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Getting Ready for Work

Mr. J. A. Latcha, the chief engineer and superintendent of construction for Brown, Howard & Co., contractors for the building of the DSS&A, is in the city and has secured office rooms in the Thurber Block on Washington street. He will use all the rooms on the ground floor east of the entrance, and will have a cashier and several clerks to attend to the work of the office. Brown, Howard & Co., have the contract for building the branch from Sage, on the DM&M to the Sault, a distance of forty miles, and also from near Sturgeon, on the MH&O to Ashland and possibly Duluth, a distance of 190 miles, if the latter point is selected. The whole contract is to be finished by the 30th of November 1887, and will be one of the fastest jobs of railroad building on record. Mr. Latcha superintended the construction of the Nickle Plate, also built by Brown, Howard & Co., which is the fastest and best job of this kind on record, but this will beat it, as the Nickle Plate was built through an exceptionally favorable country, while portions of this line will run through a country offering great obstacles to the surveyor and constructor.

Four or five division engineers, each with a corps of assistants, will have office along the line and will work under the direction of Mr. Latcha, the chief office being in this city. Two engineering parties are already at work near Lake Gogebic, and two others will soon start on that division. The line will probably run 12 miles south of Ashland, avoiding heavy grades by not entering that place, and will strike the Ashland division of the NP farther west. If this line can be leased by the company on terms which they consider favorable they will lease it, otherwise they will build their own line into Duluth, a distance of forty miles. The contract calls for the complete equipment of the road, the building of depots, etc., and the turning over of the line in complete running order. Steel rails only will be used, and the roadbed is to be of the best, the grade not exceeding 52 feet to the mile except in a very few places.

The line will be located west of Marquette as soon as possible and then men will be put on and the work of construction prosecuted with vigor during the winter. It is the intention, if possible, to do all the heavy work during the winter, and as soon as the frost is out of the ground, to finish the roadbed and begin the laying of the track. The short time allowed by the contract requires the utmost expedition, and as soon as a division is located men will at once begin work upon it, wherever it is.