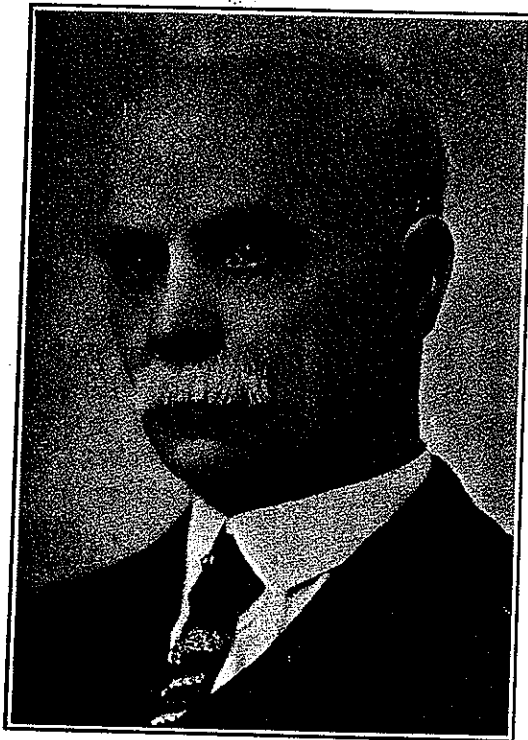


THOMAS TURNBULL

Compiled by A. P. Walker

There passed away at Winnipeg, Man., on 14th September, 1932, an Ontario Land Surveyor, who for more than 50 years had followed a career that had led him through almost unbelievable hardships, and linked his name with progress in the Dominion, more especially in the matter of railway construction, from Coast to Coast.



Mr. Thomas Turnbull was born in the Township of Wolford, County of Grenville, Ontario, on May 26th, 1857. His father, Henry Turnbull, came to Canada from Castleton, Scotland, and belonged to the branch of the Turnbulls of Jedborough, Scotland. His mother was Helen Allan, a daughter of Andrew Allan, who came to Canada with his wife in 1815, being one of the Scottish settlers who opened up the country in the vicinity of Perth at that time. Thomas Turnbull was educated in the public and high schools of Perth, passed his examina-

tions for C.E. degree at Toronto University, and served an apprenticeship of three years, from 15th February, 1875, to 15th February, 1878, as a Provincial Land Surveyor, the first year with James Allen, P.L.S. of Renfrew, and the last two years with John Morris, P.L.S. and D.L.S., of Perth. He qualified as a Provincial Land Surveyor for Ontario on 6th July, 1878. In the summers of 1880-1 he assisted John Morris in contract surveys of Townships in Manitoba and the West, returning home to Perth for the winter seasons. In the winter of 1881 he joined the survey of the Ontario and Quebec Railway (now C.P.R.) first as transit man, and then as Right-of-Way Surveyor under the late Hugh D. Lumsden, O.L.S., C.E. During

the construction of this railway he was Resident Engineer on the first 20 miles west of Perth, until the completion of the line in 1884. He remained with the C.P.R. until 1889, being engaged on surveys and construction of the Manitoba South-Western Colonization Railway, the line from Smith's Falls to Montreal, the International of Maine, through the northern part of the State of Maine east of Megantic, and for some months was on a survey of the proposed Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway. During the years 1889 to 1891 he was in charge of a party on location and construction of the Halls Bay Railway of the Newfoundland Government Railways.

Returning to the C.P.R. in 1891, he was for the next six years Assistant Engineer, Maintenance of Way, Western Division. In May, 1897, he joined forces with Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, and was appointed Chief Engineer, Location and Construction, Lake Manitoba Railway and Canal Co., now part of the Canadian National Railways. He remained with Mackenzie and Mann until the end of February, 1900, and during this time made a reconnaissance survey from Port Arthur to Fort Frances, along the present line of the Canadian National Railways. Also in the Autumn of 1897, he was sent to the Yukon, locating a line from Pyramid Harbour on the north end of Lynn Canal, which, however, was not constructed owing to the arbitration with the United States going against Canada. He encountered many hardships on this trip, and witnessed the drama of the gold rush of 1898. Returning to the Prairies, he worked on the survey and construction of a Railway from Dauphin to Prince Albert, through Swan River District and also mapped out a possible route to The Pas. During 1900-1904 he was engaged on various works including about two years as Inspector of Dominion Land Surveys in Western Canada, and on a reconnaissance of the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway. In April, 1904, he was appointed Assistant Chief Engineer, Canadian Northern Railway, Winnipeg, which position he held for six years, and in July, 1910, was appointed Assistant Chief Engineer of the Hudson's Bay Railway when he made a hazardous canoe trip to Norway House, and down the Hayes River to Hudson Bay and Port Nelson. He was in charge of location and construction of this line for two years. In 1912-13 he was chief engineer of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway, and located and built 130 miles of that Railway, and provided the first railway transportation into the Peace River Country.

In June, 1914, he returned to the Canadian Northern as Assistant Chief Engineer at Winnipeg, and four years later

was appointed Engineer Maintenance-of-Way, Canadian National Railways, Winnipeg, which position he held for 13 years until his retirement on 1st August, 1931.

Mr. Turnbull married Emily Taylor, of London, England, on 11th December, 1895, at Winnipeg, who survives. The children are:

- (1) Grace Elizabeth, now Mrs. W. J. Steer, of Toronto.
- (2) Thomas Roland, died 26th July, 1902.
- (3) Winnifred Helen, honour graduate of Manitoba University, 1932.

He had also four brothers and one sister:

- (1) Walter, farmer at Rathwell, Manitoba.
- (2) John, deceased.
- (3) Andrew, farmer at Rathwell, Manitoba,
- (4) William, engineer at Brandon, Manitoba.
- (5) Mrs. Robert Allan, of Rathwell, Manitoba.

Charles Taylor, Town Engineer of Selkirk, Manitoba, is a brother of Mrs. Turnbull.

Mr. Turnbull was an outstanding man in his profession, and stood high in the regard of his fellow engineers. One of his chief characteristics was his desire to assist younger members of the profession when starting out in life, and he gave generously to them of his knowledge and experience. On his retirement in 1931, he was signally honoured by the officials of the Canadian National Railways at Winnipeg, and presented with a handsome grandfather's clock and smoking cabinet. He died very suddenly of a heart seizure 14th September, 1932, in his 76th year, and was buried in St. John's Cemetery at Winnipeg. A recent photograph of Mr. Turnbull is published herewith.
