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Transcontinental Railway Report.

In our June issue we gave a brief advance summary of the interim report of the Transcontinental Ry. Commissioners, more extended reference to which will be of interest. The report was signed by F. B. Wade, Chairman, who died in May, shortly after the report had been completed, and whose place on the Commission has not yet been filled, C. A. Young having been appointed acting Chairman until such time as the new member is appointed.

The report deals with the work of the Commissioners from the date of organization in Sept., 1904, to Feb. 28, 1905. Permanent offices for the Commission have been obtained in the Corry Building, Ottawa, at a rental of \$8,500 a year. The Commissioners meet every week day when a quorum of two members is in town; the chief engineer attends all board meetings and takes part in the deliberations.

The first matter considered was as to what work should be undertaken during the then approaching autumn and winter. It was decided that as the G.T. Pacific Ry. Co. had had in hand the surveys from Winnipeg east to somewhere north of North Bay, and as it might prove desirable to purchase and take over these surveys, it would be well to first direct attention to placing in the field parties along the line from Moncton to Lake Abitibi. With regard to the route across the province of New Brunswick, as there was a great diversity of opinion as to whether a line across the centre of the province was obtainable at all, it was decided to run preliminary surveys from Moncton to Grand Falls by alternative routes, the one via Chipman, Fredericton and the valley of the St. John River to Grand Falls, and the other via or near Chipman direct across country to Grand Falls. As there was also a diversity of opinion as to whether the line further west should be located by the St. Maurice River and north of Lake Abitibi, or by the Mattawin River and south of Lake Abitibi, it was decided to explore both of these lines. It was also decided to ascertain if a location could be secured from Lake Clear down the River du Postes to St. Michael and on to Joliette. The survey parties for the several districts between the points named, having been organized and placed in the field, the work was prosecuted throughout the fall and winter. Subsequently additional parties were placed in the field between Lake Abitibi and Winnipeg, Man.

"The engineering work," the report states, "has been carried on under the supervision of the Chief Engineer, H. D. Lumsden, whose services and advice we have had to avail ourselves of in many other matters than

those strictly pertaining to engineering work, and which we have always found most valuable."

Early consideration was given to the desirability of purchasing the surveys, plans, etc., made by the G.T. Pacific Ry. Co., on the main line east of Winnipeg. It was deemed desirable that these should be secured as it would at once give the Commission a mass of valuable information, and negotiations were opened with the G.T.P. Ry. Co., Nov. 26, 1904. The terms upon which the Commissioners proposed to take over the

cost of the said surveys to be computed to Nov. 30, and all parties and materials in the field and elsewhere to be taken over by us on Dec. 1. (6) The accounting to commence forthwith and to be pushed through as rapidly as possible. (7) If necessary, a portion of the payment to be deferred until after a further appropriation by parliament to the Commission, such deferred payment to bear interest at the rate of 4%." The offer was finally accepted Jan. 13, 1905, and special auditors were appointed to go over the books and accounts of expenditure made in connection with the surveys. The audit was made under the supervision of the Commissioners' Assistant Engineer, M. J. Butler, who reported during its progress, "that he considered that 4-5 of section 3 of the surveys was not within the zone of the explorations which would have been made by the Commission upon the main line, and it was agreed as a result that the Commission would take over the cachés, equipment and outfits in connection with said section 3 and pay for 1-5 of the surveys made upon it, which would cover the portion which was reasonably within the zone of our explorations. The Commissioners agreed that if their chief engineer, after additional explorations, was of the opinion that any greater portion of section 3 was within the zone which would have been explored by the Commission, the difference would be added to the amount that we would pay. The amount arrived at as the cost of these surveys, including the supplies on hand, and 1-5 of section 3, is \$289,863.67, including interest up to Nov. 30, 1904. The total cost to the company of the surveys upon the main line east of Winnipeg, including the whole of section 3, was \$318,308.24, including interest from the date of payment to Nov. 30, 1904." The reason the Commission agreed to take over the cachés and supplies on the remaining 4-5ths of section 3, was because it was desirable to have the supplies in that part of the country, where they could be easily dropped down the streams, north, to the line projected by the Commission. It was also agreed

to pay for the cost of the parties working in the field upon that portion of the main line taken over by the Commission from and after Dec. 1, 1904, up to the date at which they were taken over. The cost of these parties has not been accurately ascertained as yet. Previous to the purchase of these surveys the Commissioners had sent out parties to survey a route between Winnipeg and Lake Abitibi, the headquarters of the district engineers in charge being Winnipeg (afterwards changed to Rat Portage, Ont.), Nepigon and North Bay, Ont. The Commissioners pro-



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surveys were:—(1) We propose to purchase the surveys of the G.T.P. east of Winnipeg, other than those which have reference to its proposed branch lines to Thunder Bay and North Bay; also its depots, cachés, tents, outfits, provisions, instruments, etc. (2) We will pay for these their actual cost, allowing interest at the rate of 4% from the time the bills are actually paid by the company. (3) The cost to be determined by accountants appointed by us, who will examine the books and vouchers under the supervision of our engineer. (4) All maps, plans, field books and other data in connection with the said surveys to be handed over to us. (5) The

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