

The Lake Superior district will at once rise into importance. A large traffic will immediately spring up along the whole route, mining will receive an immense impetus, villages will grow up as if by magic, and our North-Western country begin to assume that importance which nature designed it to have. It is to be hoped that no narrow-contracted statesmanship—no penny-wise and pound-foolish economy—will longer bar the way to the opening up of a good wagon-road to the Red River district, for, assuredly, every week we are without communication is a scandal to Canadian enterprise and a heavy loss to the country.

Our whole North-Western country is worthy of far more interest than either our legislators or others have evinced in it. There is no good reason why our North Shore of Lake Superior should not equal the American in bustle and activity. All that is wanted is, enterprise on the part of our Government in assisting settlement and opening up communication, and that the press earnestly direct public attention to the wealth which lies there waiting development. Let us hope that neither of these things will longer be wanting.

GOVERNMENTAL TELEGRAPHY.

THE passage of the Electric Telegraph Bill by the English Parliament, will secure to the people of the United Kingdom the great boon of cheap transmission of telegraphic messages; uniformly cheap, without regard to distance sent. The price to be paid the various Telegraph Companies has been fixed, and nothing now remains but for Parliament to vote the money necessary to complete the purchase. As we have already informed our readers, the telegraph will be worked in connection with the Post Office system, whereby much labour will be saved, and great economy obtained both in the salaries of employees and in the item of rents, as existing Post Offices will furnish nearly sufficient accommodation. It is believed, and with justice, that the lowering of the tariff will have the immediate effect of very greatly increasing the revenue, similar action in Switzerland and Belgium having been followed by a much more general use of the wires than had existed previously to the adoption of the reduced scale of prices.

We have always advocated a reduction in postage to a point even lower than that now in force, on the ground that a large and compensating increase would be sure to take place; the objection to this is based on the sparseness of our population when compared with the long distances mail matter has to be carried. This objection has some weight, but it would be quite different in the matter of telegraphing, where it would be no more costly to send a despatch over a single wire 500 miles long, than over one ten miles, or even one mile. If the practical and prudent statesmen of England with all possible information at their command, and after the widest discussion in parliament and the press, have decided on the principle of Government Telegraphy, we see no reason why our Government should not follow a similar course, and that too without delay, so that the cost of acquiring the lines already in operation may be as light as possible.

The chief objection, or at least that most likely to be a popular bugbear, in giving Government control of the telegraph wires rests on the fears entertained that at critical times—contested elections for example—they would have it in their power to become acquainted with the contents of messages to the detriment of the parties interested. There is an easy mode of preventing this by the use of cypher messages on a principle now general, which while perfectly simple, can be varied indefinitely, and for which each individual using the wires can have his own key. This cypher it is utterly impossible for any one to decipher without the key, as the same letter in the despatch has varied significances according to its chance position.

Another objection to placing the wires in Government hands is that they will not be worked as economically as in the hands of a company whose proprietors had a direct interest in the profits. We do not consider that this objection, though plausible, has much weight. The Post Office Department is on the whole well managed, with a due regard both to efficiency and economy. Officials who can be depended upon to despatch mails can also be trusted with the transmission of messages, and as the same men in a majority of cases, now employed throughout the country in the various Post Offices, will be employed as operators as soon as they can learn the art, there

will be very little room for extravagance in the management of the department.

A great advantage gained by a Government system would be that lines would be built, where though much needed, they might for some time not be remunerative. Private companies of course would only open offices at points where the business would at least pay expenses; whereas under the principle we are advocating, lines would be built and put in operation as speedily as practicable, and all parts of the country would be brought into instantaneous communication with all other parts.

That the Companies now owning telegraph lines in the Dominion have made profits enormously beyond what people in general have any idea of, is a fact easily demonstrated. Take the Montreal Telegraph Company for example. A moderate half-yearly dividend only has been paid to shareholders, but a very large extent of its line now in operation has been built not out of the capital but out of profits, and today the capital stock of that company has an actual much beyond its nominal value, and shares are almost impossible to purchase, even at a high premium. Under a Government system these large profits would be given back to the country in general, and just so fast as was found to be practicable, the tariff would be reduced, and in the same proportion would be the boon of rapid transmission of intelligence be given to an increased number of our people.

DART'S FREIGHT COMPUTATIONS.

D. Appleton & Co., New York: B. Dawson & Son, Montreal.

THE above is the title of a very useful work, one especially valuable to shipping houses, transportation and railway companies, warehousemen &c. It gives in a clear manner, easy of reference, the exact amount of freight or storage on any measurement from one cubic inch to four thousand feet, at rates from twenty five cents to twenty dollars per ton of forty cubic feet, and equivalent rates per foot measurement. We have tested a number of the calculations and find them in every instance perfectly accurate. We commend the work to the notice of those interested.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY AGITATION.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

(From Herapath's Journal.)

THE Board have arranged, we hear, to call a special general meeting of the Proprietors for the 27th of August to consider the question of giving the Proprietors a list of themselves.

We believe this is the first instance on record of such a thing being done—a special meeting called to authorise the Directors to give the Proprietors the list referred to.

We cannot think that there is the least necessity for such a step. As there is nothing in the Company's Acts to prevent the Directors from granting such a list, surely they could give it. Nay, it is a question in our mind whether the Proprietors could not demand it, being, we imagine, in this country, a very common right for partners to know who their co-partners are. To all intents and purposes the Grand Trunk is an English Company, although the railway is situated in Canada. The Board sit in London, the Secretary's office is in London, and the general meetings of Proprietors are held in London. The half-yearly reports are issued in London.

While we should have liked to see the Directors grant the list to the respectable body of Proprietors who have demanded it, and then if necessary ask the general authority of the next meeting to grant to any Proprietor a similar list, on paying the expense of it, we think Messrs. Creak, Ritter, Hartridge and Co. do quite right in pressing for the list, for without it they are powerless, excepting for mere agitation, which is mischievous unless it means something.

The list once granted, the Directors will have to mind their p's and q's in future.

The special meeting on the 27th of August will doubtless be purely *pro forma*, the Directors having promised their co-operation in procuring from the Proprietors their authority to furnish the list. Still it is a meeting which every Proprietor should attend, who possibly can, and we hope Mr. Watkin will be in the chair.

The committee are highly respectable and large Proprietors. What they want is for the benefit of the Company, and although the voting powers of the Company are against a general body of Proprietors we doubt not that the agitation on the main question—the management of the property—will result in favor of the committee. The scale of voting is four votes for every £100 of all stocks (preference or ordinary) in the Company. The same for the bonds at special meetings, the bonds having (we think) to be previously lodged with the secretary for that purpose.

This scale of voting gives an advantage to large holders. It is usual for the number of votes belonging to any one individual to be limited, and to decrease per £100 or £1,000 of capital beyond a certain amount,

so that a man with a million of capital will not possess much voting power over another with £100,000 or even £10,000 of stock. In the Grand Trunk, however, there appears to be no such limitation, and therefore the big holders on "the other side of the table" may come down to a poll with tremendous force. One or two large holders may thus set at naught the will of a whole full meeting. The Grand Trunk Proprietors must muster strong if they mean to fight and win; but we are in hopes that no fight will come off; that to prevent it the Directors will accede to all the just wishes of the committee, and we feel convinced that the committee will not ask for more than they have a right, as large *bona fide* Proprietors to demand.

It is very evident from what has already taken place that the committee mean to persevere in the just course they have adopted, and it is also pretty clear that the public augur well of the reforms they will carry, since the several securities of the Company have lately risen materially in market value.

ECONOMIC MINERALS.

THE COAL MINES, CLAY DEPOSITS AND POTTERIES OF PICTOU.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Toronto *Globe* who recently visited New Glasgow, furnishes the following to that paper, respecting the coal formation, and clay deposits of Pictou:—

The coal formation is in the shape of a long trough or basin of from two to three miles in breadth, one edge being at New Glasgow and the other two miles further south. The same seams appear to cross on both sides of the basin. Cut an onion in two and you can find (if your tears will permit you, a good illustration in one half of it of the section of coal basin, so far as the successive layers, strata or seams of shales, coal and sandstone occur—the cut portion of the onion representing the surface of the ground. At New Glasgow the strata dips southerly towards the centre of the basin, while at the Albion mines which are on the southern side of the basin, the seams dip in the same direction.

The lower seams are of immense size, being the largest bituminous seams in the world. The main seam is not less than 33 feet in vertical thickness. These large seams are overlaid by a great thickness of shale, some which are highly bituminous—there being a seam on the marsh of the George McKay, area 4 feet of which yields 40 gallons of oil to the ton, while 3 feet yields as much as 60 gallons. The oil is used for lighthouses, lubricating machinery, &c., and commands a good price. The seam in question has not yet been turned to account.

Above or on those overlying shales we find some smaller upper seams which are of admirable quality, in this respect exceeding the larger seams. They average from three feet to seven feet. They are very near the surface, and can be worked more cheaply than the lower seams. I paid a visit to a slope within three quarters of a mile from the town, which has been sunk by Mr. Lawson, on an area belonging to the Montreal and New Glasgow Coal Company. The slope is only down to a depth of 50 or 60 feet, and is worked without a steam engine, and not more than \$1,000 has been spent. Yet it is in working order, and likely to pay well. The coal being near "the crop" is a little sulphury, but it is capital steam coal. After looking at the incipient works, I went to where I saw a huge oven blazing away, and I found myself at the Crown Brick and Pottery Company's Works. These have been commenced by an English gentleman, Captain Dawson, who, with a few friends, has become the pioneer in what is destined to be the most important branch of manufacture in the New Dominion. The remarkable excellence of the underlays of the Pictou coal field, near New Glasgow, having attracted attention of parties in Staffordshire, where they have nothing to compare with the New Glasgow clays, he was induced to embark in this undertaking, and he brought out some first class artisans. I was shown by his moulder, a very intelligent Shropshire man, some "biscuit ware," as it is called before it is glazed. These showed the natural tints of the clay, a very beautiful pale rose colour, and a delicate buff coloured clay being specially attractive. The Company intend to make a superior class of breakfast and dinner sets. They are also manufacturing fire bricks, &c.

I urged upon one of the proprietors the importance of their turning their attention to the export of their fire-clay to Montreal and Toronto, where it would command a large price paying more per ton than even the rich gold quartz of the Province, after deducting the expense of working, &c. It is a singular fact these deposits of clay are very partial, the quality of the same seams of clay in other localities being defective from the presence of iron, and other causes—but the company in question have some hundreds of acres underlaid by their seam, amply sufficient to supply pottery for the whole of America for a century to come. Near their works I was shown a seam of coal, which overlies the fire-clays which they use, so that they raise their fuel and their raw material from the same pit, and within a few hundred yards of the railway and of a shipping place. Mr. Otter, of Toronto, accompanied me in my visit to the works. We suggested to Captain Dawson the propriety of sending specimens of his ware and of his clays to Toronto and Montreal, and the probability that any further capital which might be required to enlarge the operations of the company might be procured as readily there as in England.

As the market for these manufactures must be in Canada West, it would certainly be far more advantageous to have the Canadian than English capital invested in these works. Already orders enough to keep the works busy for some years to come have been offered—and the day is not far distant when