

land grabbers, and shield the *bona fide* settler. This is admitted, and though no more than his duty, is deserving of the highest praise. Recently, however, he has made a ruling that the clause of the land law which prohibits locators from selling or agreeing to sell their claims prior to making final proof applies as well to mortgages as to actual deeds of conveyance. Though possibly correct in theory, it works a great hardship in practice. The majority of pre-emptors are poor men who are, perhaps, compelled to spend all their ready money in locating and making the requisite improvements. When the limit of time allowed for proving up approaches many of them find themselves without the purchase money, which they can only secure by mortgaging the claim itself. If they are not permitted to do this their time, labor and money expended for a period of thirty-three months are lost. It is to be hoped that when the Commissioner is made to realize the full effect of his ruling he will so modify it as to permit the mortgaging of claims for purchase money, as such action would be in the interest of actual settlers as distinguished from those of speculators.

THE "Interior World" is the title of a short romance from the pen of Washington L. Tower, of Oakland, Or. It is the vehicle by means of which the author seeks to convey a new theory of gravitation, which is specially explained in an appendix. He holds that attraction is both positive and negative, and that the dual action of this force has made the globe a hollow sphere with openings at both poles, and that the open polar sea is a means of communication between the exterior and interior worlds. The theory of an interior world approachable by way of the poles is by no means a new one. "Symmes' Hole" has had many warm supporters since first declared to exist by the brilliant Captain Symmes, and even such great scientists as Sir Humphrey Davy have admitted the possibility of such a condition of the globe. The romance falls far short of Bulwer's "Coming Race" as a literary production, and does not exhibit the fertility of imagination nor command of scientific data of Jules Verne in his "Trip to the Centre of the Earth," yet it serves to illustrate the author's theory, and this was, no doubt, all he attempted to accomplish. The open polar sea has never been accounted for by scientists on the basis of our present theory of the earth's formation, and a hollow globe seems to be the only method of explaining it. Published by Milton H. Tower, Oakland, Or. Cloth bound, \$1.25.

WHEN under the pressure of the great Civil War the United States undertook to become financially responsible for the construction of the Union and Central Pacific railroads, as a means of firmly welding together the East and West, it was looked upon as an undertaking of unprecedented magnitude, a venture which nothing but the patent absolute necessity of such a means of communication between the States on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts could warrant. It was a political rather than a commercial measure, advocated by the statesman

rather than the trader. If such an undertaking were a giant one for forty millions of people, with the country through which it would pass already partially developed, with the terminus in a mineral region producing millions of dollars annually, and reaching on a magnificent harbor a city of over 200,000 people, what must be thought of the task the three millions of people of Canada imposed upon themselves, a few years later, to build three thousand miles of railway through an uninhabited wilderness of forest, across bleak and unsettled plains and through four great ranges of mountains which presented engineering difficulties such as had never before been encountered? Such was the task the Dominion of Canada attempted fifteen years ago and has now successfully accomplished. It was a long struggle, carried bravely on through seasons of prosperity and financial depression, and notwithstanding predictions of failure freely made on every hand, is now brought to a triumphant completion five years in advance of the allotted time. It was a grand achievement, and will rank in history among the greatest of modern times.

STEAMBOAT disasters on Puget Sound are apparently averted only by Providential interference, certainly not by the carefulness of the inspectors in regard to either the vessels or masters to whom they issue certificates and permits. Puget Sound is an inland sea, placid as a mirror in summer, and in many places so sheltered that even the strongest winds in winter have but little effect upon it; but in other localities where the stretch of open water is greater, notably opposite the Straits of Fuca, the wind at times raises a considerable sea. Notwithstanding this the Inspector of Hulls, following of course the custom of his predecessors in office, grants certificates to small, frail, shaky steamers, such as are fit only for river navigation. It often occurs that these craft are compelled to lie in port, because the master deems it unsafe to venture out; but there is no one, save the master, to determine this question, and when cupidity is arrayed against discretion, it is very apt to prevail. This, however, is not the greatest evil. Permits are issued to unfit persons. In one instance in particular, a first-class master's certificate is held by an individual whose notoriously intemperate habits render him totally unfit to have in his charge the lives and property of others. This person is master of a steamer on which many people and thousands of dollars of property are carried daily, and is frequently in a state of intoxication which renders him incompetent to handle his vessel. It can not be argued that the public need not travel on unsafe steamers, or entrust their lives to drunken captains; for the traveling public has no means of knowing these things in advance. It is compelled to assume that steamers and masters, licensed by Government officials, are safe vessels and proper persons. If officials can not or dare not fearlessly and justly discharge the duties of their office, they should resign or be removed. Otherwise they will some day be compelled to explain away their responsibility for some heartrending disaster.