

MONTREAL AND LACHINE RAIL-ROAD COMPANY.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Proprietors of the Capital Stock of the Montreal and Lachine Railroad Company, held on Tuesday, the 15th of February, 1848, at the Offices of the Company, No. 3, Great St. James Street, pursuant to notice, the Honorable James Ferrier, President of the Company, having taken the chair, in accordance with the requirements of the Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Company, (Mr. Macculloch acting as Secretary,) opened the proceedings with some general remarks touching the construction and present condition of the works, and the future prospects of the Company.

The Secretary read the advertisement calling the meeting, and then read the following Report:—

REPORT

OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE MONTREAL AND LACHINE RAIL-ROAD COMPANY.

GENTLEMEN :

At the first Annual General Meeting of the Stockholders after the actual commencement of operations, it is right that, with the accounts of the sums expended and received, the Directors should submit a brief statement of the circumstances attending the construction and opening of the Railroad, and of their views as to the future prospects of the Company.

After their appointment on the 27th June, 1846, and the election of the Hon. James Ferrier, (then absent in Europe,) as President, and of William Molson, Esquire, as Vice-President, the Directors lost no time in carrying the Act into effect.

On the 8th July, 1846, Mr. W. Casey, a gentleman who had been the Chief Engineer employed in the construction of the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain Railroad, and whose character for ability and experience stood high in the profession, was engaged as Engineer, and commenced the examination of the ground between Montreal and Lachine, for the purpose of ascertaining the most eligible line, as it was hoped that the one originally laid down by Mr. H. H. Macfarlane, and shown on the plan submitted to the Legislature might be so far improved as to avoid a portion of the swamp between the Canal and the high grounds. Mr. Ferrier's absence unfortunately deprived the Directors of the benefit of the intimate knowledge of the ground which he had derived from repeated personal inspection, and some time was consumed in anxious endeavours to avoid what afterwards proved to be unavoidable. In the meantime Mr. Casey's health, which had been delicate from the time of his arrival, declined rapidly, and he died in the early part of August following. On the recommendation of Mr. Morton, the Chief Engineer of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, Mr. T. C. Ruggles was engaged as Engineer, and Mr. Ferrier having returned to Canada, the examination of the ground, and the levelling and other preliminary operations, were completed with all possible despatch; and the line was finally determined, so that the plan and book of reference required by the Act were deposited on the 17th October, 1846. The Engineer prepared his specifications and estimates, and tenders having been advertised for, the contract for the earth-work, wharf, piling, &c., was taken by Messrs. Brown & Watson of this city on the 8th December, 1846. The gauge of the road, and the kind of rail to be employed, engaged the anxious attention of the Directors; nor was it until the President, who had used every endeavour to make himself acquainted with the subject of Railroads while in Europe, had made a journey to the United States for the express purpose of obtaining the best information which could be got there, that the Directors decided in favor of the ordinary gauge of 4-8½, and of the (American) T rail. The exact pattern of the rail was then determined, and the contract given the Coalbrookdale Company in England. Mr. Millar, an experienced superintendent of locomotive engines and carriages, from Scotland, was engaged, and under his superintendence the carriages were built in Montreal, and two engines were contracted for with Messrs. Kimmonds and Co. of Dundee, with the excellence of whose workmanship he was well acquainted.

The first ground was broken at the Lachine end of the road on the first of May last, and every effort was made to open the road during the same season. The Directors felt this was a point of the greatest importance for the Company, as it would enable them so far to test the works, as to have everything in readiness for the commencement next season (1848), and would, by assuring the public that the road would then be in operation, enable merchants and others to make their arrangements accordingly. By great exertion this point was attained, and the road was formally opened on the 19th November last, and on the following Thursday it was opened to the public, and so continued until the 22d December, when it was closed on account of the small amount of travel and business usual at that season of the year. Although some sacrifice was undoubtedly made to attain this object, yet the Directors believe that this sacrifice has been more than compensated by the advantages gained.

The Books of the Company and the accounts in detail have been examined and certified as correct by the Auditors, as provided by the Act of Incorporation, and are open to the Stockholders, so that the Directors do not in this report state more than the general results.

The total sum expended to the 31st December, 1847, is.....	£61,752	2	1
Of this sum there has been paid—			
For earth-work, timber, &c., including the wharf at Lachine.....	£19,945	2	1
For iron rails, on account of 900 tons.....	11,720	7	7
For lands purchased and land damages.....	12,095	15	0
For the erection of terminus buildings at Montreal and Lachine.....	3,800	11	6
For fencing and gates.....	1,934	3	4
For locomotive and carriages.....	8,230	17	6
For engineering, surveying, and law expenses.....	1,937	17	5
For other miscellaneous charges.....	2,087	7	8

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The total cost of the Road and Stock of the Company when completed, will probably be about £110,000, or about £35,000 more than the original capital subscribed for, or £10,000 more than the total amount of stock which the Company are empowered to raise. This increase of expense over the first rough estimate has arisen chiefly from the difficulty and expense of passing the swampy ground on the line having been greater than was anticipated, and from the very high compensation awarded to the proprietors whose lands were taken or cut through. The wharf at Lachine is also more extensive than it was at first supposed it would be; and the stock of locomotives and carriages is also heavier than was at first thought necessary. The engines are heavier and of greater power; and in consequence of the failure of the contractors to send out those ordered in Scotland, it was requisite to purchase an additional locomotive from the United States, so as to be ready for the opening of the road. The weight of the rail (63 lbs. per yard) is also greater than was at first proposed. A circumstance also which must always be borne in mind in considering the cost of the road is the short distance over which it runs, whereby the cost of the buildings and other conveniences at the termini, and of the land required for the termini themselves bears a larger proportion to the whole cost of the work than if the line had been longer. Yet notwithstanding the circumstances above stated, and the fact that the line runs for a considerable distance through a large city and its suburbs; and that ample land and accommodation has been secured not only for the present but the future requirements of the road, it will be found that the cost has not exceeded, if it has reached the average cost of roads similarly situated, either in Europe or in America.

The swampy ground which extends over more than three miles of the line, and the depth of the moss or soft black earth upon it, which averages about twelve feet, and, in places exceeds twenty, was found extremely difficult and costly to deal with. After much consideration, it became evident to the Directors that no embankment which could be made over it would, within such time as it would be possible to allow, become sufficiently firm to bear the rails without manifest danger, while the cost of such embankment, without the aid of locomotive power, would be ruinously great, there was no resource but to adopt piling,