

PRAISE FOR J. J. HILL ON 74TH BIRTHDAY

Railroad Presidents Wire Eulogies of His Life Work on Eve of St. Paul Banquet.

RIVALS JOIN IN TRIBUTE

Builder of the Great Northwest Worked for Thirty Years Without Salary.

Special to The New York Times.

ST. PAUL, Minn., Sept. 15.—James J. Hill, creator of the Great Northern Railway and called the builder of the Northwestern Empire, celebrates his seventy-fourth birthday to-morrow. He will be the guest of honor at a public banquet. The St. Paul Pioneer Press, in token of the great part the retired railroad man has borne in building up the Northwest, has collected expressions of personal appreciation of the man from heads of great railway systems in America. Some of these eulogies in part say:

Robert Lovett, Chairman Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railway: "Mr. Hill is the last, and one of the greatest, of a small group of great builders who by their courage, their foresight, their determination, their qualities to inspire confidence, did more than all other forces combined to open and develop the western half of this country."

Roswell Miller, Chairman Board of Directors, Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul: "As a builder and operator of railroads James J. Hill is in my opinion without a peer."

Howard Elliott, President of Northern Pacific Railway: "Truly it may be said of Mr. Hill that by his genius in promoting efficiency in the transportation machine and by his far-sightedness about the natural resources of the country he has done much to make 'two ears of corn' and 'two blades of grass' grow 'where only one grew before.'"

Charles S. Mellen, President New York, New Haven & Hartford: "James J. Hill is the most notable figure in railroading in the world. No praise is too great for what he has accomplished and no one but should be pleased that he has profited largely, as was surely his due."

James McCrea, President of Pennsylvania Lines: "Mr. Hill stands among the foremost railroad men of this day, and in the development of the great Northwest country he has made a magnificent record."

F. D. Underwood, President Erie Railroad: "Two of Mr. Hill's best attributes are that he is loved by his friends, while his enemies both fear and respect him. Greater praise can no man have than that."

Edmund Pennington, President Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railway: "I consider Mr. Hill one of the great men of his time. A man of keen conception, looking into the future rather than most men."

S. M. Felton, President of the Chicago Great Western Railway: "The name of James J. Hill will go down into history as the most remarkable character our railroading industry has developed."

Newman Erb, President of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad: "The world takes note of great events, great deeds, and great achievements, whether darts of war or dreams of peace, but no event, no deeds, and no achievements in modern times exceed in importance those which centre around the work accomplished by Mr. Hill."

In a letter published in THE NEW YORK TIMES on June 30, when James J. Hill retired from the Chairmanship of the Great Northern Railway Company, he said:

"The work begun nearly forty years ago has been substantially accomplished, though its results have been extended far beyond the foresight of any one at that time. I hope that I have earned the leisure which every man looks for who has borne the burden and heat of life's day."

He reviewed in his letter of resignation the fortunes of his great railway enterprise during a period of more than thirty-five years, but gave little clue to the broader aspects of his activities which have made him one of the foremost figures in the western world, in or out of public life. He was the Great Northern Railway, but more than that, he is looked upon as the builder of the great empire of the Northwest. With no other living man is the upbuilding of so vast a section of populous and thriving country so intimately linked.

In all of his great work of organization he has been more than a railroad man and more than a financier. He has for many years been a leader of practical thought and has done more, perhaps, than any other man in this country to foster the improvement of farming methods and conditions. Although he has grown rich with the prosperity of his road and the development of the Northwest, he subordinated the opportunities for piling up a vast personal fortune to the welfare of his stockholders. It is well known that he served as President of the Great Northern for nearly a quarter of a century, and as Chairman of the road for five years without accepting a dollar of salary. Beyond this, there remains as a monument of his perhaps unique unselfishness the vast wealth of the ore lands owned by the stockholders of the road, which might have been made, without violating precedent, his personal property. Those who are intimately acquainted with him know of, perhaps, \$2,000,000 which he has spent out of his own pocket for the vast railroad system of which he was the creator.

In the light of these facts it is easy to understand the spirit in which he wrote these words in his letter of farewell to the official family of the Great Northern:

"Most men who have really lived have had in some shape their great adventure. This railway is mine. I feel that a labor and a service so called into being, touching at so many points the lives of so many millions, with its ability to serve the country, and its firmly established credit and reputation, will be the best evidence of its permanent value and that it no longer depends upon the life or labor of any single individual."

James J. Hill was born at Guelph, in Canada, Sept. 16, 1838, the son of a farmer. He received his first education at Rockwood Academy, near his home, but went to work at an early age, his first employment away from his father's farm being in the transportation field as agent for the Northwestern Packet Company in St. Paul, in 1856.

Soon after he established a fuel and transportation business of his own, and became a pioneer in traffic in the Northwest. He organized the Red River Transportation Company after the close of the Civil War, and at the same time turned his attention to railroading, becoming local agent in St. Paul of the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad in 1873.

It was after a service of but a few years with that company that he formed the syndicate which purchased the road from the Dutch holders of its defaulted bonds and began the work which ended with the completion of the Great Northern Railway, one of the greatest systems of the country. His associates in the purchasing syndicate were George A. Stephen, now Lord Mount Stephen; Donald A. Smith, now Lord Strathcona, and Norman W. Kittson.

"Fanny's First Play" on View.

Two invitation dress rehearsals of "Fanny's First Play" were given at the Comedy Theatre yesterday, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Among those present in the audience at the evening rehearsal were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rogers Winthrop, Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop Ames, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Krech, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Untermyer, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Hapgood, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Sothorn, Lewis Waller, and most of the theatrical and literary critics in New York.

Cast for "The Affairs of Anatol."

Winthrop Ames has completed the cast for Arthur Schnitzler's comedy, "The Affairs of Anatol," which will be produced at the Little Theatre next month. John Barrymore will have the role of Anatol, and the part of Max, his friend and counsellor, will be played by Oswald Yorke. Marguerite Clark, Doris Keane, Gail Kane, Isabel Lee and Katherine Emmett will play the girls with whom Anatol is in love, and each will appear in only one episode in his "affairs."

The New York Times

Published: September 16, 1912

Copyright © The New York Times