Meetings.

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

The half-yearly meeting of the shareholders in this company was held in London, England, April 14th, Mr. R. Potter in the chair.

The report was presented and taken as read.

The *Chairman*, in moving its adoption, said that there was some difficulty in making an accurate comparison of the last six months of 1869 with 1868. In the first place, a portion of the maintenance and renewal charges had been placed to capital, and they had also brought into the account of the last six months a sum of £18,000 available balance, and on the other hand they had charged the account with £42,500 due to the Buffalo Company, thereby making the revenue bear a larger proportion of rent-charge than for the same period properly belonged to it. Taking a general comparison of 1869 with 1868, although there was not any material progress in what they were all anxious to obtain—viz., the net results available for cash dividends, yet setting aside exceptional circumstances which had occurred, progress had been made. They had lost by the snowstorms of the early part of the year and the floods of October a sum of £50,000. The goods traffic showed an increase of £35,000, and the working traffic expenses also showed an increase £35,000. That result was explained by the fact that the freightage had fallen from 16s. 3d. to 15s 7d. per ton. If the same rates had ruled there would have been an increase of £42,534 earned from this source instead of £24,500 which had been the case. They had done more business, but at a less rate per mile, than in 1868. In 1868, £323,000 was charged for maintenance and renewals; and in 1869, £324,000 was charged. In his opinion both these charges were exceptionally high. They had been mainly caused by the wretched character of the rails sent out by first-class English makers in 1867 and 1868, and which it had since been found necessary to take out of the track. He estimated that £300,000 would be necessary for maintenance and renewals during 1870. During 1870 there would be an exceptional charge of from £10,000 to £12,000, caused by permanent repairs to bridges and culverts washed away by the storms of 1869. The reduction of the rates for freight had arisen almost entirely upon through traffic. About one-third of the goods business of the Grand Trunk of Canada was through traffic. The rates were rather better now than they had been, and he hoped that they would shortly be as good if not better than they were in 1869. The condition of railway affairs in America was more favourable than in 1868 and 1869. There was now a spirit of co-operation and harmony among them which had not been the case for many years. The Grand Trunk had ordered 800 additional box cars, 100 of which were already upon the line. They were delivered at the rate of from 10 to 15 per week, and until they had some 200 or 300 of them running he was not sanguine of any material increase in the goods traffic. There would always be considerable fluctuations in the weekly traffic returns of this company from circumstances over which the directors had to control. It had for many years been admitted that the passenger accommodation of the Grand Trunk had been inefficient; arrangements had, however, been made to improve this, and about twenty-five of Pullman's palace sleeping and drawing-room cars would be placed on the line next July. They had received £193,000 on the Second Equipment bonds taken by the public at 85. Out of this sum £93,000 would be expended in capital outlay for strictly remunerative purposes. They had 229,000 of Second Equipment bonds still unissued. The board did not intend to issue them until the spring of 1871, and at that time they were of opinion that they would realize par. The board did not propose to raise any further capital until they saw the outlay already made bearing fruit in the shape of revenue. The company was now out of debt in Canada, had sufficient floating capital to pay its debts, and its credit was good. In the course of two weeks they would also be out of debt in England. This result would effect a considerable saving in Canada. The chairman, at considerable length, advocated the desirability of building a bridge across the Niagara, from Fort Erie to Buffalo, at a cost £240,000. The bridge would at once save them £16,000 per year ferry tolls, and would also greatly facilitate and develop the traffic. Certain preliminary negotiations, however, were still incomplete, but unless the construction was commenced within a fortnight of the present time the bridge could not be completed until the end of 1872 instead of 1871. The commencement of the bridge would necessitate an outlay of some £20,000, and the board were not willing to undertake the risk without the sanction of the shareholders.

Captain Tyler seconded the motion, and express his belief that the bridge would bring them a net revenue of £50,000 per annum.

Messrs. Creak and *Adams* respectively attacked the management of Mr. Brydges in Canada, and called for his removal.

Mr. C. Legg, *Mr. Prance* and others, addressed the shareholders, chiefly in support of the board.

The motion was adopted, and a formal resolution, authorizing the expenditure of 20,000*l.* on the bridge, having been sanctioned. the meeting was made special, and the retiring directors were re-elected. The proceedings then terminated.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

The half yearly meeting was held in London, England, April 13th. The report and accounts have already been published. In moving the adoption of the report, the chairman remarked, that the capital account, it was satisfactory to find, was now in a good state for the purposes of the company. The settlement of the Government loan was of the most satisfactory character, and would have an effect in favor of the company, calculating on the principle of compound interest. On 1st January they paid off 142,203*l.* of the first preference bonds due to the Canadian Government; the receipts on capital had been 207,578*l.*, of which 203,624*l.* was on account of the second installment of the 5 per cent preference stock. Three installments of 142,000*l.* each of the amount due to the Government remained to be paid, but which were provided for by the further installments, amounting together to 438,462*l.*, on the preference stock, and which would fall due so as to meet the payments due by the company. The arrears of calls—1,300*l.*—had been paid, so that this account would be henceforth clear. The expenditure on capital account had been 94.843*l.* in the half-year for additional rolling stock, new cars, renewals, and in the arrangements for connecting the broad with the narrow gauge, and bringing the Great Western stations into connection with the through lines, by which a considerable increase of traffic would accrue. He had last year stated that the local traffic had not only not increased, but had to some extent retrograded. Since July, 1866, it had fallen off about $15,000 a year. The expenditure incurred in these additions and improvements was already bearing fruit, and the cost of the new cars would save them about $45,000 a year for car hire. The receipts from revenue were £424,000, and in the corresponding period of 1869, £423,300. The local earnings had increased 12·73, and the foreign earnings had decreased 6·14 per cent. The disbursements on revenue account were heavy, principally in the item of maintenance of way; 4,717 tons of new rail having been laid down during the half-year, in addition to 1,100 tons of steel rails. This was very largely in excess of Mr. Reid's estimate of the annual requirements, but he accounted for it by the increased weight of traffic and enhanced speed, besides which it was obvious that some of the rails sent out from this country were not up to the mark. The board believed that the proper course would be gradually to introduce steel rails, which were now proved to be suitable to the climate of North America, throughout the entire line. Referring to the plan for making a railway tunnel under the river Detroit, he said that he believed it would be carried out successfully, and at a moderate cost; and when that was done, the renewal fund would enable them to write off the value of the steam ferryboat, which would be no longer wanted. The loss on the conversion of the American currency has been £37,000, against £70,000 in the corresponding half of the previous year, the average value of gold for the half-year having been 126 as against 131 in the former period. Speaking to the paragraph in the report in reference to the prudence of the friends of the Great Western and of the Michigan Central obtaining from the Ontario Legislature a permissive and protective charter for a loop line to occupy the territory south of the maine line, he explained that if the Michigan Central had the control of the proposed line, the traffic would come over the Great Western, otherwise it would be diverted, and the result would be to reduce the Great Western to almost a local line. It was stated that the local traffic on the new line would pay about six per cent., and it would be valuable also as giving to the Great Western an opening to Buffalo. He hoped the meeting would give the directors their confidence to watch the matter in their interests, and he promised that any plan which might be adopted should be submitted to the shareholders, and their opinion taken before any action was taken. The revenue on the Detroit and Milwaukee line was about the same as in the previous year, but there had been a very large outlay of revenue for capital purposes, and in consequence the Detroit and Milwaukee had been unable to pay the dividends due to the Great Western in money, but had paid it in 7 per cent. bonds. The dividend now proposed to be paid was at the rate of 5¼ per cent., free of income tax, carrying forward a balance of £2,054. This was an improvement which he hoped would be satisfactory to all.

Mr. Cannan objected to so much of the report as by implication committed them to any expenditure of capital on the southern line. If they passed this paragraph, millions would be taken out of the shareholder's pockets, and their dividends brought down probably to two per cent. He moved an amendment disapproving of the 9th paragraph, which referred to the subject.

Mr. Tollemache thought it would have been better to have issued only half the preference stock last year instead of the whole, and complained of the heavy charges for compensation for damage and other items.

Mr. Homan (Vice-President) explained that the proposal of the directors would not commit the shareholders further than to empower the board to watch over their interests. Should it be deemed desirable to make the line, the scheme would be submitted to a meeting of the company, and the opinion of the shareholders taken. The district through which the line would pass had very much increased in population and wealth, and that it would be made was certain, and if it were made by any company whose interests were hostile to the Great Western interests, it would seriously injure them and depreciate the value of their property 50 per cent. If it were made by themselves or by a company friendly to them, it would bring them into direct connection with the Erie which now carried more traffic than the New York Central, and charged less, and with the Midland, which by that time probably would be completed. The proposed line would be about 140 miles in length, uniting with the Great Western at Glencoe, and running to Buffalo, and the estimated cost was between £600,000 and £700,000.

The amendment was negatived by a large majority. The report was then put and carried.

On the motion of Mr. G. Smith, the special