

THE GENESIS OF OUR CANADIAN RAILWAYS.

THE growth of our railways has within the last few years been so rapid that it would form an important chapter in Canadian history to review their rise and progress. The first claiming attention in order of time is the *Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad*, which was constructed between the St. Lawrence at St. Lambert (or South Montreal) and Rouse's Point on Lake Champlain.

It was chartered from Laprairie to St. Johns in 1831.

Commenced in..... 1835.

And opened for traffic in August..... 1836.

The Charter authorizing an extension from St. Johns to Rouse's Point, and the Branch to St. Lambert was granted in 1851. It was opened for traffic throughout in 1852. Its total length, including the Laprairie Branch, was 49 miles, and the cost of road, wharves, stations and equipment, amounted to £381,195.

Lord Gosford, the Governor-General, was present at the opening and took part in the banquet which was served in the station—the building which, defying the ravages of time, still does duty as a freight shed.

One of the chief promoters of the railway was Jason C. Pierce, of St. Johns, and associated with him were the late Hons. Peter McGill and Robert Jones, Mr. John Shuter, &c. Mr. James Macdonald, of St. Johns, was also connected with the early management of the line. The road was originally built of scrap iron—that is, thin plates of iron nailed on to wooden sleepers, and the rolling stock was very light. For about 15 years after construction the road was not operated in the winter time.

The second locomotive used on the old Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad was called the Jason C. Pierce, and it is still in use on the road at Joliette.