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SOME RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN HALIFAX.

A VESTIBULED TRAM CAR.

Halifax this week attracted some attention. Sympathetic people who can feel the cold that tingles in others fingers and the sleet that dashes into their faces when Winter is in a savage mood, rather rejoiced to see it, and in their hearts congratulated the motormen. The sentiment is a worthy one, but as a matter of fact it is frequently the case that motormen prefer the open air, their reason being that they can get used to the cold wind and mind it little when warmly wrapped up, but find a draft caused by the vestibule arrangement rather discomforting. Yet there are motormen who gladly accept the shelter of a glass covering when a piercing wind is blowing. This car, however, that we speak of, will decide the question. It is being tried as an experiment and if it proves desirable, the rest of the closed cars will be fitted up in like manner. The vestibules can be put on at the tramway company's shops, where

the work on the above mentioned car was done.

AT NORTH STREET DEPOT.

For various reasons, sometimes a bad rail, sometimes bad braking, or the weight of the train, an engineer when shunting into a terminus, will over-shoot the mark. Though happening rarely, when it does the results are serious. The ordinary buffers in such cases, are quite inadequate to check the momentum of the train. Our Depot at North Street has occasionally suffered in this way. In an ordinary train the momentum of seven or eight cars weighing each about fifty tons and going at a rate of even a mile an hour, is quite considerable, and very few devices are strong enough to bear the tension.

A gang of workmen are now installing the first Ellis Patent Buffer that we have had here. In this Buffer the terminal rails after being connected by long fish plates with the main track, are riveted down to a bed of solid rock and inclining together and upwards rest at a terminating junction on a supporting beam. From this junction projects toward the track a large solid rubber Buffer, tipped with wrought iron with a rod playing loosely through a mass of iron at the junction of the rails.

Just before the front wheels have reached the incline the forward end of the car has struck the Buffer and the effect of the shock is distributed along the rails, the track itself on which the train rests and the sleepers thus adding their quota to the resistance made by the Buffer.

UNDERGROUND WIRES.

It was found recently that the wires going into the Nova Scotia Telephone Co.'s exchange under the present system were proving too great a strain on the building, and in view of the fact that the company are preparing for the installation of a metallic system, which requires two wires for every one now in use, the strain would become much greater in future. Accordingly they are laying cables underground in a certain district immediately contiguous to the exchange office. The portions of streets to be so served are:

Salter street from the exchange to Barrington street and also to Hollis street.

Barrington street from Spring Garden Road to Sackville street.

Granville street from the exchange to Sackville street.

Sackville street from Grafton street to Bedford Row.

Spring Garden Road from Barrington Street to the poles opposite St. Mary's Cathedral.

This is all that is being done in the way of providing for underground wires at present, and it is not likely that more will be laid for some years. The Company are putting in a new switch board to improve the service that will cost \$110,000 and the additional cost of \$25,000 for underground wiring is almost as much as they care to take upon themselves at present. It is certainly a great amount of money to expend at one time, and the public will be grateful for this consideration of their wants.

The ducts at present laid will admit 3,000 pairs of wires, but 1,800 pairs will meet all present needs and only that number will be put through them. A pair of wires for each instrument will create a great change in the telephone service, for people will not then be troubled with the induction that prevails after nightfall. This induction is due to the leakage of electricity from the lighting wires, but the metallic circuit, providing an independent return in substitution for the common ground return, will overcome the intermixture of currents that now makes it such a difficult matter to carry on a conversation over the wires at night.

Many people have watched the process of laying ducts for underground wires and have manifested some interest. They will perhaps be disappointed that this improvement will not do away with poles; for underground wires are not like water or gas mains that can be tapped anywhere, but are brought out of the ground at intervals to supply districts, and for the support of these, poles must still be used. The only benefit that will result in this respect will be the lessening of the number of overhead wires in the crowded downtown district.