

ELEVENTH YEAR.

FLORENCE CUT-OFF.

A Visit to the Scene of That Very Important Railroad Work.

Shortening the Line Between Omaha and St. Paul.

And Reducing the Grade One-Half.

The Necessity and Advantages of the Cut-Off.

Progress of the Work and Date of its Completion.

For the past two years a great deal has been said, written and published about the "Florence cut-off," but it has generally been from hearsay, and probably not twenty-five persons in this city know the extent and importance of the work, that for over a year has been in progress within ten miles of the metropolis of the state.

Some of our merchants may guess at it vaguely from the trade it throws into their hands, for all the tools and supplies for the camp are purchased in Omaha, and there has been not a little money thus brought into their coffers.

There have also from time to time appeared advertisements for men and teams, and occasionally a brief announcement of the progress of the cut-off, a report of some accident up there and so on.

Once the small box broke out at a farm house not far from the line and then the Florence cut-off folks got a benefit. Accidents will happen in the best regulated families, and despite all obstacles this work has been prosecuted inch by inch, foot by foot, and yard by yard, until, at last, the blind can see how enormous the job is, the end of which is just beginning to be seen by the manager.

A few days since a BEX reporter was detailed to go out and see

WHAT THE FLORENCE CUT-OFF IS

and dish it up for the thousands of readers throughout the city and state, and he found it by no means an easy job to perform, the magnitude of the undertaking exceeding all expectations ever formed of it.

And it may be well to explain right here what the cut-off is, to do which intelligently will require a brief reference to the past history of the line of which it is to form a part.

When the road was first built, many years ago, Douglas county was asked to vote \$120,000 in bonds to aid the company. In order to be able to do this lawfully it was necessary to have some miles of road in the various townships through which it was to pass.

Now by adhering as nearly as possible to an air line it would be impossible to get the requisite length of track on the given amount of soil and as it was

"NO TRACK, NO BOND," the company had to do a little maneuvering to get around the difficulty.

Accordingly after reaching a point on Mill creek, a few miles west of Florence, the Omaha & Northwestern railroad, as it was then called, took a serpentine course through Union township by which they got in the desired number of miles and for which they got their bonds.

This deviation forms a complete horse shoe bend and made the road just five and a half miles longer than there was any necessity for.

On this eleven and a half mile curve, the grade is 116 to 122 feet to the mile and it has always been impossible to haul a train of any size over

THE "CAMEL-BACK," as it is called, seven cars being about as much as one engine could manage. Whenever there was a heavy run on the line, an engine had, and still has, to be sent up to Calhoun as a helper.

After the money had been secured and the road had passed into the hands of a live railroad company, the "Camel-back" was an eyesore to them and it was determined to remove it.

This could be done by cutting through the hills across in a north-westerly direction and intersecting the line at the point where the curve was finished and the genuine and legitimate course resumed. On the 10th of December, 1880, the new company

SIGNED THE CONTRACT with Mitchell Vincent to do the work, and after some unavoidable delay the first shovel-full of dirt was finally thrown on the 26th day of May, 1881, by Mr. James P. Vincent, General Superintendent and Purchasing Agent for the contractor, and since that time he has missed but three working days, summer and winter, pushing things for all they were worth.

The advantages to be gained by the cut-off, which means cutting off the hump or bend, are very great. In the first place, it shortens the line five miles and a half, reducing the curve from eleven and a half to six miles. It also

REDUCES THE GRADE to sixty-five feet to the mile, or nearly one-half, and it makes it possible to haul an average train with other roads. It is claimed by the officers of the company that they will save \$500 per month in the item of fuel by the completion of this cut-off. At this rate the work would pay for itself in five years, as it will cost them about \$30,000. The cut-off is, in exact figures, six miles and two feet in length, and is divided into two sections in about the middle, the north half, which is easy grade work, being sublet by the contractor to Franklin Force, and is now nearly completed to the most of the remaining work to be done being on the south half mile, where it joins the half in charge of

James P. Vincent, Force working southward and Vincent northward.

A DIFFICULT JOB.

The south half is one of the most difficult pieces of road ever built in this western country, as will be seen from the fact that while the average amount of earth to be removed per mile on western roads is 8,000 yards, on this line there are 570,000 yards to be removed on the six miles, or nearly 100,000 yards per mile, and of this 120,000 yards are to be moved upon one mile of the work. Upon the south half are two great cuts, one of which is 2,700 feet in length and 95 feet deep in the center; the other 1,300 feet in length and 55 feet deep in the center. There is the usual amount of filling, bridging, etc., to be done, and along the entire line the force are

WORKING LIKE BEANS.

Taking the morning train on the Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha road one day this week, the reporter found himself about 9 o'clock at Florence station, where he was met by Mr. Vincent, who kindly offered to show him over the ground.

Taking a buggy, he was driven along the county road, which follows the track for about two miles before it veers off to the northwest. At this point a switch has been put in by the railroad company for the use of the contractor in transporting his supplies to the scene of operations, and which will be the initial point of the cut-off.

A car of iron, one of coal and another of corn were standing to be unloaded and the contents hauled to the camp, which is nearly a mile away. Here about two and a half feet of filling only is required to bring the switch to the grade of

THE NEW LINE

and west of the siding, about six hundred feet of fill has been thrown up. A little further on, standing up isolated from all tracks or fills, is a bridge about nine feet high, and still further the dump or end of the fill, which is being rounded up day by day in the direction of the bridge.

From this point a narrow gauge road, eighteen inches wide, runs to the center of the big-cut, where the men are at work, and from which the dirt taken out is hauled on diminutive cars to the dump, which extends gradually towards the six hundred feet of grading first mentioned. A little further in and at the mouth of the cut we arrive at

THE CAMP

at which Mr. Vincent and his assistant, Mr. C. Salmon, book-keeper and paymaster, make their headquarters. This is quite a little village with a refreshing frontier look about it that is quite inviting. On all sides are hills, some thickly wooded and others bald as billiard cues, except of a bright emerald covering of grass. Eight or ten ruderly constructed buildings of pine boards and tar paper, and two or three canvas tents, make up the camp, a street running through the center. A new stable is in process of erection, the old one being surrounded by mountains of manure accumulated during the past winter, and being too unwieldy to remove. The barns are removed from it. A roughly carved

"WELCOME HOME"

adorned the corn-crib, and, in fact, the boarding houses, grocery store, sleeping houses, blacksmith shop and office, made it a motto applicable to about the largest family the reporter has seen in a good while. The camp is on the east side of the track, and every few minutes a train is heard rushing down or being run up the hill. These trains are composed of four small dump cars each, the Peterson patent, carrying exactly a yard of dirt to the car. They are mounted on a single four-wheel truck and emptied like all dump cars. They run down grade by their own weight and are hauled up by relays of mules, changed at short distances, and sometimes being a team, at others a single mule.

On the down grade they are controlled by a brakeman, who sits on the hind end of the train and uses a lever brake. Once in a while they get away, and occasionally

JUMP THE TRACK,

but not often. The rails are very small indeed, being fourteen pounds to the yard, with as small as eight pound iron in some places. There are several miles of this track with switches at frequent intervals and it is necessary to run as regularly as on a railroad in order not to blockade the road. There are about one hundred and thirty-five cars in use and forty teams of mules, with perhaps five teams more of odd mules, while the working force of men when the reporter was there numbered 175. The same evening brought an addition of 35 Swedes from Sioux City with teams, swelling the entire working force to the proportion of a small army. After inspecting the camp and being introduced to Mrs. Vincent, a fine looking and warm hearted lady who would make home pleasant in a much more inhospitable region than this, the reporter accompanied by Mr. Vincent,

TOOK THE TRAIN

for the scene of action. As the cars climbed the grade behind a line team of mules, Mr. Vincent called attention to the ditches on either side the track, flowing with streams of the clearest water. They have had great trouble with this water flow which has continued all winter. Last fall but about 15 feet of the surface had been removed when the water was struck, and it was the same all along the line. It is pure, crystal spring water, but it is also a pure nuisance. Ditches had to be dug everywhere and the ground was so wet that at times it was almost impossible to work it. Rubber boots were furnished the men the same as shovels and many a time it has been necessary to pull the laborers out by main force and generally

MINUS THEIR BOOTS

which will be dug up by future generations, and exhibited as some defunct species of the reptilian age. The width of this road bed was originally fixed at twenty feet, but the wet ground caused the caving in of the banks to such an extent that it was

in which the south three miles is divided. After making a start into the hill with scrapers, taking off the surface, a square excavation is made into the side of the hill large enough to admit one of the dump cars. A hopper with trap bottom is fixed above this excavation, and the teams with scrapers are driven from the freshly plowed ground over the hopper into which the contents of the scraper are dumped. It takes six scraper loads to fill the hopper "and then the driver calls out hopper" and down it drops into the car, just filling it, and one more of the 600,000 yards is out, each team making from forty-five to sixty cars per day. In this cut they have to go twenty feet down still, besides widening it twenty to thirty-eight feet all through. A short distance from the mouth of the cut is the fill through a culvert in which

PONCA CREEK

flows. This culvert was built with twenty-two inch tile to drain a mile square of territory, and is already doubled down and practically rained by the pressure. The same state of affairs exist at another culvert further on, where a big twelve foot ditch is being dug to carry off the surplus water. The engineer who was responsible for these and other bad breaks has long since resigned, by request. The valley of Ponca creek is a beautiful one, and the company anticipate grading about the hills and following the meandering of the creek and running a track to Rocky Point, on the river about four miles away, where there is a fine gravel bank from where they will draw from to ballast their track, the large amount of "waste" or surplus earth from fine cuts being more than sufficient to make this.

EXTRA RAILROAD.

Beyond Ponca creek is Norton cut, which was all done by scraper work, being Mr. Vincent's first piece of work on the line, and beyond this is a bridge 200 feet long and very high, the fill at the south end being 26 feet. A short distance beyond is the end of this division, where piles have been driven for a bridge 384 feet long, the fill at the south end being 29 feet deep. Here the dirt from the no the end of the big cut is dumped from the trains, as that from the south end is dumped below the camp. West of this to the end of the three miles, is divided into two sections like the first, the apex of the second cut being the dividing point. John Hardy is foreman of the south end, and Morris Casey of the north end. Here we met Mr. J. C. Murphy, the "walking boss," who has charge of the quartette of foremen and oversees the work on

THE ENTIRE LINE.

He is next to Mr. Vincent in authority, and is one of the best railroad men, at his work, in the country. Mr. Vincent says he would not part with him for his weight in gold. There are the same embankments, ditches and wet lands this end of the road seen on the first and a short bridge crosses before reaching the cut, which, as stated, is shorter and shallower than the first. Here is another camp, with boarding houses, tents and stables, while there are scattering tents and ranches all along the line. Work is progressing finely in this cut, the clay being stiffer, and gunpowder blasts being necessary to loosen the earth from the sides. This is the scene of the accident which happened from a spring bank last winter, and is also in sight of the Griffin farm, where the small box broke out in the latter part of the cold season, and

DEMOLISHED THE WORK

for a while. A fill 2,700 feet long brings the line to the bridge dividing the portion of the cut-off described, from the Force sub-contract, the last dump being the deepest on the line, 3.18 feet, and the south end of the bridge being just 17,500 feet from the south switch, where it leaves the main line, the center of the bridge dividing the Vincent and Force territory.

Another camp is found here and from a delicious spring near by a most refreshing drink can be had.

An inquiry of Mr. Vincent as to the probable date of the completion of his work and the opening of the cut-off brought the answer, "Well, we will do well if we get through

BY NOVEMBER FIRST.

The widening will take extra time. It has certainly been a big undertaking, and the work has been pushing with great energy by Mr. Vincent and his assistants, who one and all deserve great credit. Mr. Vincent has been in this work for 35 years, and he can't be discounted by any one, as the many important jobs he has completed in the west, in Minnesota, Iowa and Dakota, and now in Nebraska, will testify. A walk back over the line, a rousing good dinner with Mr. Vincent and his excellent wife, and the reporter left for the Florence depot, pretty thoroughly impressed with the magnitude of the work whose results he has tried to give to the readers of The Bee that you may know what a big work is going on at their very doors.

Train Wrecked.

BEDFORD, Ind., June 16.—The passenger train on the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago road was wrecked near here last evening. Engineer Connors was killed and twenty persons injured.

STEAL-GLAD KNIGHTS.

The Mail Road Agents of Bygone Days Confident of Victory.

Their Ill-Gotten Gains Prove as Effectual in Washington as in Nebraska.

And the Trial Will Simmer Through Summer Days, Ending in a Farce.

The Tariff and Utah Commissioners Selected and Sent to the Senate.

The Whisky Investigation Turns Out a Decidedly Dry Affair.

The Bank Charter Bill Considered in the Senate—The Harbor Bill in the House.

CAPITAL NOTES.

THE STAR ROUTERS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 16.—The star routes proceedings consisted of a contest of the accuracy of maps of the routes offered by the government, and offering the evidence of money paid for service not performed.

The greater part of the afternoon was occupied in submitting documents. From the ill feeling between the opposing counsel, which frequently developed, it is estimated the trial will continue all summer, and the general opinion is the jury will never agree on a verdict.

WRAPED.

The postoffice department is draped and will be closed to-morrow in respect to the memory of ex-Governor Dennison, of Ohio.

THE WHISKY RING.

Before the Windom committee today Harrison, managing editor of The Critic, refused to give the name of the writer of the interview alleging certain journalists were in the pay of the whisky ring. W. H. Hobart, treasurer of the Western association, and Jacobs, treasurer of the Kentucky association, both denied the use of any money by distillers to influence legislation.

IMMIGRANTS.

During the month of May 141,035 immigrants arrived in the United States, making a total for the eleven months of 885,634 against 563,157 for the same period last year.

THE WHISKY BILL.

Treasury officials say the failure of the whisky bond extension bill will not compel the withdrawal of more than one million gallons this year, but an immense amount next.

NOMINATIONS.

Members of the tariff commission in place of Wheeler and Phelps, declined: A. R. Boteller, of West Virginia, and William H. McMahon, of New York.

To be members of the board of registration and elections in Utah: Alex. Ramsey, of Minnesota; Algron S. Paddock, of Nebraska; General Godfrey, of Iowa; Ambrose B. S. Cullerton, of Indiana, and James R. Pettigrew, of Arkansas.

CONGRESS.

SENATE PROCEEDINGS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 16.—The bill regulating the mode of presidential elections was referred to the judiciary committee.

The anti-bellum southern mail claims were debated during the morning hour and went over.

The bank charter bill was taken up. The first seven sections of the bill were agreed to substantially as reported, by a vote of 35 to 21. Debate ensued on the 8th section and pending motions were when the doors were opened at 5:25 p. m. the senate adjourned until Monday.

HOUSE PROCEEDINGS.

The consideration of the river and harbor bill was resumed by paragraphs in committee of the whole. A number of amendments were offered and the section of the bill which states that such portion of the sum appropriated for the Ohio river as is necessary for the improvement of the Davis island dam and Indiana chute was struck out and the whole sum, \$350,000, is left to the direction of the engineers.

A long discussion ensued on the section of the bill providing for the condemnation of land for reservoirs at the headwaters of the Mississippi river, pending which the committee rose and the house adjourned.

The Head Tax.

NEW YORK, June 16.—The board of immigration commissioners to-day ordered Castle Garden to be closed after Saturday next to all emigrants landed except by any other steamship company than the French line, which alone agrees to pay 50 cents per head.

Fires.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., June 16.—The car trimming works were destroyed by fire with a loss of \$5,000.

WORCESTER, Mass., June 16.—The painting, upholstering and furnishing shop of the Osgood Bradley car company, with four cars, was destroyed by fire. Loss, \$30,000.

Passenger Rates.

CHICAGO, June 16.—An important agreement affecting the public as well as railroad companies has been reached by the several managers of all southwestern railroads, by which pas-

senger rates over the routes between Chicago and St. Louis and Missouri river points shall be advanced on June 20th. The new schedule is as follows: Chicago to Kansas City, \$12.60; Chicago to St. Louis, \$7.50; outstanding unlimited tickets sold in blocks to speculators during the passenger war are to be good over any line which is party to the agreement irrespective of issue. This settles a matter which has been pending over a year.

The Malley Trial.

NEW HAVEN, June 16.—The Malley trial was adjourned till Tuesday. Juror Turman's daughter is dead.

Obituary.

BRISTOL, Pa., June 16.—Charles I. Gredell, cashier of the Farmer's National bank, died this morning, aged 77.

The Labor Troubles.

PITTSBURG, June 16.—The labor situation is unchanged. Reports that mills are starting with non-union hands are denied. Everything is ready for the labor demonstration to-morrow.

Hanged.

ALBUQUERQUE, June 16.—Miller Varberry was hanged for the murder of five men, one of whom, Charles Campbell, was a stranger to him. He killed them just for fun.

PICKENYVILLE, Ill., June 16.—James Vaughn was hanged this afternoon for the murder of William Watts, marshal of Tamarora, in August, 1881.

Base Ball.

WORCESTER, Mass., June 16.—Worcesters, 3; Buffaloes, 4.

Lightning Wreck.

ST. JOHN, N. B., June 16.—During a heavy thunderstorm this morning at Hammond, Kings county, two houses were struck by lightning and destroyed, and Reuben Brown, a farmer, killed. He leaves five children.

Two hundred and fifty passengers, who were passengers on board the wrecked steamer Canadian, passed through here en route to Boston.

Texas Doings.

DALLAS, Tex., June 16.—A San Antonio special says that on Wednesday evening Col. Holland, superintendent of Flower's ranche, was murdered by two Mexican herdsmen in Flower's employ. They split his head with an axe and otherwise mutilated the body, pillaged the premises, stole two horses and escaped.

A report is just received of a wind storm in the locality of the railroad camp on Possum river last night. Many saloons, restaurants and several hundred tents were blown down. One man was killed and three others injured. Damage, \$1,000.

The Iron Strike.

PITTSBURG, June 16.—In two mills a sufficient number of men to run the mills agree to go to work at the old price. One mill will resume next week, and the others as soon as enough orders have been received to justify resuming. The condition of the iron trade can be inferred from the fact that to-day a representative of an English firm sold 100 tons of iron to a broker at 3c, when the card rates here are 4 1/2-10.

A \$200,000 DWELLING.

ROSS & WINSAN to Build a House in Baltimore That Will Rival Mr. Vanderbilt's.

The proverbially lavish taste of Mr. Ross & Winsan has again been displayed in a new building which is in course of erection on the east side of Paul street, between Biddle and John streets. The structure is intended as a private residence, to be occupied by Mr. Winsan and his family, and it is said to be the finest private house south of New York. From the plans and specifications of the building, the idea of a palace rather than an American dwelling is conveyed. The structure so far has only been completed to the roof, and is as yet in the rough, but when finished its magnificence will rival anything which has yet been built in Baltimore. The lot upon which the house stands is 125 feet front by 122 1/2 deep. The house itself is 66 feet front by 75 feet deep, and is to be five stories high, with sloping Mansard roof. The style is French renaissance, and the exterior, when completed, will resemble very closely an old Belgian or French chateau, around which fancy seldom fails to cluster clinging and historical associations. What remains of the lot after the building has taken up its quota will be transformed by the gardeners into a beautiful garden, which is to cost \$10,000. Around the yard and building Mr. Winsan has ordered a brick inclosure ten feet high and fourteen inches thick, which is to meet at the northern and southern corners of the house.

The most striking features in the architectural appearance of the house are two towers, one at the front and the other at the rear. They reach only as far as the cornice, and remind one of the pictures of Kenilworth Castle. At the side of each of the towers rise four circular chimneys, unique in design and made of pressed red brick, with jet black cement, all combined in one. The material of which the house is built is pressed brick and Long Meadow brownstone, and the blending of colors is rich and perfect. Building operations were begun this spring, and the house will be finished about November. Mr. Winsan is at present at Newport, but in the winter will move from his Hollis street mansion and occupy the residence on St. Paul street.

REDDING'S Russia Salve has genuine merit, as all who use it will testify. Price 25c. Try it.

GATHERING OF BIG GUNS.

The Naval Strength of European Powers Displayed in Egyptian Waters.

A Large Number of English Troops Embarked for Alexandria.

The Flight of Foreigners Continues From All Towns.

Bismarck Kicks the Reichstag Into the Middle of November.

AFFAIRS IN EGYPT.

LONDON, June 16.—The Porte has been notified that if he refuses to consent to a conference the powers will hold one anyhow, elsewhere than Constantinople, with or without his presence.

The Alexandria customs house has been reopened.

The channel squadron is going to Malta, where a large number of troops will be embarked, and the squadron will then proceed to Egypt.

The increased objection to a conference shown by the Turkish officials is caused by fear that the result of the conference will limit the sultan's authority in Egypt.

In the house of commons this afternoon, Gladstone, in answer to inquiries, said he believed the sultan still had the sovereignty of Egypt, and other powers had concurred in this opinion.

Cairo, June 16.—Four thousand persons left this city to-day for Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIA, June 16.—The khedive has summoned Ragheb and Ahmed Kashed Pashas to form a ministry. They will probably refuse.

It is calculated that 15,000 persons have already left Alexandria, and the city, owing to suspension of business, is full of destitution.

Eye witnesses state that all persons who took refuge in the police stations during the riots were massacred.

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 16.—It is reported the porte will recall Dervish Pasha, and send Ahmed Mukhtar Pasha to succeed him.

BERLIN, June 16.—Germany will send two more war vessels to Alexandria, if it is deemed necessary to preserve the peace and protect German residents in Egypt. Reichstag has been prorogued to November 13th.

PARIS, June 16.—General Deciesy Dix is in this city to-day.

A CRUISE.

LONDON, June 16.—The American corvettes Portsmouth and Saratoga have left Spithead to cruise on the French and Spanish coasts.

Drowned.

GUILFORD, Ind., 16.—The recent storm, the third this year, swept the house of Michael Power and he and his family were drowned.

Poisoned by Bull Batten.

PHILADELPHIA, June 16.—Analytical Expert Crescenore reported to the board of health that the substance which poisoned Mrs. Margaret Shellen and two daughters on Sunday was artificial butter compounded from animal fats rancid with strong acid, melting at 9 1/2 F., containing bad salt. The victims are still in a critical condition.

Small Pox.

DAVENPORT, Iowa, June 16.—Sixteen cases of small pox have developed here in the past four days. The disease is spreading as the hot weather continues.

CHICAGO, June 16.—For the first time in a year not a single case of small pox was reported during the past twenty-four hours.

A Rascally Community.

SCOTLAND, D. T., June 16.—Alfred Brown, the notorious agricultural implement swindler, who defrauded Racine parties out of over \$25,000, has been arrested here but his friends refuse to permit the United States marshal to take him out of the territory, declaring the marshal will be murdered if he attempts it.

The Hoosier Capital.

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., June 16.—General George H. Chapman, a well known lawyer of this city, died this evening. He was a prominent cavalry officer in the Army of the Potomac, and since the war has been receiver of two important railways in this state. He has been in bad health some time.

Mrs. George Wallace, 60 years of age, who resides in the southern part of the city, was drowned into this evening by falling into her own cellar, which was filled with water by the recent overflow.

Patrick O'Brien was found this evening in White river, some distance below the city. His body was recovered from among those who were drowned Monday at the union depot by falling into Payne's run. There are two others still missing.

Indications.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 17.—For the upper Mississippi and Missouri valleys, in the southern portions, partly cloudy weather and rains, warm southerly to westerly winds, falling followed by rising barometer.

Terrific Hall Storm.

DUBUQUE, Iowa, June 16.—A terrific hail storm prevailed here to-day. Hail stones as large as oranges and weighing from a half to one pound fell. The damage to property amounts to \$5,000. Several persons were injured. Wm. Graham received a scalp wound.

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