

RAILWAY MATTERS

M. VICTOR DE LESSERS has arrived in Bombay on a tour of inquiry respecting the overland railway to India, which has been undertaken by his father.

THE Illinois Legislature has passed a law making drunkenness on the part of railroad officials during the hours of employment a criminal offence.

THE extent of new railroad opened last year in the United States was 3,993 miles, as compared with 7,340 miles in 1872. The total length of line in operation in the United States at the close of 1873 was 71,969 miles. The following States have now each upwards of 5,000 miles of railroad in operation:—Illinois, 6,530 miles; New York, 5,417 miles, and Pennsylvania, 5,724 miles.

BARON REUTER writes to contradict the statement recently made through the public press, that the Persian Railway concession had been annulled. He states that under Article 8 of the concession he was bound to commence the railway work within fifteen months from the date of its signature, that is before the 25th October last; and in point of fact by that time nearly two miles of earthworks had been completed, and seventy-five miles of the route were surveyed.

How a railroad opening up a new country creates business for itself is demonstrated very remarkably in official statistics accompanying the message of the Governor of the Territory of Colorado. A comparison of the United States census of 1870 with the territorial census of 1873 shows that between those years all the counties on the line of the Denver and Rio Grande have either trebled or quadrupled in assessed wealth and population.

ALTITUDE OF RAILWAYS.—A Mexican paper says that the highest point in the world where railroads are now in operation is at Apizaco, on the Vera Cruz and Mexico Railway, 7,478 feet above the level of the sea. The next highest is on the Central Pacific, in the Nevada range, 7,111 feet above the level of the sea. The third is at Arequipa, an important city in Peru, 7,000 feet above the level of the sea; and, under the Peruvian railway system, the work is to be continued and is expected to reach double that altitude at the ancient capital of Cuzco, 14,000 feet above the level of the sea.

A COMPANY seeks for incorporation, with power to construct a line from the Georgian Bay, at or near the mouth of French River to a point near the south-east shore of Lake Nipissing, with powers of extension to the southward, to connect with the railway system of Ontario, and to the eastward to connect with the railways of the Ottawa valley. The capital stock is fixed at one million dollars, with power to increase the amount. It is provided that the railway shall be commenced within five years, and completed within ten years from the passing of the Act.

THE Stockholder gives the following account of the first trip made by an express train over the newly-opened Canada Southern road:—"Two or three weeks ago, when the train known as the Chicago express on the New York Central road had made some thirty-five miles from Detroit towards this city on the Great Western Railway of Canada, word came by telegraph that a sudden flood had carried away certain bridges and culverts, and made the road ahead impassable for the time. The conductor, probably acting under orders, took the back track to Detroit, where his train was switched over to the Canada Southern road. On the track of that company, entirely strange both to conductor and engine-driver, the train was run through, 256 miles, to the International Bridge to make the connection with the New York Central. None of those in charge knew even where the watering stations were. The engine, nevertheless, kept its speed. When convenient creeks or rivers were reached, holes were cut in the ice, and the brakemen filled the tender with buckets. To recover the time lost in this mode of watering, the train was urged at accelerated speed. The road is new, not as yet ballasted, and slightly undulating, accordingly, as is the case with American

new roads generally, full of hills and hollows; but the rails were fresh and sound and made of steel. No accident ensued, but the passengers found out how much 'ground and lofty tumbling' could be had without charge on a new road in an express train at unslackened speed. An Englishman (the inevitable Englishman always brought in to give the point to an American story) getting out of the train at one of the stops for water, going forward, asked the engine-driver, 'Where are we?' 'Don't know; never was here before!' 'Where are we going?' 'New York.'

NEW YORK RAILROAD SIGNAL OFFICE.—The signal office is a little room at the northern entrance of the depot, about 20ft. above the pavement. It is reached by a narrow passage way from the west side, and when you get into it you see a sight which made Jones go into an unmistakable surprise. Looking down the depot there was a space of more than 600ft. extent by 200ft. breadth, covered with an iron roof and lighted from the top. Trains of cars were coming and going incessantly, but no confusion was perceptible, and everything, as my friend said, "went on like clock-work." There are two operators in service here, relieving each other during a tour of duty which extends from 5 a.m. to 11 at night, their motions being regulated by a large and costly clock. The gentleman in charge received us very politely, but before we had hardly thanked him we heard the sharp and rapid ring of a bell overhead. It was marked "Ninety-sixth to Seventy-fifth street." "You see," said the operator, "there is a train coming in, and it wants to know if we are ready for it." "But how does it ring that bell?" said Jones. "By electricity," was the reply. "This is Hall's patent which works like a charm." In a few minutes another bell rang. It was marked "Sixty-first to Fifty-sixth street." "The train now reports itself again," said the operator, "and this means notice either to prepare for it or to signal it to stop." He touched a telegraphic machine, and then said, "This throws up the signal to come in," and sure enough in a few minutes the train arrived. One hundred and forty trains arrive and depart in a day, including the Central Hudson, the Harlem, and New Haven Roads, and hence the signal service is one of incessant activity. The operator then informed us that each road has four starting bells of different keys, all of which were rung by him by means of electricity. Three started passenger trains and one ordered out the cars as soon as emptied. "You see," said he, "this train which has just come in. The passengers are gone, and I want to know if the baggage is taken out." He touched a stop and rang a bell, as he said, 600ft. distant. In a moment a bell overhead struck twice. "Baggage is out," he said, "otherwise he would have struck once, and would have waited. I must order the train out. Do you see that locomotive just ahead? Well, now, see it move." He touched a stop, and I saw the letter Z displayed at a window in a side building. "He hears a bell ring also," said the operator. The engine backed down and hitched to the empty train and the Z disappeared. "I shall now send him out," said the operator, as he touched another stop, and the empty train at once moved forward and left the station. The letters X Y Z, I may add parenthetically, designate the locomotives of the Harlem, Hudson River, and New Haven Roads, and are the signals to back down and connect with trains. "I am now about to send out a passenger train," continued the operator, "a half hour ago I struck twice to open the doors and let the passengers pass from the sitting-room to the cars. Now I shall soon close that very door, but first I must stop checking baggage." A small knob was touched by his finger. "Now," said he, "the next trunk that comes must wait for another train. There (another touch with the finger), the baggage car is hauled out and switched on to the right track. Five minutes more and she is off. Here goes to 'close the door bell' (at a touch) no one passes in after this. Now I say 'all aboard' (a touch) and we hear the distant voice of the conductor echoing through the vaulted roof. "Now it moves (another touch), and the rumbling movement was immediately perceptible, and in a few moments the train left the station. As the cars go up the road they signal their progress by ringing bells in the same office until they have got through the city streets, and thus give assurance of a clear track for all that may follow. The station will contain twelve trains of thirteen cars each, and by means of this wonderful system they are all managed with despatch and safety.—*Troy Times.*