

**The Grand Chief Conductor.**

A SHORT biography of Mr. Calvin S. Wheaton, appears in the *Railway Conductor's Monthly* for January. From that article the following facts are gleaned:

Mr. Wheaton was born in Seneca, N. Y., Dec. 4th, 1846. When sixteen years of age he commenced his apprenticeship under a master builder, and at nineteen was in full possession of his trade, which occupied his time until Nov. 30, 1871, when he entered the service of the Northern Central Railway Company, as brakeman; August 23, 1872, he was promoted to conductor, and served in that capacity, and that of yardmaster, until he left the service of the company in September, 1883. The only break in this period of service was in 1882, when he was offered a good position on the Missouri Pacific Railway, at St. Louis, Mo., whither he went, but in about a month, under a change of officers, he returned to active service with the old company.

Mr. Wheaton left the service of his company to accept the position and salary of Grand Chief Conductor of the Order of Railway Conductors, with a leave of absence, longer, we believe, than had ever before been granted any employee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company; granted on account of his long and faithful service, and he to-day enjoys the confidence and respect of every member of the official staff of the company.

Mr. Wheaton was elected Grand Chief Conductor of the Order of Railway Conductors, at St. Louis, Mo., in October, 1880, and was re-elected at Buffalo, in October, 1881; again re-elected at St. Paul, in October, 1882, and at Kansas City, in October, 1883, was elected for a term of three years. When first elected to this important and honorable position, the Order numbered about 1,000 members, with forty Divisions, while to-day the membership is over 10,000, with 206 Divisions in good working condition. The unprecedented growth of the organization proves conclusively that he has been the "right man in the right place," and his several re-elections show that his labors are fully appreciated, and he to-day stands at the head of one of the most powerful organizations of railway people in existence, honored and respected by all. During his incumbency, the Insurance Department has grown from less than 200 members to its present magnitude, and has paid during the past fifteen months the sum of \$90,000. The *Railway Conductor's Monthly*, which is in a flourishing condition, and is proving itself a necessity, as well as a source of profit, financially, to the Order, was established in 1884, with Mr. Wheaton as editor.

Bro. Wheaton is popular with his membership, the high or low, the old or young being each to him as "Brothers," and his gentlemanly demeanor and loyalty to principle has won the Order that he represents the confidence of the railway managers of the country.

Bro. Wheaton in speaking of the success of the Order, says harmony and confidence, together with will and hard work, have won the fight.

Mr. Wheaton is a thorough, practical railway man, an eloquent speaker, and an able debater, and the Order is to be congratulated that it may count him as one among us.

**A New Automatic Electric Signal.**

THE *Electrical Review* says:—"The Boston & Lowell Railroad is experimenting, between the West Somerville and Arlington stations, with an ingenious and novel signal and danger alarm for use previous to its general adoption, provided its operation is satisfactory. The invention consists of a generator of electricity, placed on the engine, and connected with the rails by a suitable device to convey the electric current from the generator. In the cab of the engine is a gong or target, which will ring a safety signal, if the tracks are all clear, the rails in place and not broken at any place, the switches and draw-bridges all closed and locked, when a train is entering upon a section of the road. Should there be any displacement or obstruction upon the track, the gong will sound a danger signal, and a target will appear before the engineer, showing the words "danger slip," and the target will remain at danger until the trouble is removed, or until the entrance is made on the next section, when it returns to safety. At no time can an engineer approach danger except at a distance in which he can stop his train or bring it under perfect control. Another new and important feature in the invention is that all switches and draw-bridges are locked by the train immediately upon entering the section where they exist, and they cannot be opened until the train has passed.

**The Severn Tunnel.**

THE great Severn Tunnel in Great Britain which has been under construction for the last fourteen years, was formally opened for passenger traffic on Wednesday, December 1st. In September of last year the work was so far completed as to admit of the passage throughout of a train conveying Sir Daniel Gooch and a number of the officials of the railway. On January 9, a coal train of 200 tons also passed through, but the opening for passenger traffic was delayed, until some necessary works had been carried out in the approaches, until the 1st inst. At present traffic is confined to local business between Bristol and Cardiff. The fast through service will not be started till the early part of next year, probably about February or March, owing to the difficulties met with by the contractor in the construction of the new tunnel at Patchway. Until this is completed the doubling of the line, without which the fast through service is impossible, cannot be accomplished. The pumping machinery for keeping the enormous water influx down is of remarkable capacity, capable, it is said, of raising over 25,000,000 of gallons per day. The tunnel has been lined with vitrified bricks set in cement, about 75,000,000 bricks having been used for this work alone; but with a head of 170 feet some good work is necessary to keep water out."

**The Telegraph.**

ON Sunday, 19th ult., a wonderful demonstration of the practicability of long distance telegraphing was made over the wires of the C. P. R. system and the Bennett-Mackay cable line. New Westminster, on the shores of the Pacific, was united with Old Westminster, of England, by a continuous telegraphic and cable circuit of over six thousand miles. It is stated that this is by far the longest circuit that has been worked. The operator at New Westminster ticked off the message, which was next moment in London, six thousand miles away. The message was repeated at various points by automatic repeaters, and was transferred from telegraphic to cable signals, and back again by automatic instruments; but the message only passed through the hands of two operators, the sender at New Westminster, and the receiver in London. When the circuit was completed New Westminster sent the following complimentary message to London:

New Westminster, B. C., sends greetings to Old Westminster—12.20 p. m. Weather cloudy, light rain; thermometer 44 above. What is the weather with you and time of day?

To this the following reply was made:

Old Westminster sends kindly greetings to its younger namesake. Weather here is heavy fog; temperature above 32 Fahrenheit. The city is enveloped, but about three miles outside weather is clear. We all send you the compliments of the season, and hope this year which has seen such tremendous strides made by you and your friends, will be long remembered, and that years to come will prove the value and importance of your great undertaking.

When the line was clear, Winnipeg called London. The following communications were exchanged:

To London—

Winnipeg, the centre of Canada and metropolis of the greatest cereal producing region of the North American continent, sends greeting. Weather clear and bright. Thermometer 30 above. We are a happy and contented people, and there is room for millions more. Come and join us in building a grand Canadian nationality under the aegis of "the flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze."

WINNIPEG.

To Winnipeg—

8.22 o'clock.—We have heard a great deal about your wonderful city, and cannot but admire its marvellous progress. It is bound to be the centre of a vast population. Let us hope that the many thousands who will leave these shores to find homes in your country will grow up in the path marked by you.

LONDON.

Another circuit was arranged with the Baltimore & Ohio Telegraph—the C. P. R. Co's United States connection—and New Orleans was put in indirect connection with New Westminster. Greetings were exchanged, and the test was highly satisfactory.—*Electric Age.*