

An order for 30,000 tons of steel rails for spring delivery has been placed in Scotland. Daily press reports which recently stated that the contract for building the entire line of the G.T. Pacific Ry. had been let to the National Construction Co. were incorrect. We are advised by an officer that the organization of the construction company was a formality. The G.T.R. Co., which has guaranteed the bonds of the Lake Superior branch, has no power to build the same, and therefore a subsidiary company has been created with the necessary powers. The whole of the stock in the construction company, except such as is necessary to qualify the directors, who are officers of the G.T.R., is held by the G.T.R. Co. It is further said that the construction company takes the contract for building the branch for the amount of bonds which the G.T.R. Co. is guaranteeing.

The first sod of the Lake Superior Branch was turned by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, at Fort William, Ont., Sept. 11. The site of the ceremony was near where the first sod of the C.P.R. was turned in June, 1875. The Premier was presented with a silver spade as a souvenir of the occasion. The Lake Superior branch, according to the latest surveys, is expected to be 205 miles in length, some 15 miles shorter than was originally expected would have been possible. The line will start from the Mission property at Fort William, and run in a northwesterly direction through the townships of Vreeburg, McIntyre, Oliver and Ware, practically paralleling the C.P.R. Shortly after leaving Kaministiquia the line will cross Dog River, passing near Linko station, and will join the main transcontinental line near Minnetakie Lake, and Abraham's Lake. Tenders for the construction of the branch were opened at Montreal, Sept. 15, but no contract had been announced up to Sept. 29.

The C.P.R. in its protest against the approval of the route of the main line from Portage la Prairie to the Touchwood Hills, set out that the route is a violation of the act of Parliament constituting the new company; and that the location so far decided upon is contrary to the policy of the Government as declared in Parliament. The protest was heard by the Railway Commissioners, Sept. 4, and the chairman in giving judgment said it did not seem to him that any question of law was involved; the company had obtained a special act authorizing it to build a line within certain points. The Minister had approved of the plans, and after this there could be no alteration of the route except by the Minister himself. The position of the board was not that of one who had the right to say whether the line should be built or not. The Minister having approved of the plans, the board had no right to say they should not be carried out. If in no way objectionable on engineering grounds, and no public or private interests were affected, there was no reason why the order applied for should not be granted. There was not a shadow of doubt in his mind that the company had authority to build upon the line chosen, and that the Minister had authority to sanction the plans. The clause creating a limitation as to the route in the Northwest Territories did not bind the Government to anything. The whole route was practically left open, as it would be in the case of any other railway under the general railway act, and which had no limitation as to route. There was nothing in the question of law which would justify a reference to the Supreme Court. The usual order would issue as to approval of plans.

The route is practically an air line from Portage la Prairie for about 84 miles, and of that distance 45 miles is a tangent. It closely parallels the C.P.R. main transcontinental line as far as McGregor, at which point the C.P.R. deflects southwesterly. The new line continues for a distance of 12 miles to Wheat-

lands, and then proceeds northwesterly via Crandall, entering the Assiniboine Valley south of Beulah, crossing Bird Tail Creek near its mouth, and continuing up the valley of the Assiniboine River to a short distance above the confluence of the Qu'Appelle River, where it crosses the Assiniboine River, and then running along the valley of the Qu'Appelle River practically as far as township 18, range 30, west of the first principal meridian. The line then runs north-west about 85 miles, to township 26, range 13, west of the second principal meridian, within a short distance of the Hudson's Bay Co.'s Touchwood Hills post. From Portage la Prairie it is fairly light prairie work until Wheatlands is passed, and then the work becomes heavier, especially near the crossings of the Arrow River, Bird Tail Creek, Assiniboine River, and in the valley of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers. The contract let to Macdonald, McMillan & Co. comprises grading and completing the line ready for tracklaying, with the exception of the steel bridge work. The contracts for the steel bridge work will be let direct by the company, which will do the tracklaying, and ballasting, and possibly the putting up of the station buildings also. There will be two division points on this 275 miles of line. The principal bridges will be required at the crossings of the Little Saskatchewan River, Arrow River, Bird Tail Creek, Assiniboine River, and Cut Arm Creek. A sub-contract has been let to G. H. Strevel, Winnipeg, for 36 miles of grading. It is expected to grade about 100 miles this season. The work will be in charge of E. R. McNeil, the company's division engineer at Winnipeg. It is not intended to let any further contracts for work on the main line this year, but it is hoped to have the line to Edmonton under contract early next season. Plans for the portion of the line from the end of the 275 miles from Portage la Prairie to the vicinity of Touchwood Hills, have been filed at Ottawa.

The B.C. Government has entered into an arrangement with the G.T.P. Ry. Co. for the establishment of the Pacific terminals on Kaien Island. The Government has agreed to sell 10,000 acres in the vicinity of Tucks Inlet at \$1 an acre, and to retain one-quarter interest in the townsites. In the event of the agreement not being carried out, the land is to revert to the Government.

Canadian Northern Ry. Construction.

Winnipeg Hotel and Station.—W. Mackenzie, President, recently stated in Winnipeg that the company had prepared plans for a building to comprise hotel, station and general office building to cost about \$2,500,000. He also stated that negotiations were pending with other companies to join in the enterprise, but nothing definite has been decided.

Winnipeg Terminals.—At the sitting of the Railway Commissioners at Winnipeg, Sept. 14, the company made application to expropriate a large area of land, and to close up nine streets at Fort Rouge for terminal purposes.

Oak Point Branch.—A contract has been let to Jas. Cowan for the grading of a piece of line to connect the branch to Oak Point, with the main line at St. Charles, Man. The line will start at the point where the branch intersects the C.P.R., and will run through St. James, just outside the city limits, crossing over the Assiniboine River, and through St. Charles to the C.N.R. main line, connection being made therewith a short distance west of Fort Whyte.

Hartney to Regina.—The construction of the line from Hartney to the westerly boundary of the Province, is to be completed this season, and contractors are pushing ahead with the work. It is stated that the inten-

tion of the company is to extend the line to Regina, Sask.

Grand View Extension.—Grading has been completed into Edmonton and to a junction with the short piece of line constructed by the Edmonton, Yukon and Pacific Ry., from Strathcona into Edmonton. The tracklaying was expected to be completed by the end of Sept.

G.T.R. Betterments, Construction, Etc.

Midland Branch.—In connection with an application before the Railway Commissioners recently, F. H. McGuigan, Manager, stated that it was the intention of the company to double track the Midland branch in the near future.

Queen Street Subway, Toronto.—A proposal has been under consideration for the construction of a subway under the tracks at Queen St. East, but F. H. McGuigan, Manager, informed the Mayor that the company was preparing plans for improvements which would render the construction of a subway unnecessary.

Brantford Improvements.—The big improvements in the vicinity of Brantford, Ont., have been so far completed that it was arranged to divert the main line trains through the city Oct. 1. A public demonstration to celebrate the event was arranged for Sept. 30.

Guelph Freight Yards.—The residents of Guelph, Ont., have signed, in large numbers, a petition to the City Council objecting to the sale of the fair grounds for use as freight yards. The City Council, Sept. 12, declined the invitation of the company to inspect the freight yards at Hamilton, Brantford and other points.

Improvements at Norwich.—The Brantford and Port Burwell branch, and the Stratford-Port Dover line cross at Norwich, Ont., and the company is asking the village to grant \$10,000 and to provide a right of way to deflect the lines, so as to provide a new and central station.

Komoka-Kingscourt Second Track.—The steel has been laid on the second track constructed between Komoka and Kingscourt Jct., Ont., and the ballasting is nearly completed.

New Station at London.—The company's plans for the improvement of its station and terminal facilities at London, Ont., are taking shape, and it is reported that they will involve the expenditure of about \$2,000,000. The plans, it is said, include the building of a new passenger station and freight sheds in the city, and a passenger station at East London, with other improvements.

The Transportation Commission is making a tour in Western Canada, sittings having been held at Winnipeg, Man.; Regina, Sask.; Calgary, Edmonton, Alta.; Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster and Nelson, B.C. The sitting at Victoria was fixed for Sept. 28, and the Commissioners' arrangements were to return east by the Crow's Nest Pass route.

At a special meeting of the Central Passenger Association, at Chicago, Ill., Sept. 15, an effort was made to secure an agreement to pool all the steamship business between the differential lines including the Michigan Central Rd. The G.T.R. opposed the suggestion on the ground that the M.C.R. was not entitled to any of this business unless it would say over what routes and under what conditions it could carry the traffic. The G.T.R. also gave notice that if the M.C.R. put on a new through car service between Chicago and New York over a differential line from Buffalo, an application would be made for a rehearing of the differential cases recently decided in favor of the M.C.R.