. The distance from Liverpool to Halifax is a little more than 2,400 miles, while the distance from Liverpool to New York is 3,000."

"When the road is completed and our steamers are running we shall have from 500 to 1,000 more miles of an advantage over any other route between England and Asia, and the trip can be made in one or two days' less time. Passengers from New York can go to Montreal and thence over our line to Japan and save more than 500 miles over San Francisco via Chicago and 1,800 miles over the route from that port via Galveston. Buffalo can save more than 600 miles via San Francisco and more than 700 via the Canadian Pacific and Vancouver. We shall have fast steamers across both oceans, and I doubt not we shall have what the other lines will consider more than our share of the trade."

ON THE EASTERN DIVISION.

"What can you tell me about the eastern division?"

"That is a matter for the future," replied Mr. Morse. "We shall have plenty to do for the next few years in constructing the main line and its branches. The Alaska line may go from Hazelton in British Columbia northward to Dawson and the Klondike. In the meantime that part of the Rocky mountains through which our line is to pass has never been carefully prospected, and old miners who have visited parts of it tell me the indications are that it is wonderfully rich in all sorts of valuable minerals. We may open up a new Klondike in that region. Indeed, a great part of that country is almost entirely unknown."

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"It is also largely unexplored. We know that there is a block of good land stretching from the boundary of the province of Quebec westward comprising an area as large as that of West Virginia, or over 15,000,000 acres, which is nearly all good for farming. It is a clay loam, well watered and rich."

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FRANK G. CARPENTER.



PRESIDENT HARPER.

President Harper, of the University of Chicago, it is stated, can live only a few weeks longer. He is living now on liquid food alone, and to lessen the terrible pain of the cancer his abdomen is constantly kept numbened.

Despite his suffering he is keeping track of his university work. During all the big football games, reports direct from the field have been received at Cobb Hall and carried to the president. The above photograph of President Harper was taken just before he underwent the operation for cancer of the stomach last summer.

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