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The Atlantic Steamship Service. Among recent contributions to a discussion of an improved Atlantic Steamship service in the interest of Canada, is a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. George H. Dobson. The writer regards such a service as highly important. He believes that the immensely larger immigration to the United States than to Canada, during the past half century, is in part to be accounted for by the fact that that country has possessed a vast advantage over us in respect to the speed and convenience of ocean travel. He shows that while the fast lines running to New York cross the ocean now in half the time required for the voyage by the best steamers of fifty years ago, comparatively little advance in the matter of speed has been made since 1857 in the boats running to Quebec. In connection with this, it is shown that in 1850 Canada received 32,292 immigrants, and the United States received 310,000. In 1880, Canada received 27,544 and the United States, 622,252, while in 1891 the figures were for Canada, 24,409, and for the United States, 665,000. It is doubtful, however, if improved means of transportation, by means of a Canadian line, would have done a great deal to turn the tide of immigration toward this country. As it has been, the Canadian lines have brought a great many thousands of people to Canada who simply passed over our territory into the United States. However, it is probable that the next half century will see a very considerable change in the direction which immigration will take on this continent. "In establishing a Canadian fast line," Mr. Dobson says, "it is necessary to use ocean tracks, affording equal speed to that obtained on the New York routes." And this, he holds, it is quite hopeless to expect by the Belle Isle and St. Lawrence, the present summer route. The great objection to this route is not its length, since the distance from Liverpool to Quebec is, by that route, considerable shorter than the distance from Liverpool to New York. What renders the Belle Isle-St. Lawrence impracticable for a fast line, Mr. Dobson holds, is the icebergs which abound during the summer season in the Arctic current to the east of Belle Isle and in the straits, and the fogs which are said to prevail in that region, during the summer months, about one-third of the time. This combination of ice and fog, it is easy to see, must make navigation in the highest degree dangerous, so that vessels on this route are sometimes delayed for days at a time. "The difficulties and hazards, of the St. Lawrence for high speed are well known to English capitalists, and this accounts for the failure of every attempt to raise the necessary funds to float a 20 knot guaranteed speed." In order to give Canada a satisfactory fast line service, a route must be adopted free from ice, and there must be an Atlantic port of call. Mr. Dobson advocates the adoption for a Canadian line of the same lane routes on which the fast and regular passages between New York and Liverpool are made, diverging from that route at the meridian of Cape Race. From that point of divergence to North Sydney—which he would make the Atlantic port of call—the distance is short and through unobstructed waters. From the port of call the mails and such passengers as so desired would be conveyed westward by rail, reaching Ottawa some thirty-three hours earlier than they could by way of Liverpool and New York. With a 22 knot service, for passengers who should land or embark at North Sydney, this would involve an ocean voyage of less than four days. From that port the steamers could proceed at a safe rate of speed, by way of the Gulf and the river St. Lawrence, to Quebec. Of course such a service as Mr. Dobson advocates would cost something. He thinks that a subsidy would be necessary from Canada of \$750,000 or \$800,000 annually, supple-

mented by an Imperial subsidy of 50 per cent. additional, and it is not likely that his estimate is too large.

Principal Grant's Contribution. Another contribution to the Fast Line discussion comes from the pen of Principal Grant, of Kingston. Dr. Grant has been spending a holiday in Newfoundland, and has been impressed with the practicability of making the trans-insular railway a link in the line of trans-Atlantic travel. Like Mr. Dobson, he rejects the Belle Isle-St. Lawrence route as impracticable for a fast line service, and for the same reason. Icebergs and fog make it impossible to run steamers regularly by that route at the required rate of speed. But Principal Grant proposes to improve upon the plan advocated by Mr. Dobson, by taking another day off the ocean voyage. With three days steaming from Galway, or some port in England, he would reach Green Bay, a deep inlet of Notre Dame Bay, on the east coast of the island. Landing at Green Bay, passengers and mails would be taken by rail, in seven or eight hours, to Port aux Basques, on the west coast, and thence by steamer to North Sydney in six hours. "This route," Dr. Grant says, "would be perfectly practicable during the passenger seasons, from May to December, and for the remaining months of the year, Halifax would be the Atlantic terminus. The winter tracks used by the fast liners; are to be the south of Sable Island, and an Atlantic chart shows that in spite of "the SS. Bruce" having made North Sydney an open port all the year round, Halifax is the best eastern port for the winter service, and Halifax is now only one day distant from Montreal. A little examination into the merits of this proposed highway, as compared with the St. Lawrence route, will at least demonstrate that the Canadian government should "go slow" in inviting tenders again for a fast Atlantic service by the St. Lawrence route, and in offering for it an enormous annual subsidy."

The Czar is for Peace. The most noteworthy occurrence of the past week in the world of international politics is Russia's note addressed to the representatives of other nations at St. Petersburg, inviting the powers to take part in an international conference, as a means of assuring a real and lasting peace and of terminating the progressive increase of armaments. It has been assumed in some quarters, on insufficient data it would seem, that the Czar has proposed a general disarmament of the nations. So far as we can discover, the note which Count Muravieff has issued, by the authority of the Czar, does not contain such a proposal. Russia's object appears to be to bring about such relations between the powers and to establish such mutual confidence in each other's peaceful intentions as to secure the basis for a permanent peace. This would not necessarily involve a general disarmament, but it would at least render it unnecessary for the nations to go on playing the ruinous game of increasing their armaments in competition with each other. The maintenance of permanent peace making possible the reduction of excessive armaments, the Czar holds to be in accordance with the interests and the legitimate views of the powers. It is in order to preserve peace that states have formed alliances and burdened themselves intolerably with the expense of vast military establishments. To put an end to the incessant increase of armaments, and to seek means of warding off the calamities which are threatening the whole world from this cause, is regarded as the supreme duty imposed upon the nations. "This conference

will be, by the help of God," the Czar concludes, "a happy presage for the century which is about to open. It would converge into one powerful focus the efforts of all states sincerely seeking to make the universal peace triumph over the elements of trouble and discord; and it would at the same time cement their agreement by a corporate consecration of the principles of equity and right, whereupon rest the security of states and the welfare of peoples."

What Does it Mean. The Czar's overture has, of course, attracted world-wide attention, and is everywhere being discussed with deep interest. Naturally, suspicion is not wholly wanting of some sinister design on the part of Russia, but judging from the cabled utterances of the English press upon the subject, there appears to be a rather general disposition in Great Britain, at least, to accept Russia's proposal in good faith. There is every reason to believe that the present Czar is a man of peace, whose grand desire and purpose is the internal development of the great country over which he rules, rather than the enlargement of its borders by means of war. The Czar is also so intimately connected by marriage with the royal family of England that there must be very strong reasons, on that ground, why he should desire to avoid war with Great Britain, the only nation which is in a position to dispute Russia's march of empire, or which seems likely to do so. Nor, so far as the Czar's advisers and the general policy of government in Russia are concerned, does there appear to be any good reason for suspicion that the Czar's proposal has not been made in good faith. There is every reason why that nation, at the present juncture, should desire a permanent peace. By securing open sea ports on the Pacific, Russia has succeeded in one grand object of her ambition (and, considering her great possessions and interests, one cannot deny that it was a legitimate object). She has also obtained a hold upon a vast extent of territory in Northern China, which, if not interfered with, she will make a part of her own empire. In order to complete her great Siberian railway, to organize these new provinces which are falling to her, and thus make her position secure in Eastern Asia, Russia requires time and assured peace, with deliverance from the tremendous burden of keeping up a constantly increasing armament on land and sea. On one side of it, therefore, this proposal may be regarded as another masterly stroke of Russian diplomacy. At the present time England probably possesses the power to spoil Russia's programme in the east and deprive her of the foothold which she has gained on the Pacific, but it is a question for how long this supremacy over Russia in the east could be maintained, and whether it would be worth to Great Britain what it would cost. It would seem that the Czar's proposal must involve the partition of China among the European powers, which of late has seemed inevitable as things are. But there are other matters which it would seem must be settled before Europe would be prepared to ring in the days of universal peace. There is France's long cherished revenge on Germany, and the question as to spheres of influence in Africa, the Turkish question, etc. Probably the conference to which Russia invites the nations will be held, and in spite of the difficulties in the way of a secure basis for permanent peace and consequent disarmament, it is not impossible that good may come of it, for all the nations want peace rather than war, and the present system of competitive armaments involves burdens now quite too grievous to be borne, with the prospect of indefinite increase. From such burdens it seems imperative that relief in one way or another shall be found.

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