

## From Workhouse to Westminster.

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preserve for influential contractors and men, who in the colonies are usually designated "with axes to grind." In the face of the bitterest opposition from the huge vested interests represented, and the misrepresentation of the Press, he fought for the cause. "The greatest good for the greatest number." The late Sir John McDougall, chairman of the L.C.C., paid warm tribute to the qualities of the member for Poplar as follows: "His zeal is great, and his wisdom is as great as his zeal. I doubt whether anyone in London has done so much as he in all the measures which tend to the uplifting and the good of the people." Crooks took an active part in promoting technical education, the construction of the Blackwall tunnel under the Thames, the feeding of the poor, turning workhouse children into useful citizens, the compulsory payment of trade union rate of wages in contracts, and many other reforms. In 1903 came his election to Parliament, where, with the band of other Labour members in the House of Commons, he has been a consistent and strenuous advocacy for the mitigation of those appalling evils which dominate the lives of over 38,000,000 of people in Britain.

### What Crooks Stands for.

In a brief sketch it is impossible to relate of the man all that his vigorous personality and persistence has brought him to. If East London had the deciding vote as to who would be next sovereign, assuredly Will Crooks would be elevated to the throne. But his aspirations lie not in the direction of privilege and high office. His voice in Parliament will always ring out for the unemployed and the submerged masses. He will be known to the future historian as one of the first humanitarians of his day who saw in the powers of the State a lessening of the evils of excessive wealth and universal poverty. England has need of many men of his stamp, who sacrifice to political practice to idealistic theory, but whose whole life is one pent up and stupendous protest against the iniquity which foredooms the unborn generations to unspeakable social horror. It is that horror which has damned their parents and it is chiefly men of the stamp of this broad shouldered, black-bearded son of Poplar, who himself suffered the rack of pauperism for years, that can bring it home to the great aristocratic and middle classes. They are the responsible people, and Crooks is determined that they shall not escape their responsibility, any more than the demon of poverty shall in this age claim millions of underfed, underpaid, and demoralised men, women, and children for its own.

## The Commercial Mastery of the Pacific.

### AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR AUSTRALASIA.

The past two years have been productive of unprecedented development in trans-Atlantic shipping between Great Britain and Canada. The White Star and other first-class shipping concerns have entered the Canadian field, and in another year or two the steamers running to Canadian ports from the United Kingdom will be equal in speed, size, and luxurious accommodation to the best of the steamers sailing from European ports into New York. Great as is the development on the Atlantic, the second decade of the twentieth century is likely to witness an even greater movement of British shipping to the Pacific, on a scale that will revolutionize the trade and travel routes of the world. By that time the Panama Canal will be opened, and Canada will have three transcontinental railways, instead of one, as at present. As New Zealand is vitally interested in all that pertains to shipping on the Pacific, it appears that now is the time for her Government and people to be on the alert to secure due consideration of the Dominion's interests in the changes and improvements that the next few years are to bring about.

Little has been heard lately in the newspaper press of the "All-Red Route" to Australia by way of Canada, but that by no means indicates that the project is dropped. As a matter of fact those who are most intimately associated with its development, on this side of the world, believe that the project is

nearer accomplishment than at any time since it was first mooted, some twenty years ago. Shortly after the opening of the Canadian-Pacific trans-Continental Railway in 1886, an attempt was made to organise a fast mail and passenger service between Sydney, and London by way of Canada. The promoter of this enterprise was Mr. James Huddart, of Melbourne, of Messrs. Huddart, Parker and Co., a shipping firm that owned a line of coasting steamers trading between the principal towns of the east coast of Australia. Mr. Huddart obtained promises of support from the Governments of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, and with these came to England. He was, however, unsuccessful in enlisting the support of the British Post Office or any of the large shipping firms, and met with little encouragement from the Canadian Government or the Canadian Pacific Railway. The project came to nothing and shortly afterwards Mr. Huddart died.

Later, Messrs. Gray, Dawes and Company, agents for the British India Steamship Company, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, cooperated in establishing a four-weekly line of steamers between Vancouver, Honolulu, Suva, New Zealand ports, Brisbane, and Sydney. This line obtained a subsidy from the Canadian Government, and from the Colonies of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand. Its only competitor was the John D. Spreckles line from San Francisco to Sydney, which kept to a four-weekly service, calling at Honolulu, Samoa and Fiji. This service was subsidised by the four colonies before mentioned and by the United States Government. After the Commonwealth came into force in 1901 the Federal Parliament declined to renew the subsidy to the Spreckles line, which a few years ago dropped out of existence, although the Government of New Zealand made considerable efforts to maintain it. Consequently, the Canadian-Australian line from Vancouver to Honolulu, Suva, Brisbane, and Sydney is now the only direct steamship line carrying mails and passengers from North America to Australasia. The steamers of this line are good sea-boats, but slow, and the accommodation is not up to the standard expected by the present day passengers in twentieth century ocean travel. As a mail route between England and Australia, the Canadian-Australian line has never been of much use, and it obtained a renewal of its subsidy from the Commonwealth and Canadian Governments on the last occasion only with great difficulty. This subsidy expires in 1910. Recently newer steamers have been added to the fleet, but these, while a marked improvement on the older vessels, are still not nearly up to the standard of the regular liners that ply to Australian and New Zealand ports by way of the Suez Canal. As this Canadian-Australian line is the only direct one in existence, at present, between Australia and North America, it carries a large number of passengers at certain seasons of the year. It is managed chiefly in the interest of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and while it takes a good deal of freight outward from Vancouver, it is not very successful in collecting return freight from Australasia, for which there are reasons that need not be mentioned here.

Recently, in the British House of Commons, the Prime Minister was asked if the "All-Red" scheme had been definitely abandoned. Mr. Asquith, in reply, said that the "investigations of the Committee inquiring into the scheme had not hitherto succeeded in removing the many difficulties by which it was surrounded, but there was no reason to assume that these difficulties would prove insuperable." Commenting upon Mr. Asquith's reply, several newspapers have fallen into the error of stating that the delay has arisen through objections to the "All-Red Route" urged by the Governments of the Commonwealth of Australia, and the Dominion of New Zealand. This is not, however, the case. It will be remembered that the "All-Red" route proposal was first prominently put forward by Sir Wilfred Laurier, Premier of Canada, at the Imperial Conference, in May, 1907, and that it received support from the Hon. Alfred Deakin, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, Sir Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, and the Hon. Sydney Buxton, British Postmaster-General. The views of Sir Wilfred Laurier, Mr. Deakin, and Sir Joseph Ward as regards the "All-Red" route have not apparently undergone any

change since the time of the Conference, but there are various matters, both in Australasia and Canada, which make it inadvisable to take precipitate action for the present, so far as the trans-Pacific section of the "All-Red" route is concerned. Any day now may bring an announcement of the acceleration of 100 Atlantic service between the United Kingdom and Canada. In Canada there is at present only one trans-continental line—the Canadian Pacific Railway. By the end of 1911 there will be another, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and some years later there will be a third, the Canadian Northern Railway. Neither the Canadian Pacific nor the Canadian Northern Railway can properly be described as "All-Red," inasmuch as both of them in their trans-continental route dip for a short distance into the United States.

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, on the other hand, is entirely upon Canadian soil, and lies a long way to the north of the United States boundary. The full title of this railway is the Grand Trunk Pacific and National Transcontinental Railway. The Canadian Government builds the eastern half of it from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Winnipeg, a distance of 1800 miles, and leases that portion for a long term of years to the Grand Trunk Pacific Company, which builds the western half of the railway, another 1800 miles, from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert on the Pacific. The Government, however, guarantees bonds for the Company to provide funds for the construction of its half of the railway. Naturally, the interest of the Canadian Government in the success of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, in which it is, in a sense a partner, is very great, and in any scheme for the establishment of an "All-Red" route it is desirous that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway should be duly considered before any contract should be entered into for a term of years. Of course it will be necessary to make a contract for a lengthened term to obtain the class of steamships required for the proposed service between Canada and Australasia. Further, Prince Rupert is one of the best and most beautiful harbours in the world, ranking in the North Pacific in that respect with Sydney in the Southern ocean.

Physically, the Grand Trunk Pacific is one of the most perfect railways in North America. It is nearly level from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Even in crossing the Rocky Mountains its maximum grade is only four-tenths of one per cent. As a consequence one Grand Trunk locomotive will be able to haul between the Middle West and the Pacific Coast a load that would require from four to eight similar locomotives on any of the other trans-Continental railways in North America. This means a great saving in the cost of traction for the new railway, and the excellent, level roadbed, and almost entire absence of curves, will permit of mail and passenger trains being run at a high rate of speed with perfect safety.

There has been a tendency in Canada, when considering the "All-Red Route," to assume that on the trans-Pacific section of it Australians and New Zealanders will be satisfied with a much slower service than what will be established on

the Atlantic. It is proposed for the Atlantic service that between the United Kingdom and Canada to require a minimum speed of 25 knots, and 16 to 13 knots have been spoken of for the service between Canada and Australia. The trans-Pacific end of the "All-Red Route" should have a service of not less than 20 knots to start with, and that, too, of the highest class of passenger steamers. With a fast Atlantic service, an acceleration across Canada, which will be possible when the Grand Trunk Pacific line is completed in 1911, and a 20-knot service on the Pacific it will be possible to deliver mails between London and Sydney in from 23 to 24 days, which is about the time now taken by the fastest steamers through the Suez Canal to Fremantle, in West Australia. A fortnightly mail by way of Canada, alternating with the present fortnightly Orient mail, would give a first-class regular weekly mail service, while for British and Australasian travellers the round trip, going one way and coming the other, would be the most luxurious, comfortable, instructive and enjoyable of world tours.

Few Canadians, and not many British people, realise that Australia and New Zealand have now a combined population of close upon five and a half million people, of whom at least ninety-five per cent are British or of British extraction. Trading almost entirely with the Mother Country, and with the British traditional love of the sea, the Britons of the Southern Hemisphere have always been keenly alive to all matters pertaining to ocean shipping. The opening of the Panama Canal, five or six years hence, will revolutionise trans-Pacific direct shipping to Europe, and the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, two years hence, will render possible the finest and fastest mail and passenger service in the world. The subsidy to the present Canadian-Australian line expires next year. It is, therefore, time for the people of New Zealand to be considering what share they are going to take in the coming struggle for the commercial mastery of the Pacific.

## A Famous Pawn Shop.

The Paris Monte de Pieté, where the jewels of the ex-Sultan of Morocco are now reposing, is flanked on one side by a church and on the other by the venerable building which stores the national archives, and there is nothing in the appearance of the largest pawnshop in the world to shame its respectable neighbours. In fact, were it not for the flag it displays and the sentinel at the gate, the vagrant tourist might easily assume the somewhat gloomy edifice to be a college or a hospital. The Monte de Pieté may well claim to be a philanthropic institution, for, as a general rule, the management loses money on all loans under twenty francs, the seven per cent interest which is charged not being sufficient to cover the registration and storage expenses. And no interest whatever is claimed on loans up to five francs when the articles are withdrawn within sixty days.

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