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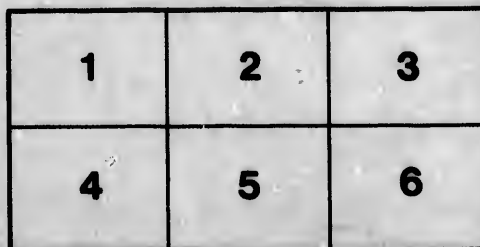
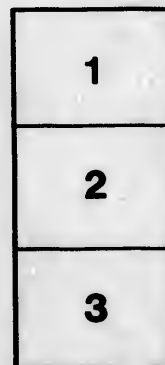
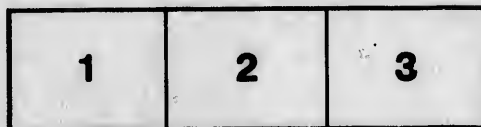
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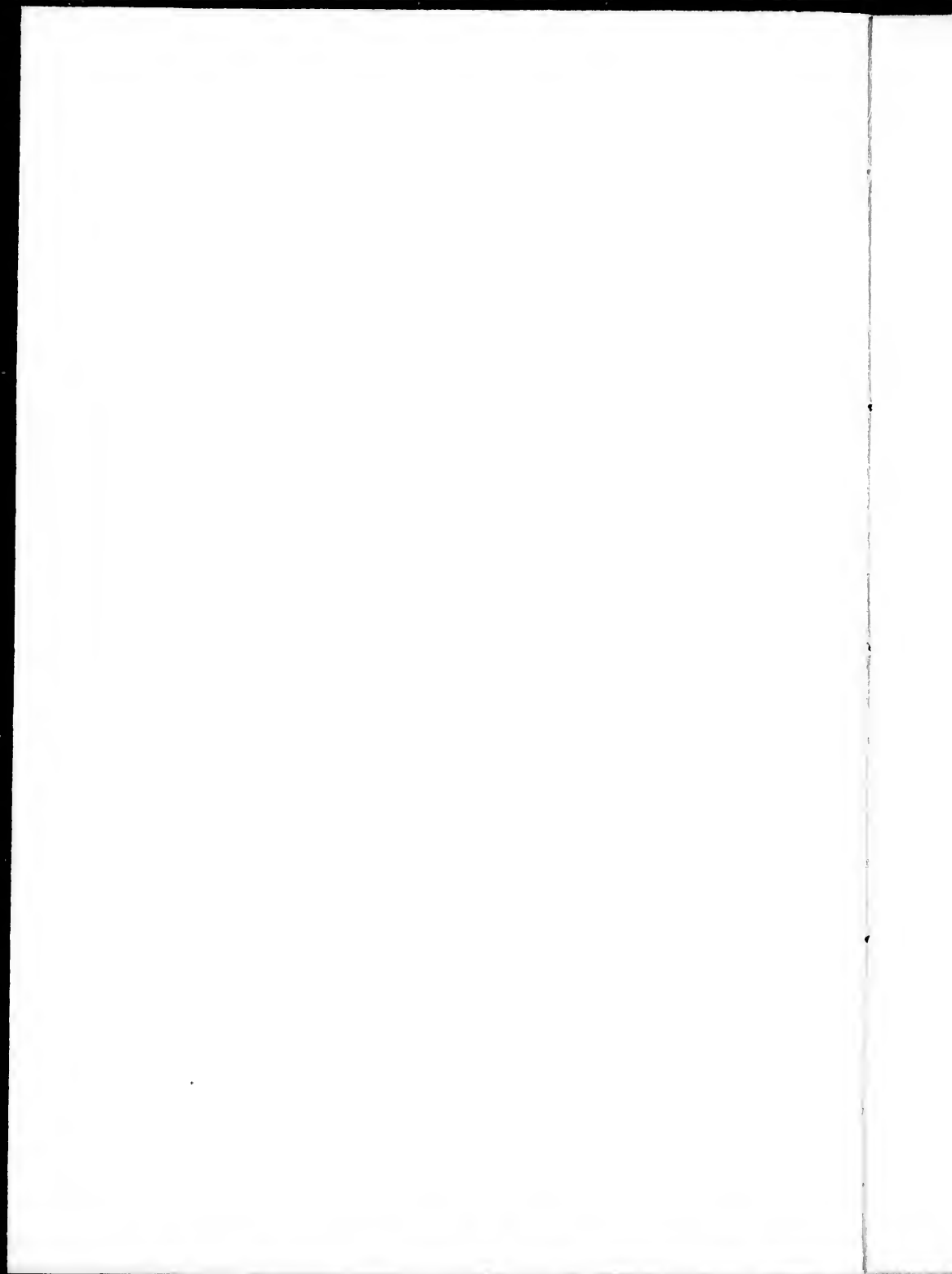
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REPORT
OF
THE MANAGING DIRECTOR
OF THE
GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA,

TO
ROBERT W. HARRIS, Esq.
PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY,

Dated HAMILTON, CANADA, 31st AUGUST, 1853.

London :

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

1853.

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GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY,
Hamilton, Canada West,
August 31st, 1853.

SIR,

One of the duties imposed upon me when I was appointed, at the close of last year, Managing Director of this Company, was, that I should make, at the date of each annual meeting, a report upon the proceedings of the Company.

At the late meeting, I had been but six months in this country, and as the report of the Directors was full and ample, it was not considered necessary that I should then make a separate report. Having, however, since the annual meeting, several times visited the works along the whole line, and having, within a few days, returned from one of those visits, it may not be out of place, if I state a few facts connected with the line, as, at the distance at which we are from the English Shareholders, they will naturally be anxious to have as much information as possible, in reference to an undertaking in which they are so deeply interested.

The main line, a total length of 228 miles, is divided into three sections—the first called the Eastern division, extending from Niagara Falls to Hamilton, a distance of 43 miles; the next, the Central division, from

Hamilton to London, 75 miles; and the last, the Western division, from London to Windsor, 110 miles.

Upon the Eastern division, the works are being pressed forward with the very greatest activity; upon that section there are four steam excavators at work, taking out the heaviest cuts; there are two locomotive engines employed in aiding the track layers, who are laying about two miles of permanent way per day; and there is a force engaged upon the structures not yet completed, which must place them out of danger in the course of a short time. The Contractors assure me, most positively, that they will be sufficiently forward to enable us to open that division by the 1st of November next, and as they will lose a considerable sum of money if they do not succeed, I feel confident from that fact, and the general state of the work, that I shall have the satisfaction of writing by the mail after the 1st of November, that the Great Western Railway is carrying traffic upon upwards of 40 miles of its line.

Upon the division between Hamilton and London, the works are in a very forward state indeed; nearly all the large structures are complete; the grading may be said, except at one or two points, to be almost finished, and there are but very few spots which offer any obstacle to the progress of the tracklayers, who are now at work at five different points. Upon this division three steam excavators, and two locomotive engines, are at work, and I feel justified in expressing my strong belief, from the progress which is making at the present time, that, by the beginning of the month of December, we shall run our trains regularly between Niagara Falls and London, a distance of nearly 120 miles.

On the Western division, between London and Windsor, the works at one or two points are not in quite so forward a state. A few miles west of London there are two very heavy cuttings, in which the material is of a very hard description, but there is now at work upon them a very large force, which will be able to get a track through in the time hereafter specified. At the prairie lands (now under water) bordering on Lake St. Clair, considerable work has yet to be done, but as there are now two steam dredging machines at work at this point, there seems to be no reason to fear this work being behind. Upon the remainder of the division the work is in a very forward state, track being now laid at four different points, and three engines being employed in aiding this operation ; on the whole, then, I believe that, by the 1st of January next, we shall be enabled to carry our traffic along the whole line.

I make these statements from personal observation, and from assurances received from the various Contractors, who are pressing forward the work entrusted to them, with an energy which gives good earnest of the fulfilment of the promises which they make. Of course there are several things which may tend to delay the opening somewhat beyond the dates which I have specified, and it is clearly impossible in so vast a work, involving such a multiplicity of details and arrangements, to prophecy without the chance of failure. The weather for the last few months has been such as to facilitate the progress of the works, and we may reasonably expect that the Autumn will afford full scope for the most active exertions. Fortunately, up to this time, we have not suffered materially from sickness among the

workmen, and I trust that we shall not this year meet with so unfortunate a hindrance to our progress. One great difficulty against which we have to contend is the great scarcity of labourers; we have suffered greatly from this cause throughout the whole of this year—wages are at a point beyond what was ever known before—the great extent of work going forward in Canada, renders it difficult to procure either the number or quality of men so much needed; and the evidently near completion of the works, tends to induce strikes amongst the men, and thus delay for days very important works at the most critical moments. With all these difficulties, and no one not actually amongst them can appreciate their extent, the work is being pressed on most vigorously throughout the whole line, and in none of the contingencies, to which I have adverted, delay our operations, I feel the greatest confidence in naming the dates before mentioned at which we may be earning revenue.

The Contractors are now engaged vigorously in putting up the various station-buildings, and there is no doubt whatever but that we shall be fully prepared in this respect to carry on our operations.

A supply of stock, sufficient to commence work, is now placed beyond all doubt, as we have at this moment engines and carriages enough to conduct operations until we receive from the Contractors, now busily engaged, a further supply in the Spring.

I may, however, here say, that if my expectations of traffic are at all realised, we shall need a very much larger quantity of rolling stock than has ever yet been estimated as necessary.

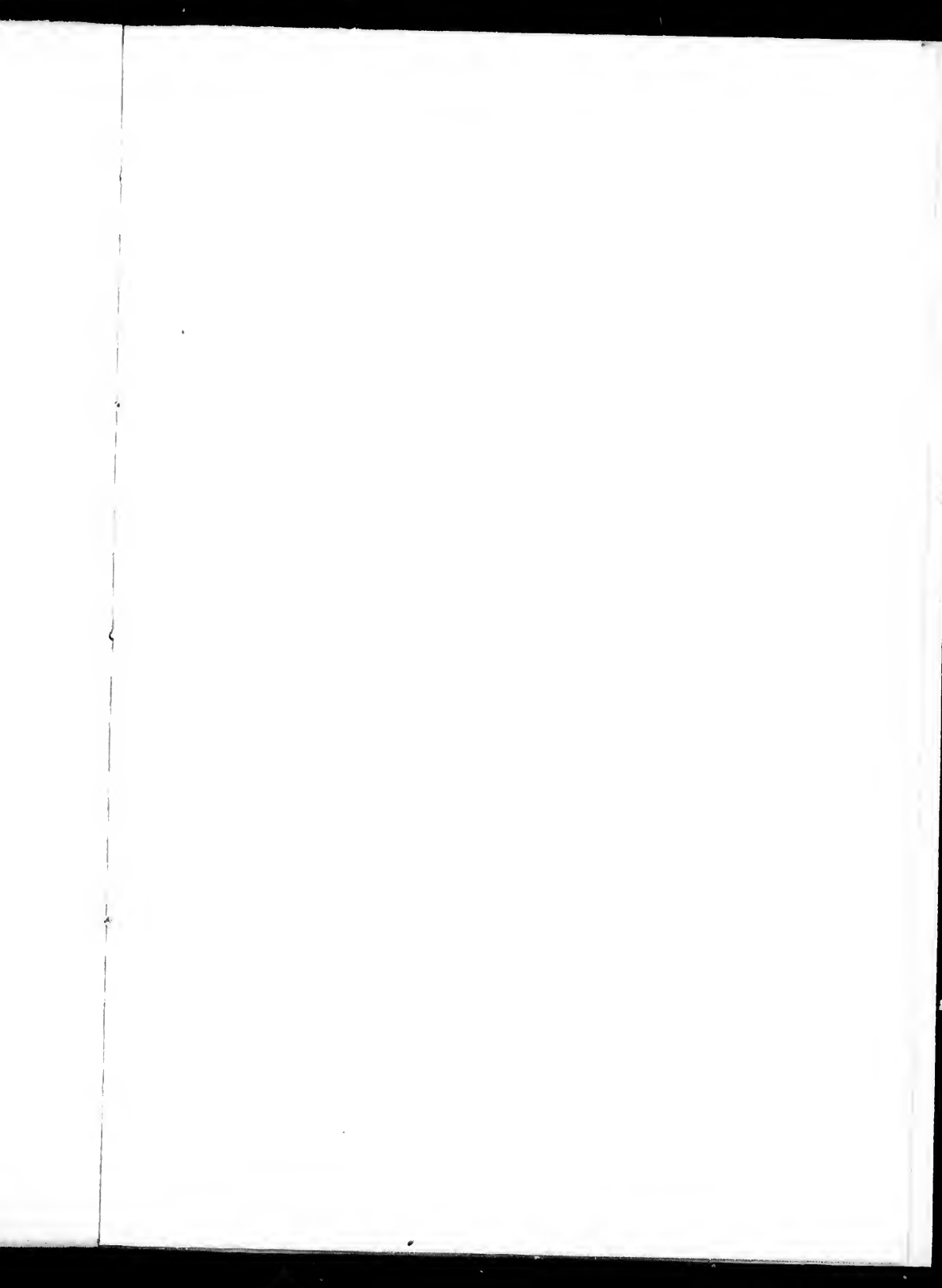
On the whole, then, I feel happy in being able to look forward to such early dates for the commencement of business; and it may not be uninteresting if I, who have not until the present year been personally acquainted with this part of the world, make a few remarks as to the prospects which are before us.

The country between Niagara Falls and London presents an almost unbroken spectacle of the greatest fertility, and the immense quantity of produce which is raised along this part of our line and the surrounding districts, will inevitably find its way by our Railway to Hamilton, as the nearest point to meet water conveyance to the St. Lawrence and the American Ports on Lake Ontario. The line passes through numerous thriving towns and villages, which evince every sign of a most prosperous condition. The country is studded with steam and water mills, from which immense quantities of flour and lumber are annually sent away, and I feel perfectly satisfied that the local trade on this 120 miles of the line, will present results of the most favourable and astonishing nature. As a proof of this, I may mention, that the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway, which runs northward from Toronto, through a country inferior to that served by the Great Western, and upon which none of the through travel, ultimately expected viâ the Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe from Lake Superior, yet passes, is at this time, although but lately opened, earning 5 per cent. net from local travel alone, upon the amount of capital expended upon the portion of the line now in operation. This is a most encouraging fact, and I was surprised, when travelling along that line the other day, to observe how well filled the trains appeared to be.

The traffic between Hamilton and London alone, without counting that to be derived from the intermediate towns (each the centre of a most flourishing district), of Dundas, Paris, Woodstock, Ingersoll and Beachville, will be of very considerable extent; the stages, which take some sixteen hours on the journey, and are most uncomfortable modes of conveyance, at the present moment carry on an average fifty passengers each way daily, and the most intelligent Merchants of London assure me, that when they have the opportunity of travelling by railway between that place and Hamilton, and returning the same day, that the passenger traffic will be at once quadrupled. Here is at once a source of revenue of a certain and most remunerative character. I could add much as to the impetus which facilities of communication will afford to the general prosperity of the country, and therefore of the Railway, but a few months will enable me to announce results, which I feel sure will exceed any expectations which I might now feel justified in holding out.

The country, between London and Windsor, is at present not so well settled, but it is fast filling up, and the price of land in that district shows that the attention of parties is being directed to it, its splendid wheat-land, and almost inexhaustible supply of oak, pine, and other timber. The existence and prosperity of such towns as Chatham, under the disadvantage of want of convenient means of communication, speaks volumes for the capabilities of the district.

The local traffic upon the Great Western line, and I speak here from personal observation and inquiry, appears to me to have been always underrated, and I



feel persuaded that the operations of a very short time will show that the local traffic alone will be sufficient to afford a very handsome return upon the capital expended.

But, in addition to the local traffic, we shall secure a very large portion of the through-travel between the Eastern and Western States of America. From New York and Boston, the great centres of business for this Continent, there are daily (on one line alone) six express or mail passenger trains to Buffalo, and as many returning. The bulk of these passengers now proceed westward, either by the railways along the South shore of Lake Erie, or by steamers across the Lake. The Great Western connecting both at Niagara Falls and Buffalo, with the trains alluded to, will effect a saving of upwards of 100 miles of railway in the distance between New York, Boston or Buffalo and Chicago, and of course, therefore, will draw the majority of the travel to and from Chicago and the West. It also connects, by the shortest possible line, the sister cities of Buffalo and Detroit, each the centre of the business of a vast and flourishing district.

The opening of this railway next winter, at a time when the navigation of Lake Erie is suspended, will pour through Canada nearly the whole of the vast east and west travel, which is, even now, being conveyed along the line of railway between Buffalo and New York and Boston, and the lines in Michigan, with a tedious break between them. The Central Michigan Railway, running from Chicago (where it is connected with a large ramification of railways penetrating far into the prolific west) to Detroit, immediately opposite the

western terminus of this road at Windsor, is now carrying on a large and profitable business, and will exchange with this line, when open, a large quantity of passenger and freight traffic.

The manner of travelling on this side of the Atlantic is very different from what it is at home. The journey between New York or Boston and Chicago, or points still further west, occupies a considerable space of time, and, as Americans seldom stop on a journey, it is an almost universal practice in the summer months, to proceed during the day by railway, and sleep on board one of the floating palaces which cross Lake Erie at night. This enables passengers to proceed without the loss of time which stopping at an hotel would involve. The dangerous navigation of Lake Erie has hitherto rendered this a very unsafe mode of travelling, but even the numerous and fatal accidents which yearly occur, have not prevented the practice. In order, therefore, to secure the travel during Summer by the Great Western, a line of first-class steamers, will run between Oswego and Hamilton. Accordingly, passengers leaving the Sea Board or Chicago in the morning, will be enabled by the evening to reach Lake Ontario, which is perfectly safe and free from the dangers which have made Lake Erie so painfully notorious; and, after enjoying a night's rest, proceed in the morning by railway to their destination. This route will become a most favourite one during the Summer, and without it, Lake Erie would, with all its dangers, be a very powerful competitor to us.

On the whole, then, the prospects presented by this railway are of a far more encouraging nature than any-

thing with which my ten years' experience of English railways has made me familiar; and if the Legislature and Government of this country profit by the bitter lessons which competition is now forcing, not only upon Railway Companies, but upon Parliament at home, we may safely look for the gradual development of the most satisfactory and remunerative results.

Whilst I am referring to the prospects of the Great Western Railway, I cannot avoid making some allusion to its cost. When I reached this country, in the beginning of January of the present year, I found that it had been lately ascertained that the cost of the line would exceed the original estimate. The experience of English railways did not cause me to be much surprised at such a result, nor was I astonished to learn by the Chief Engineer's report of last June, that even his predecessor's last estimate would not suffice to complete the railway. The cost of this line having been made the subject of a good deal of remark, and compared disparagingly with that of American railways generally, it may be useful if I correct some erroneous impressions which appear to exist.

I may then remark, that this railway will, when the existing contracts are closed up, be as nearly as possible completed; that hardly any of the works will be of such a temporary character as to require renewing immediately, or until the receipt of revenue places the Company in a financial position to do so; and that all the important structures are of sufficient size and strength to allow of the doubling of the line without extra cost in that respect. It is a fact, not generally known in England, that very few, if any, American railways, are

much more than half completed when they are opened, and that a careful inquiry as to the exact cost in its present state, of any lately perfectly-completed American railway, would show that it had arrived at a sum considerably greater than will be the mileage cost of the Great Western Railway. This is a most important fact, and one which should not be lost sight of, especially as the economical working of a railway depends so much upon the stability and perfectness of its original construction. It is true that the means at the disposal of the Company will not be quite sufficient to close up all the contracts for the construction of the line, but it is exceedingly satisfactory to be assured that the re-arrangement which has been effected within the last few months, of all the construction and other existing contracts, will enable the Company to close them all up without difficulty, or the probability of a resort to any of those vexatious and expensive legal proceedings with which the railway history of this Continent so plentifully abounds.

Before concluding this somewhat lengthy statement, which, however, the great importance of the subject will, I trust, excuse, I must mention that the proceedings of the Grand Trunk Company, who are vigorously prosecuting the works upon their line from Guelph to Sarnia, have rendered it absolutely essential that this Company should be in a position to complete its line to Sarnia. We have, accordingly, in pursuance of the authority given the Board at the last annual meeting of Shareholders, and in accordance with the resolution come to by the English Shareholders on the 10th of May last, made a contract with a highly respectable and

responsible Contractor, who has undertaken to purchase the right of way, provide the iron-rails, &c., and complete the whole line in a manner which shall be equal to the present Western division of the Great Western line, for a sum of £7,000 currency (equal to about £5,600 sterling) a mile. He also agrees to take £150,000 of the gross amount in nonconvertible bonds of the Great Western Company, and to complete the line within twelve months of the time that he is instructed to commence the works.

The line will pass through a comparatively easy country, and the necessary preliminary steps are now being taken, so as to enable the line to be put under construction the moment it is considered desirable to do so, but no expenditure will be incurred this year, and the Directors will thus have the satisfaction of feeling, that even in a period of great railway excitement, they have been enabled to carry through the great work entrusted to them without encountering the construction of any branch line, beyond the short span of twelve miles to the important town of Galt, which it will be remembered was commenced simultaneously with the main line. A career of almost unexampled prosperity in railway history is now about to commence in Canada, and I sincerely trust that no wavering on the part of the Shareholders will permit that prosperity to be cast away, by listening to any scheme for merging this line into any other Company.

In conclusion, let me again repeat, that the Great Western Railway will, I feel the greatest confidence, be in full and successful operation by the close of the present year: its prospects of a successful result are, in

my judgment, beyond the reach of doubt and the completion of the Sarnia line on the favourable terms I have mentioned, will fence it in from the chance of intrusion from the north. The small sum needed to be raised for the latter purpose—£200,000 currency, is insignificant when compared with the objects it will accomplish, and the traffic it will secure; and a further sum (for the main-line) of £300,000 currency, making in all £500,000 currency, or £400,000 sterling, will complete in a perfect and efficient manner, a line of railway, the works of which are second to none on the American Continent, and the business upon which will develop the most satisfactory results.

It is, however, beyond doubt, that increased rolling-stock, required to work the Hamilton and Toronto and Sarnia lines, and to accommodate the vast business which will present itself upon the line generally, as well as an increase of station accommodation, and the necessity for soon doubling certain portions of the line, will, before long, require further outlay, but the objects will all be of a nature to add to the dividends, which before long we shall, I have no doubt, have the pleasure of paying to the Shareholders of the Company.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

C. J. BRYDGES,
Managing Director.

To ROBERT W. HARRIS, Esq.,
President,
Great Western Railway of Canada.

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