

men passing on the river, and the fiery profanity that marked a part of it was noted. "Oh," said my companion, "they swear by note on the river—they always did, pretty high notes, too. But now-a-days it is different on the railroads. For instance, here on the Grand Trunk, you have to govern your language and be mighty particular about your swearing, for you are liable to be warned by the boss, or even discharged for profanity." One of us thought of Boston, where cleanliness is placed almost ahead of godliness and where swearers and smokers are alike fined, and he wondered at the rapid westward spread of Athenian culture. But it is after all a good thing, and whether Mr. Hayes has instituted this among other reforms of the great road he is doing so much to perfect, or whether it is an ordinance ante-dating him, the community should be thankful that a practical embargo is somewhere laid and enforced upon public cursing.

The panorama was a striking one. Although, in the changes of recent times, the schooners and barques of twenty years ago, with their white sails and graceful shapes, were rarely to be seen, the variety of other more modern craft was great. Here, coming up the river, was a modest Canadian group, a wooden propeller, painted green, towing a schooner barge of the same color.—Next to them a swift screw steamer of the Erie line with arches and twin funnels.—Then a Cleveland passenger side-wheel, three-decker boat—a saucy tug—a "sand-sucker" scow. Passing down, behold! a huge straight-stemmed whaleback, with her consort, a cigar-shaped steel boat. After them, a string of ordinary looking barges, which were once fore-and-afters or barkentines, as handsome as sailing yachts, but are now, their spars all cut down, trailed after a puffing tug.—A roar of a siren steam-whistle drew attention to a black ore-carrier pursuing her stately way under low steam. Close to her a swift excursion steamer crowded with passengers and gorgeous with flags.—Then a steam yacht, all white and gold.—A raft of timber, which seemed to fill not only the channel, but the landscape, compelled the ferry boats, little and big, to await its leisurely movement down the current attended by little tugs. Next, the course being for a moment clear, there appeared more steel steamers, more tows, stone-scows, sand boats, the Toledo boat, the Port Huron boat, the island steamers; last and stateliest of all, the magnificent—there is no other word—three-funneled "North West," a shimmer of white paint, as big and graceful as an ocean liner. Where else in the wide world is to be seen such a panoramic view? Nowhere on fresh water, surely.

PIONEER TELEGRAPHY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Reference was made in our columns a year or two ago, when the Klondike discoveries were new, to projected arrangements for telegraph lines through northern British Columbia to the gold fields. And this brought to mind the great Russian and American telegraph enterprise of thirty odd years ago. Upon the temporary collapse of the Atlantic cable enterprise in 1858, when the cable first laid ceased to work, it was thought that the difficulties of ocean telegraphy were insurmountable, and the necessity for telegraphic connection with Europe having become urgent, it was determined to build a telegraph line up through British Columbia to Alaska, and thence through the centre of Asia to Europe, a cable being intended to cross Behring Strait. Hundreds of miles of this line were built through Cariboo and Cassiar districts of British Columbia. With the successful laying of the Atlantic cable in 1866, however, the partially constructed overland route was abandoned. Wm. T. Jennings, C.E., who in the autumn of 1897 went to Dyea and beyond, inspecting northwestern British Columbia routes, by order of the Canadian Government, told *The Monetary Times* that fragments of poles and great quantities of wire were then to be seen along the route, both at Telegraph Creek and south of it, which had lain there since the days of the Alaska and Russia telegraph. The name of Telegraph Creek, by the way, is derived from the enterprise in question.

In connection with this enterprise an extremely interesting story appears in the August issue of the *British Columbia Mining Record*, written by the late P. J. Leech, C.E., shortly before his death in July last. That gentleman was engaged in the month of June, 1866, by the Western Union Telegraph Com-

pany, which was then building the line northward through British Columbia—intending to carry it to Behring Straits, which should be crossed by a cable, and continue the wires to St. Petersburg, in Russia, there to connect with other European capitals and with the British Islands—a roundabout route, to be sure.

Mr. Leech's duty was to survey the line and examine the country through which it passed; determine the latitudes and longitudes of the telegraph stations, which were to be 25 miles apart; make regular meteorological observations and report generally. With him were Edmund Conway, the superintendent of the work; T. Elwyn, stipendiary magistrate, who was sent by the Government at the request of the telegraph company, and W. Burrage, one of the company's quartermasters. The working party was then some 60 miles W.N.W. of Quesnelle.

Previous to this, in 1865, namely, it should be explained, several exploring parties had been sent out by the Western Union Co., to find the best line of route, as near the coast as possible, so that supplies could be got by the rivers to the stations, but keeping clear of the coast range of mountains. A man of the name of Burns had explored a route from Quesnelle to Fort Fraser, 135 miles, and his line was adopted. At the time Leech writes Burns was further on, exploring from Fort Fraser to Skeena River, 270 miles.

A graphic picture of the every-day operations of the band of line-builders, in that little-known country a third of a century ago, is thus given by Mr. Leech's paper: "The line of route having been selected a surveyor, J. McClure, having a rough sketch of the country, went ahead with two or three axemen and blazed the trees, keeping as straight a course as the nature of the country would permit. Then came the choppers, about 80 men, who cut down all the trees within a width of 12 feet. Next, a man who paced distances of 70 yards and at the end of each such distance drove a stake in the ground. After him came a party of Chinamen, who dug holes where the stakes had been driven; then a party of axemen who cut poles on which to string the telegraph wire; next, the pole-setters, whose duty it was to nail the bracket on the pole, place the insulator on the bracket, and then set the pole upright in the hole, filling in the earth and stone, and tramping all well down. Last of all came the wire party, who strung the wire upon the poles."

Thus at the end of each day, adds Mr. Leech's narrative, we had telegraphic communication with civilization [by means of the continuous line, and a ground wire no doubt]. But besides this party there were others employed in making trails, building bridges over streams, and making rafts at the crossings of rivers. Supplies were brought from Quesnelle by trains of horses and mules, and the line-builders had driven a band of horned cattle with them, which ensured ample supply of fresh meat.

It is not possible for us to follow closely the adventures of this curious and adventurous enterprise. But we may note that by September, 1866, the expedition having reached Kispiox—the junction of the Bulkley River with the Skeena, 130 miles from the mouth of the latter—work was stopped for the season. The party built a big house at this point and called it Fort Stager, in honor, no doubt, of Anson B. Stager, now deceased, one of the finest of the many able administrative men who have been from time to time connected with the service of the Western Union Telegraph. What is said of the country hereabout may now be noted. "I counted 24 different kinds of fruits growing wild," says Mr. Leech, "raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and currants among them." Between Quesnelle and West Road river is heavily timbered. From Fort Fraser to the Skeena River, he adds, the country gets more open and park-like, "the red-top and blue-joint grass growing so high that horned cattle cannot be seen in it."

An exploring expedition was next organized to proceed by sea to Stikine, and up the Stikine river to the Great Canon, 170 miles from the mouth of the river, and then to go towards the Yukon, to find where Burns had struck the Naas River. Boats were built to take the whole party to Fort Simpson, which they reached on October 18th, whence the Hudson's Bay steamer "Otter" and the Western Union Telegraph steamer "Munsford" took all hands down to New Westminster, B.C.—all hands, that is, except Leech, who with a Frenchman, named Frank Bourgeois, three Indians and the wife of one of them, were to get to Stikine in an Indian canoe. After a risky journey,