CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Scope of the Volume - General Statements - Opening of Sections - Gross Quantities of Work - Average Quantities per Mile - Total Expenditure - Review of the Boundary Question - Diplomacy of the United States - Sacrifice of British Interests - The Lesson Taught - General Observations - The Railway and the Dominion - Historical Events - Suggestive Associations - Men identified with the Railway - A Coincidence - Opening of the Line.

It has been the aim of the writer to give, in the preceding pages, a concise account of the Intercolonial Railway, in its several stages. While setting forth the principal facts in its history, as far as he has been able, the writer has also presented those subsidiary events, which have more or less influenced the project from the beginning. These records may appear of doubtful utility to those who are familiar with them; but, when the present actors shall have passed away, the permanence of the record may be held by another generation to be of some value.

The Railway will hereafter be known to the general public chiefly on account of the advantages which it has created, and the conveniences which it has increased. To the statesman and the engineer, its history has more suggestive teaching. The writer, however, does not conceive it to be his province to enlarge on this view. It only remains for him to add some general statements respecting the undertaking, and so bring to an end the duty he has assumed, of recording its vicissitudes and its successful consummation.

The line south of Moncton has been open since 1873, by which means Railway connection between Saint John and Halifax was attained. At the north the distance from River du Loup to St. Flavie, 86 miles, was opened in August, 1874. Between Campbellton and Moncton, 185 miles, trains have been running, with some interruptions, since last winter. The remaining sections are now completed, and the line may be considered fit for traffic throughout.

Tables are given, in the appendix, which show the gross quantities of the work in each District, and the average quantities per mile on each Division. Being based on the returns of actual measurements, they may be regarded as authoritative.

They show that more than two hundred thousand cubic yards of masonry has been built, and that the excavation amounts to sixteen million cubic yards, of which nine to ten per cent has been rock.

Comparing the different Divisions, the lowest, average excavation per mile is 13,665, the highest 81,996 cubic yards. The lowest average of masonry is 179, the highest is 2,004 cubic yards per mile.

Making comparison of the four Districts, the average excavation per mile is as follows:-

The St. Lawrence District ..... 33,631 cubic yards.
The Restigouche District..... 33,000 cubic yards.
The Miramichi District ..... 31,940 cubic yards.
The Nova Scotia District..... 30,200 cubic yards.

The average masonry per mile may also be stated thus:

The St. Lawrence District ..... 332 cubic yards.
The Restigouche District..... 557 cubic yards.

The Miramichi District ..... 376 cubic yards.
The Nova Scotia District..... 330 cubic yards.

On the line, as a whole, the average gives the excavation at 32,210 cubic yards, and the masonry at 401 cubic yards per mile.

It is not practicable to state the precise cost of the several sections in each case, as many of the claims advanced by contractors are unsettled. Moreover, some time must elapse before the entire ballasting and draining are thoroughly completed.

At this date, the capital account shows a total expenditure of $21,569,136.79, on all services, including branch lines and rolling stock.

The statements of quantities and cost may be said to be all that was needed to close the description of a work which, for so many years, has occupied public attention, and which is now a fact in the history of the Dominion.

The Boundary question, no pleasant page in our records, might have been briefly passed over: the consideration of it adds little to national pride, or national satisfaction. But when we find that railway connection with the nearest British Atlantic port is now attained by traversing twice the distance which, under a just settlement of that question, would have been necessary, the subject prominently presents itself; and the events which led to this condition of affairs claim investigation that could not be avoided.

At this date, we look back with bewilderment at the extraordinary series of negotiations which ended in the establishment of the Maine Boundary, -- a result which converted undoubted British territory into foreign soil, which alienated the allegiance of thousands of British subjects, without their consent, and which made a direct connection on our own soil, between Central Canada and the Atlantic, an impossibility.

The diplomacy of the United States has not always appeared so straightforward as it seems to have been in this matter. Individual citizens may have acted in a captious, exacting and aggressive spirit. But it is evident, throughout, that the Executive at Washington desired to settle the line of boundary, described in the Treaty of 1783, on a fair and equitable basis. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to suggest a proposal more marked by sagacity and justice than that made by President Jackson. The local irritation in Maine was a minor quantity in the problem; General Jackson would have eliminated it in a very simple manner. The truculence of a few provincial politicians would have cost him little thought. In Lord Ashburton's time the temper of individual citizens would have been as readily controlled by Daniel Webster, whose strength of will would have been little coerced by the now forgotten delegates sent to assist him.

The local irritation in Maine did not gain strength until years after the rejection of the Washington propositions for a settlement. The ill-feeling subsequently shown was strongly incited by the men who sympathized with the Canadian rebellion of 1837. Had the offers made by the United States been accepted the boundary would have been satisfactorily established long before the period of the out-break. Even in 1842, it was possible to fall back upon President Jackson's offer, had Lord Ashburton possessed the least fitness for his duties.

No Canadian can reflect, without pain and humiliation, on the sacrifice of British interests in the settlement that was made. Yet however strongly we may be actuated by this thought, we can have no ill-feeling against the United States. The fault does not lie with the Washington Government. It is due to the ignorance of the merits of the case, and to an indifference to the

interests at stake, on the part, of the Imperial representative, who had been entrusted with the protection of the rights and the honour of the Empire.

The Imperial authorities recognize the lesson taught by the Ashburton Treaty, in adopting the policy of the federation of the British American Provinces, and in acting on the principle that no Canadian interest shall hereafter be discussed in Imperial negotiations without the presence of a Dominion representative.

It is scarcely necessary to say that these remarks in no way point to a severing of the tie that links Canadians to the Parent Land. The universal feeling throughout the Dominion is, that British connection is a mainstay in our political existence; and the strength of that connection has been shown by the way in which it has withstood occasional shocks, among which may be reckoned the Treaty of 1842. Though the Dominion has sustained an irreparable loss of inheritance, she fully appreciates the advantages of her position. Under the fostering care of the Mother Country, she has passed peacefully into the possession of illimitable acres, vast forests, inexhaustible deposits of mineral wealth, and fisheries on three oceans. Her still boundless territory and resources will tax the energies and enterprise of her sons for centuries, and may well afford room and welcome for the millions who may seek her shores from less favoured lands.

For more than twenty years after the Ashburton Treaty, many fruitless attempts were made to revive the railway project. Delegation after delegation called upon the Home Government, without success, to connect the several Provinces by railway, so that British America should have the means of inter-communication. Explorations and surveys were indeed made, but no practical result followed until the time arrived for the political union of the Provinces.

The Intercolonial Railway owes its existence to the creation of the Dominion, although it may be said that neither could have been consummated without the other. One of the first efforts of united British America has been the establishment of this line of communication, to make intercourse possible between the Provinces. It is the railway which brings the Maritime Provinces into connection with Central Canada. At each extremity of the wilderness hitherto unoccupied except by the hunter or the Indian, and never traversed without difficulty, were found separate communities, each with the sentiment that all had interests in common; all equally belonged to the outer Empire of Great Britain; all were identified with her glories and greatness; all had been devoted to her in the hour of trial, yet all were denied means of intercommunication, and were unable to unite for a common purpose. There is no longer an unpenetrated wilderness to bar the hope of realizing all the benefits of union. The Provinces are now brought into daily connection and association, possessing identity of political life, with institutions extending equal justice to all, covered with the ample flag, of the Empire, and with advantages which are unrivalled. If we but prove true to ourselves, our future prosperity is assured.

It does not fall within the province of the writer to allude to the past history of the country, or to make special mention of the places of interest that are reached by the Railway. The district now opened up has, through want of communication, been hitherto cut off from the every-day life of the rest of Canada; but it possesses much to repay the tourist, both in the variety and character of its landscape and in the traditions which throw a halo over many a locality.

The railway will give easy access to many of the scenes of the long struggle between France and Britain for the mastery of the Northern Continent, terminated by the triumph of Wolfe

at Quebec. The record of many of these events is still imperfectly, written. The naval engagement on the Bay de Chaleur, the fierce contests around the now grass-grown Forts of Lawrence, Beausejour and Moncton, are, seldom heard of; but the scenes of these conflicts are now made accessible; and some future historian, may, by the inspiration of viewing the ground, be induced to perpetuate the events. The expulsion of the Acadians from their homes, which, Wolfe declared, "added nothing to the renown of the King's arms," we may wish to forget. The ever-memorable Miramichi fire, half a century ago, still remembered, might well be entombed in similar oblivion; but the tale is to be told, and to be remembered.

More than three centuries ago, Jacques Cartier, coasting by New Brunswick, landed on its shores, to abandon them for an exploration of the great river, with which his memory is for ever connected.

At a still earlier date fishermen from the Basque Provinces left their Biscayan homes, to enrich their country by the oil and ivory of the walrus, which in vast herds frequented the Bay de Chaleur and the St. Lawrence, in those early days. Pushing investigation still farther back, we meet the Indians, who held the country as a possession from nature. We ask the remnants of this once fierce and numerous race, and we ask the ethnologist, equally in vain, whence they came, and from what stock they descended. The district traversed by the railway is full of suggestive associations, and cannot fail to awaken the attention and interest of enquiring minds.

During the past forty years many public men, conspicuous in the Councils of the several Provinces, have been identified with this railway. Of late years another class, less prominent but more numerous, have been the direct and immediate instruments in bringing the work to its present completion.

All may feel an honest pride in this connection, whatever part they played. Some may have toiled for renown: others have patiently and silently laboured for duty or for bread.

The traveller, who is borne onwards, moving in an hour a distance which would have taken weeks to traverse through the tangled forests, scarcely casts a thought on the thousands of the sons of labour, who toiled so many days and years, in making smooth his path. Prominent in the list are those who explored the forest, who traced the line, and who directed the work to its completion. Their professional brotherhood and official relationship with the writer suggests to him the duty of placing their names permanently on record. The Engineering Staff, from the earliest explorations to the present time, is given in the Appendix. It is a mournful duty more especially to record the names of those who have fallen, and to pay the last tribute to their memory.

It appears, from the account of Jacques Cartier's first voyage, that on the 1st July, 1534, at a point between, the Bay des Chaleur and Miramichi, he first planted his foot on the new Continent.

On the 1st July, 1761, the great Indian Chief, Argimault, whose race had long warred against the British settlers, met the authorities at Halifax, and terminated the Indian wars, by declaring perpetual submission to Great Britain, and with great solemnity buried the hatchet for ever.

The Dominion came into being 333 years after the bold navigator of St. Malo landed on the shores of Acadia; and the anniversary of its birth in the present year marks another important epoch in the history of the country. On this day, July 1st, 1876, may be chronicled the

completion of the Intercolonial Railway, and the full consummation of the union of the British Provinces in North America.

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