

The Victoria Jubilee Bridge.

Back in the fifties, Montreal could not boast of a better connection with the railway to the south than by the primitive mode of a ferry across the St. Lawrence River. The terminus of the G.T.R., then called the St. Lawrence & Atlantic R.R., running from Portland, Me., was Longueuil, at which place the Co.'s steamers were in readiness to ferry the passengers to Montreal, the most important city of all the British possessions in America, & one which at that time warranted the expectation of its becoming an immense metropolis. The population of Montreal was between 60,000 & 70,000, more than half of whom were of French extraction.

Freight was transported in barges & during the winter sleighs were resorted to as conveyances for passengers & merchandise. Twice a year there was a stoppage of traffic from one to three weeks during the fall & spring, when the mighty St. Lawrence was impassable. On one occasion a number of passengers were being carried across the ice-bridge in a sleigh, driven by one of the G.T.R. teamsters, when a casualty occurred which proved fatal to one of the number, the others narrowly escaping. When nearing the middle of the stream the whole field of ice, many miles in extent, began to move, but fortunately stopped after going a short dis-

tance, taking the trowel & assisting in preparing the mortar bed for the first stone in the first pier of the great undertaking.

On Nov. 24, 1859, Vice-President Blackwell, Hon. G. E. Cartier, Attorney-General; J. Hodges, A. M. Ross, C.E.; W. Shanley, Major Campbell, Messrs. Gzowski, Macpherson, Forsyth, Captain Rhodes & others, were the first to cross

the Victoria Bridge. Mr. Blackwell was on his way to England to attend the Grand Trunk meeting, where he was able to report himself as coming "via Victoria Bridge."

On Aug. 25, 1860, the bridge was officially inaugurated, & the last rivet driven by H.R.H. the young Prince of Wales, on which occasion a grand banquet was held near the bridge, & addresses were given by the Prince, the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Blackwell, A. M. Ross, C.E., Mr. Hodges & others.

To commemorate this event, Mr. Blackwell had a medal prepared by J. S. Wyon, Chief Engraver of Her Majesty's seals, a gold one

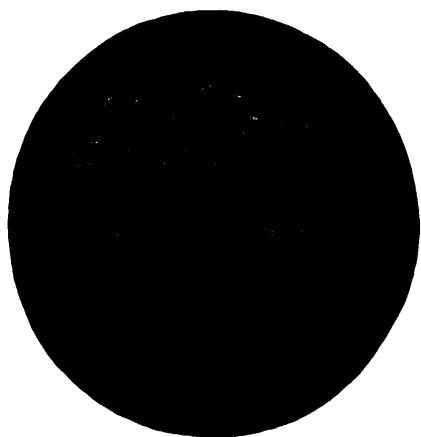


ST. LAWRENCE & ATLANTIC R.R.
LONGUEUIL STATION - 1855.

going east may have observed on his left a gigantic boulder placed upon cut stonemason work, surrounded by a picket fence. This boulder was dug up in the vicinity of the bridge while the latter was under construction, & was placed where it now stands by the workmen employed on the construction, in commemoration of the immigrants who died from ship fever during the years 1847-8. The boulder bears the following inscription:—"To preserve from desecration the remains of 6,000 immigrants, who died of ship fever, A.D. 1847-8. This stone is erected by the workmen of Peto, Brassey & Betts, employed in the construction of the Victoria Bridge, A.D. 1859."

At the time of the completion of the Victoria Tubular Bridge in 1860 it was considered the eighth wonder of the world, & was the admiration of not only the promoters & the G.T.R. Co., but of all Canadians & others who looked upon it. Through increase in traffic, & with the onward march of time & improvement, the old bridge had become inefficient to meet the demands of the G.T.R. System, & the management concluded it must be replaced with a structure which would meet all needs. Accordingly a new open work steel bridge, with double tracks, carriage ways, & foot walks for pedestrians, now rests on the piers which held the old Victoria Bridge for so many years.

On December 13, 1898, the second track across the new Victoria Jubilee Bridge over the St. Lawrence River at Montreal was completed, & the bridge opened for traffic with a double track, the first train to pass over it being the St. John's local, with passenger engine No. 265, Conductor Lavigne & Engineer Day. While apparently of small moment in itself, this fact marked an interesting event



SOUVENIR MEDAL, OPENING OF VICTORIA TUBULAR BRIDGE.



tance, & all escaped in safety, except one man who died from exhaustion & fright.

Thus, it may be imagined by those living in the present period that great difficulties & dangers were experienced by travellers to & from Montreal in the old days, before the G.T.R. erected that wonder of engineering skill, the Victoria Tubular Bridge, which stood the test of a heavy traffic for nearly 40 years.

It is probable there never was an undertaking so beset with difficulties as the building of the Victoria Tubular Bridge at Montreal. The contractors had to contend not only with a rapid stream two miles wide but with shelves of ice from 3 to 7 ft. in thickness, & from 15 to 20 square miles in extent.

The engineers of the Victoria Tubular Bridge were Robert Stephenson & Alex. M. Ross, C.E. Mr. Ross, who had been connected with many large railways & public works in Europe, came to Canada in 1852, & after conferring with prominent men in this country, & the management of the G.T.R., with a view to bridging the St. Lawrence, returned to England in the fall, after suggesting a tubular bridge to connect the north with the south shore.

The first stone for the first pier of the old bridge was laid July 22, 1854, by Sir Cusack Roney, along with Vice-President Holmes, J. Hodges, A. M. Ross, C.E., & other gentlemen, who were also joined by Lady Roney, Mrs. Hodges, Mrs. Maitland, & others, each

of which was presented to the Prince, & a bronze one to each of the officers of the G.T.R. It bears a fine impression in relief of the Prince as he then appeared, with the Prince's feathers on the reverse side, & the words, "Welcome, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, visited Canada & Inaugurated the Victoria Bridge, 1860."

The following particulars respecting the old Victoria Tubular Bridge may be interesting:

Length of ironwork	6,502 ft.
Total length	9,144 ft.
Number of piers	24
Number of iron tubes	25
Width of centre span	330 ft.
Width of side spans	242 ft.
Thickness of centre piers at summer water level	28 ft.
Thickness of side piers at summer water level	18 ft.
Material of piers	Limestone
Quantity of masonry (piers and abutments)	100,000 cubic yards
Total weight of masonry	223,000 tons
Height of tubes	18 1/2 to 22 ft.
Width of tubes	16 ft.
Total weight of tubes	9,044 tons
Height from water	60 ft.
Grade of tubes to centre	1 in 130
Cost of bridge	\$7,000,000
Engineers	A. M. Ross & Robert Stephenson
Builders	Peto, Brassey & Betts, under the superintendency of J. Hodges.

The traveller on leaving the Montreal side of the bridge



H. R. H. THE PRINCE OF WALES AND SUITE PRESENT AT
OPENING OF VICTORIA TUBULAR BRIDGE, 1860.