

are preparing to place large contracts for cars for next year's delivery.

A large number of the idle cars listed on the returns of the traffic associations are either crippled or too antiquated for active service under modern railroad conditions. The result of the larger traffic, present and prospective, however, has been to rush many of the cars that are reclaimable into the repair shops. This movement has been stimulated by the active demand for shipments on recent contracts for iron and steel products. Those in closest touch with the situation in the Pittsburg and Chicago territory claim that it will be only a question of a comparatively short time before there is again a shortage of cars to move accumulated freight. Very few new cars can be constructed in time to be utilized in next fall's traffic and dependence must thus be placed upon the rolling stock now passing through the repair shops. But the railroads are also preparing for increased traffic next year by placing orders, as noted above, for an increased number of cars. New contracts are now pending for about 60,000 cars and plans are being prepared which will call for about 40,000 additional.

The steel mills will thus be called upon to furnish about a million tons of steel plates and shapes within the next few months, which, following the heavy contracts placed during March, April and May, will require the exercise of the full capacity of the finishing mills and also means that there will be more or less delay in making shipments on contract time. Already some of the mills of the subsidiary companies of the Steel Corporation, as well as some of the independent companies, cannot promise shipments on new orders under sixty or ninety days after receipt of the specifications.

A natural result of these conditions is advancing prices on both finished and raw material. This advancing tendency has been especially noticeable on steel and iron bars, structural and fabricated shapes and scrap material of all kinds. Other products, such as billets, plates and some specialties, are hardening and advances are only a question of time.

The most notable increase in activity during the last week has been in the demand from manufacturers of railroad equipment, including the railroads themselves, the latter placing orders for pig iron, car wheels and miscellaneous products required in repair work.

#### Coast Extension of St. Paul Open

The first transcontinental railroad ever built from Chicago to the Pacific Coast under one management was officially completed last week, when President A. J. Earling, of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad made formal announcement of the preparedness of that road to transport all freight destined to all points on the Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound Railway, the St. Paul's Pacific Coast extension.

This announcement marks the consummation of one of the greatest achievements in the annals of American railroads, presenting as it does to the merchants of the country another commercial artery between the central West and the markets of the north Pacific Coast. While the St. Paul road will now contract for freight delivery at Puget Sound points, the passenger schedule over the new line will not be inaugurated for some time.

The Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound Railway has a total operating length of 1,400 miles, the construction of which was accomplished in the record breaking time of three years. The rapidity of the work of the St. Paul engineers and the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which they were forced to overcome held the technical world in astonishment.

During the construction period of three years 60,000,000 cubic yards of material has been excavated, 360,000 yards of tunneling driven, 20 miles of bridges erected and 200,000 tons of eighty-five pound rails laid at a total cost of \$105,000,000. A noteworthy incident in connection with this construction is that the actual cost of the enormous undertaking approximated

the estimated cost, as a result of which additional financing to carry through the work was unnecessary.

The first shovelful of dirt was turned April, 1906, and in spite of the difficulty in securing men and material during the following season the estimated progress of the work was not once delayed.

The track laying of the Puget Sound Railway was completed by the laying of the last rail at a point two miles east of Missoula, Mont., on March 29. The line east of Butte has been in operation since September, 1908. The first through passenger run was made on June 1, when a train bearing the special car of President Earling and Roswell Miller, chairman of the board of directors, arrived in Seattle.

#### Boston and Maine Merger Bill Passed

The Massachusetts General Assembly has passed the "Railroad Holding Company" bill, which practically brings to a close a three years' controversy over the railroad situation in New England and as giving the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad control over the Boston and Maine Railroad, with certain restrictions.

The merger controversy started in 1906, when several large stockholders in the Boston and Maine Railroad sold their holdings, amounting to 109,989 shares, to the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. Governor Curtis Guild, Jr., called the attention of the Legislature of 1907 to the matter and ordered the Attorney General to institute proceedings against the New Haven Company.

In the fall of that year, a faction of the Democratic party supported an independent candidate for governor on an anti-merger platform. The Legislature of 1908 failed to settle the controversy, and during the session the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided that the action of the New Haven road was illegal. After the close of the legislative session last year, the New Haven road carried out the provisions of the court's decision by selling the Boston and Maine stock to John L. Billard, of Meriden, Conn., who in the fall was elected a director of the Boston and Maine Company.

For more than three months of the present session of the Legislature no headway was made in settlement of the difficulty. In April, Governor Draper, after numerous conferences with officials of the railroads, business men and leaders on both sides, sent a message to the Legislature suggesting the holding company plan. Attorney General Dana Malone drew up the bill, which was reported by a majority of the Committee on Railroads.

The Governor's bill provides for the incorporation of the Boston Railroad Holding Company by three Massachusetts citizens, Walter C. Baylies, of Boston; Robert M. Burnett, of Southboro, and Frederic C. Dumaine, of Concord, a financier, a business man and a cotton mill treasurer respectively.

The new company is to be financed by some railroad company, presumably the New Haven, and the Billard holdings are to be purchased and held by it. The stock cannot be sold unless by permission of the Legislature. The bill gives the New Haven Company practical control of nearly three-quarters of the railroad mileage in New England, but with Massachusetts supervision over part of it.

#### Illinois Central Gets Outlet to Seaboard

The sale of the Central of Georgia Railway to the Illinois Central Railroad, carrying out plans forecasted more than a year ago, has been announced. The transaction originated in negotiations culminating in November, 1907, when the entire capital stock of the Central of Georgia passed into the hands of William Nelson Cromwell and John W. Castles. The purchase, it was announced a few months later, was forced by E. H. Harriman, whose interest and intention it was then stated, was to transfer it to the Illinois Central. The price paid by the Illinois Central was not given out.