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An Interesting Interview

The following is taken from a lengthy interview, had with Mr. James McMillan by a reporter of the Detroit Evening Journal. Upper Peninsula readers will find it of great interest. After giving the details of the formation of the syndicate for the building of The DSS&A, it says:

This syndicate consists of Calvin S. Brice, George I. Seney, F. P. Alcott and General Thomas, of New York; Francis Palms, George H. Hammond, William B. Moran, John S. Newberry, Hugh McMillan, and James McMillan, of Detroit and C. R. Cummings of Chicago, and ten millions of dollars were subscribed to carry out these projects. The DM&M road was bid in by Mr. Hugh McMillan for this syndicate, the sale being part of the scheme for the reorganization of the road. It is proposed to have the "Soo" branch completed by July next and the bridge finished by November. F. P. Alcott, George I. Seney and James McMillan have been constituted a committee to handle the money and complete arrangements. The cost of building will be about \$20,000 a mile. The Michigan Central will build a gigantic ferry intended to run across the straits of Mackinac all season. It will carry 30 cars and will give Michigan through connection with the Pacific coast via the Northern Pacific, MH&O, DM&M and MC railroads, as well as with the Canadian northwest, via the CPR, which reaches the "Soo" by November next. Mr. McMillan will hold a conference shortly with Mr. Hickson of the Grand Trunk, with a view to having the Grand Trunk pushed through to the "Soo" also.

"I cannot say that Detroit merchants have been over quick to take hold of this new project for increasing their trade in the upper peninsula," said Mr. James McMillan, this morning. "Still, I have been spoken to by many of them, and there is a decided interest in the plan. Then, again, several Detroiters have put money into the work - Hammond, Palms and ourselves, for example. The trouble all along has been that the MH&O has worked in the interests of Chicago and against Detroit. Now things will be changed. Then, again, there has been trouble in getting freight up there in the winter; but this will be obviated by the new railroad ferry across to St. Ignace. For some time I have been trying to get Mr. Ledyard and Mr. Hughart to build a boat that could get through in the winter; but until now, they have not see their way clear to do so."

The boat will be built on the principal developed by Capt. James Millen, of Parker & Millen, while superintending the transit of the present ferry Algoma across the straits two years ago, when the ice was piled mountains high. It was found that the ferry would run one-third of her length into and on top of a deep floe of ice, and that her engines were totally unable to pull her off or send her further through. In such cases it became necessary to blast the ice from under the boat in order to free her. It was under these circumstances that Capt. Millen conceived an idea that facilitated matters greatly. When a floe of ice was met which was impassable by ordinary means, a stake or anchor was set firmly into the ice some distance ahead.