

## SIXTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY



GRAND TRUNK PASSENGER LOCOMOTIVE 1870

Brockville was opened in 1855, Brockville to Toronto in 1856, Toronto to Sarnia in 1856, Richmond to Point Levi (opposite Quebec) in 1854, Point Levi to St. Thomas (Montmagny) in 1855, and St. Thomas to Riviere du Loup in 1860.

During the early struggles of the company for existence, many materials of construction had to be imported from Britain under conditions very different to those prevailing to-day, and the obstacles to be surmounted were further accentuated by the outbreak of the Crimean war, at a time when it was essential to the building of the railway that the company should have the most favorable opportunities for financing the enterprise. As a result of the Crimean war financing became almost impossible, and it was little short of a miracle that with practically no Government assistance the Grand Trunk Railway was pushed through to completion.

Notwithstanding such adverse circumstances, the various works were carried out by the contractors who undertook them with energy and ability, and in some sections with extraordinary rapidity. Besides inclement and diversity of climate which had to be contended with, the greater part of these works were carried out through territory defective in means of internal communication and in those facilities to which the contractors had been accustomed in previous construction in other countries.

### TWO FIRMS OF CONTRACTORS.

For the building of the Grand Trunk there were two firms of contractors, one known as the "English contractors," consisting of Messrs. Jackson, Peto, Brassey and Betts, who constructed the lines from Montreal and Toronto and from Richmond to Riviere du Loup, the other a Canadian firm, Gzowski & Co., known as the "Canadian Contractors," who built from Toronto westward to Sarnia. The nature of the contracts which the English firm had,—provided that the railway should be superior to any American or Canadian railway then existing, and stipulated the best English railways as the standard for substantiality and permanence. The contractors were given the selection of the line, subject to the approval of the Government, and the contracts also provided limitations as to gradients and curvature.

These English contractors had previously been engaged in extensive railway construction in Great Britain and on Continental Europe, and their ability and capacity were generally recognized, not only in regard to engineering qualifications, but also in respect to financial standing and influence. Everything then was in a sort of experimental stage in Canada, and it was therefore deemed expedient to make a contract with one firm to make the surveys, acquire the lands and lay out and