

The Gorge Route.—Work was started early in April to clear the track of the Niagara Falls & Lewiston R.R., but several more falls of rock occurred, some of them consisting of thousands of tons, & the work was abandoned. It is not expected that the line will be operated again this year.

A Newfoundland Electric Railway.—R. G. Reid, of Montreal, proprietor of the Newfoundland Ry., is about to build an electric railway in St. John's, Nfld. Power will be generated 8 miles from the city. Orders have been placed for cars, apparatus, plant, etc., & it is expected the line will be completed this year.

The Maritime Electrical Association met in Halifax April 18, when a number of interesting & valuable papers were read, one of which will be found in full on page 157 of this issue. The following officers were elected:—President, F. A. Huntress, Halifax; Vice-President, P. R. Colpitt, Halifax; Sec.-Treas., R. T. Mackeen, Halifax; Executive Committee, H. Brown, St. John, N.B.; J. Eddington, Moncton, N.B.; J. A. Weddell, Charlottetown, P.E.I.; S. G. Chambers, Truro, N.S.; W. Pickles, I. Smith, J. A. Anderson & F. A. Hamilton, Halifax.

TELEGRAPHS & CABLES.

The G. N. W. Company's Defence.

Our Jan. issue, page 29, gave very full particulars of the suit to annul the agreement of 1881, by which the G.N.W.T. Co. assumed the control and operation for 97 years of the lines of the Montreal Telegraph Co., at a yearly rental of \$165,000. The plaintiffs are H. M. Morrow & W. A. Clark, jun., of Boston, Mass., who, as holders of 750 shares of the G. N. W., claim that the Co. had no power to enter into such an agreement, nor had the Western Union Telegraph Co. power to guarantee the rental, as it really did. The plaintiffs say the G. N. W. is in reality the Western Union, & that H. P. Dwight, who holds most of the G. N. W. shares & is President of the Co., is really an agent of the Western Union. They further say that the agreement in dispute is "an attempt by a foreign corporation, through possession of the majority stock of the G. N. W., to exercise & use the statutory powers & franchise of that Co. solely in their own interests; an attempted misuse & abuse of statutory powers & franchises."

In its statement of defence recently filed in the Ontario High Court the G.N.W. insists upon the validity of the agreement & the power of the Western Union to guarantee the rental thereunder. It says the agreement was made in the interest of all parties, & has for over 17 years been faithfully carried out.

Another paragraph of the statement of defence says:—"The holder of the shares now alleged to be held by the plaintiffs at the time of the entering into the agreement was Erastus Wiman, who was one of the most active shareholders in procuring the assent of the

companies to the agreement. The shares were used to vote upon, & by them the agreement was entered into. This defendant (the G.N.W.) submits such shares cannot now be used for the purpose of invalidating the same agreement, & that the plaintiffs are disentitled from using them for such purpose."

The other parties to the defence, the Montreal & Western Union companies, & Mr. Dwight, should the court consider him a co-defendant, set up the same pleas, with one or two additions. The Montreal Co. adds that even if the agreement, when it was made, was not strictly within the powers of the companies concerned, it was executed in good faith, & has been acted upon & carried out for nearly 20 years by the companies; that since then new rights & interests have arisen. For instance, the stock of the Montreal Co. has been purchased, & is now held as an investment, & the Co. says that the court should not interfere with the vested rights of innocent holders of such stock, but protect them.

The G.N.W. says the amalgamation was necessary to end the injurious competition that previously existed, & was advantageous to all parties. It also states that the dividends paid by the G.N.W. after the agreement was made were very high. Then, as the statement of defence relates, other telegraph lines came into existence, followed by a season of financial depression. It is added that but for the guarantee it would have been necessary to call upon the shareholders of the G.N.W. to make good the rental in arrear to the W.U. And that had not the shareholders of the G.N.W. insisted on receiving the \$325,000 as profits on their stock, there would have been ample to have paid a reasonable dividend of 6%, & also to have discharged the total liability guaranteed & paid by the W.U. But the prospects, it is said, are that the Co.'s earnings will be sufficient within a reasonable time to discharge the indebtedness to the W. U., & then pay reasonable dividends.

The G.N.W. also submits that if, for any reason, the court should hold the agreement of 1881 to be invalid, that the plaintiffs should be compelled to repay the large sums of money received by them as shareholders under the agreement, in order that the accounts, as between the G.N.W. & the W.U. may be adjusted.

The case will be heard at the next assizes.

C.P.R. Company's Telegraph.

Offices closed—Acadia Iron Mines, N.S.; Bass River, N.S.; Economy, N.S.; Five Islands, N.S.; Highland Village, N.S.; Mount Rose, N.S.; Port-au-Pique, N.S.; Shakespeare, Ont.; Woodslee, Ont.; Seguin Falls, Ont.

New offices—Camp McKinney, B. C.; Columbia, B.C.; Fort Steele, B.C.; Moyelle, B.C.; Angus, Que.; Bishops Crossing, Que.; Hall's Stream, Que.; High Forest, Que.; Marbleton, Que.; Randboro, Quebec.; Sawyerville, Que.; Hull Station, Que.

Since the Front St. fire, which badly damaged the C.P.R. wires, the various lines have been carried into the Toronto office by cables from the street poles. The protection against heavy electric light, or electric railway currents has been altered by substituting fuse wires for the electro magnetic breakers which have been in use for some years.

The first floor of the Burns & Murray building in Halifax, N.S., which was purchased by the Provincial Government a short time ago, has undergone a great transformation, & is now one of the finest office floors in the Dominion. The entrance on Hollis street, as well as the whole interior, is finished in American quartered oak, all panelled. The steps from the vestibule are of marble, & the floor is tiled in a pretty design of brown, grey & white. The ceiling is a neatly designed metal one. A hallway leads from the entrance in the centre to the stairways in the rear, & on either side are the telegraph & cable offices. The Commercial Cable Co.'s office is situated in the northwest corner, to the left of the entrance, & has oak counters the same as the other departments. The whole of the remainder of the north side of the floor is occupied by the C.P.R. telegraph offices, splendidly lighted from the windows on the Cheapside end of the building, while opposite, the south half of the floor is occupied by the Halifax & Bermuda Cable Co. The recorder & transmitter of the cable offices, & the operators' tables in the C.P.R. rooms are in view over the wide counters. The C.P.R. has always used a duplex wire to Montreal. To this equipment it is now adding quadruplex instruments, which make it possible at the same time, on one wire, to send 4 messages—2 simultaneously each way. All the operators in the C.P.R. office are expert typewriters, & the tables have been arranged for the use of either the pen or typewriter. In the rear of the respective operating rooms are the private offices of the Superintendent of the Cable Co., & the Manager of the C.P.R. Telegraphs. A portion of the basement floor is fitted up for the batteries, of which there are 500 cells of the gravity type. Adjoining this is the messengers' room. Another portion of this floor is used for the testing apparatus, etc., of the Cable Co. The wiring of the office was done by F. T. Jennings, Inspector of the Eastern Division C.P.R. Telegraphs, & is a very neat piece of work. Cables were used throughout. The new quarters are splendidly situated, are well lighted, airy & attractive, & by combining the three companies in what is practically one room, the interchange of business is greatly facilitated. The upper floors of the building are to be fitted up for Government offices.

At the annual convention of the Brotherhood of Railroad Telegraphers, which opens at Peoria, Ill., May 12, the C.P.R. telegraphers will have 9 representatives, & the G.T.R. 5. This will be the first time the G.T.R. men have been represented.

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