

INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY, 1832 TO 1842.

Early suggestions of a Railway System for Canada. - Henry Fairbairn's Extraordinary foresight. - An Intercolonial Railway first projected. - Exploration of the Route. - Smith and Hatheway's Report. - The project meets the approbation of the Lower Canada Legislature. - Opinions of Captain Yule, R. E. - St. John's press advocates the scheme. - Deputation to England - Imperial Government grants £10,000 - Survey Commenced under Captain Yule, R. E. - Engineering character of Route favourable. - Western Traffic to be competed for. - Opinions of the New York Press on the "Great Project." - Cupidity of the people of the United States. - Interference of the State of Maine. - Suspension of the Survey. - Lord Durham. - The Kempt Road.

The project of an Intercolonial Railway, to connect the Maritime Provinces with the Canadas, early occupied public attention. Few are aware that among the first consequences of the stimulus given to progress, throughout the world, by the creation of the Railway system, we must assign a prominent position to the consideration of a scheme for connecting Halifax with Saint John, and the Bay of Fundy, with the St. Lawrence.

The Stockton and Darlington Railway, of which the fiftieth anniversary was celebrated last autumn, had been but a few years in operation, when British North America became awakened to the necessity of establishing the Railway system within her territory as a relief to the disability under which she was labouring. Although the influence it was destined to exercise upon the world was at that time but imperfectly understood by the mass of men, some minds foresaw the power which it possessed to develop the resources of a country. They were but few, and it was only by slow degrees that the generation which witnessed its introduction appreciated the revolution it would accomplish.

Extraordinary as it may seem, a writer who may be classed with the few far-seeing men who lived two generations ago, turned his views across the Atlantic and suggested the construction of Railways in British America as a means of promoting her progress.

The Stockton and Darlington line, the first in the series of English passenger Railways, indeed, the first of the kind in any part of the world, was opened on the 27th. September, 1825. In the United Service Journal of 1832, Mr. Henry Fairbairn, the writer in question, published the first notice, so far as known, of a project for applying the Railway system to Canada. He says: "I propose, first to form a Railway for "wagons, from Quebec to the Harbour of St. Andrews upon the Bay of Fundy, a work which will convey the whole trade of the St. Lawrence, in a single day, to the Atlantic waters. Thus the timber, provisions, ashes, and other exports of the Provinces may be brought to the Atlantic, not only with more speed, regularity and security, than by the river St. Lawrence, but with the grand additional advantage of a navigation open at all seasons of the year; the harbour of St. Andrews being capacious, deep, and never closed in the winter, season, whilst the St. Lawrence is unnavigable from ice, from the month of November to May. Another great line of railway may be formed from Halifax, through Nova Scotia to Saint John, in the Province of New Brunswick, and thence, into the United States, joining the railways which are fast spreading through that country, and which will soon reach from New York to Boston and

through the whole New England States. This railway will not only bring to the Atlantic the lumber, provisions, metal, and other exports of the provinces, but from the situation of the harbour of Halifax, it will doubtless command the whole stream of passengers, mails, and light articles of commerce passing into the British possessions and to the United States and every part of the continent of America.

"Indeed, if the difficulties and expense of constructing these works in our North American Colonies were tenfold greater, an imperative necessity would exist for their adoption, if it is desired by, the Government of this country, to maintain an equality of commercial advantages with the neighbouring United States. For the splendid advantages of the railway system are well understood in that country, where great navigable rivers are about to be superseded by railway of vast magnitude, reaching over hundreds of miles. Indeed, in no country, will the results of the railway system be so extensive as in the United States, for it will assimilate their only disadvantage, inland distance from the sea; and it will effect the work of centuries to connect, consolidate, and strengthen that giant territory, lying beneath all climates and spreading over a quarter of the globe. If then we would contend with these advantages, in our North American Provinces, it is only by similar works, that we can bring to the Atlantic, the agricultural exports of the Colonies, and secure the stream of emigration, which otherwise, with the facility of inland transportation, will be rapidly diverted to the Western regions of the United States."

These words were penned forty-four years ago and they are worthy of preservation, not only for the correctness of view expressed and for the enunciation of a policy which has been entirely carried out, but for the modern language and tone in which the writer clothed his argument. The mind which, in those days, could judge what railways would effect, and could foreshadow what has taken half a century to accomplish, must have been of no ordinary kind, and, on the completion of the Intercolonial Railway it seems a fitting time to remember Henry Fairbairn and mention his name with honour.

St. Andrews, on the Bay of Fundy, was then an important centre of business in New Brunswick, and the mention of the part assigned to that locality in this scheme at once attracted public attention there. The commercial importance of the undertaking was immediately recognized and its active population lost no time in putting-into practical form the policy which Mr. Fairbairn had pointed out for it to follow; a meeting was called on the 5th October, 1835, at which resolutions advocating the line of Railway were unanimously carried.

More than ordinary interest is attached to these proceedings as they may be held to be the first step taken towards the consummation of the project. The resolutions enunciated the necessity of a Railway from Canada to the nearest winter port in New Brunswick, viz., St. Andrews, the national importance of the project, and the prospect that it would be remunerative. The resolutions further set forth that an association be formed to promote the building of a Railway. The association was at once organised and an executive committee appointed.*

* Honourable James Allanshaw, Chairman.
Thomas Wyer, Esq., Deputy Chairman.

Committee of Management

Harris Hatch

John Wilson

James Rait

Samuel Frye

J. McMaster

Adam Jack Secretary and Treasurer

A deputation was also named to wait upon Sir Archibald Campbell, then Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, to demonstrate the advantages which must result from the scheme and to solicit his assistance. The Lieutenant-Governor expressed his appreciation of the zeal and enterprise which suggested a project so well calculated to prove beneficial, commercially and in every other respect; and promised to support the project. The association appointed Mr. George H. Smith and Mr. E. R. Hatheway to explore the territory; so that the feasibility of the undertaking could be ascertained, and the character of the difficulties in the way made known. These gentlemen reported in January, 1836. The route followed by them was in part that which the present New Brunswick & Canada Railway has taken from St. Andrews northward to Woodstock, thence it proceeded up the valley of the river St. John as far as the point called Mars Hill, about 120 miles from St. Andrews, and then turned nearly Westward towards Quebec, ending on the height of land between the waters of the river St. John and the St. Lawrence. The exploration was not continued farther than this height of land, owing to an examination having been previously, made through the district lying between it and the city of Quebec, by Captain Yule of the Royal Engineers. The latter exploration had been carried on under the authority of Lord Aylmer, Governor-General of Canada. The report of Messrs. Smith and Hatheway declared that no obstructions had been met to impede the formation of the Railway, that a great portion of the lands were fit for settlement, and no burnt tracts had been found. The work was pronounced by the explorers to be less difficult than was expected. During the progress of the survey, the association appealed to public opinion, and a verdict was pronounced unmistakably in its favour. In this state of affairs it became advisable to communicate with Lower Canada; accordingly in December, 1835, a deputation proceeded to Quebec, to bring the matter under the notice of the Government. Resolutions favourable to the undertaking were adopted in the same month by both Houses of the Legislature. The resolutions of the Legislative Council bear date 19th December. They are highly laudatory of the project, and promise the passing of a law authorising the construction of the Railway, recommending at the same time the work to the consideration of the Imperial authorities.*

* That a railroad between the port of St. Andrews, in the Bay of Fundy, which is open at all seasons of the year, and the port of Quebec, would greatly diminish the disadvantage under which this province labours from the severity of its climate and the consequent interruption of the navigation of the River St. Lawrence. That the opening of such communication between the points before mentioned would promote the settlement of the country, greatly facilitate the intercourse between these provinces and the United Kingdom, extend the interchange of commodities between the British possessions in America, increase the demand for British manufactures, and to the means of affording additional employment to British shipping. That for the foregoing reasons it is highly expedient to promote and facilitate the views of the Saint Andrews and Quebec Railroad Company Association, and that so soon as the Legislature of the province of New Brunswick shall have passed an Act to establish a railroad between Saint Andrews and the province line, every facility ought to be given to the enactment of a law of a similar nature upon conditions as favourable as may have been granted to any railroad company within this province.

That an humble address be presented to His Excellency, the Governor-in-Chief, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to transmit the above Resolutions to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, as the opinion of the Legislative

Council, upon the subject to which it reference; and praying also that His Excellency will be pleased to recommend the subject to the favourable consideration of His Majesty's Government, if His Excellency shall think fit to do so."

Similar Resolutions were adopted by the House of Assembly the ensuing week.

The inhabitants of Quebec and Montreal equally expressed sympathy in the undertaking. The Boards of Trade of both cities joined the association, and special committees were appointed to act in concert with the deputation.

In compliance with the wish of the deputation, Captain Yule, R. E., who had made the exploratory survey between Quebec and the height of land, placed on record the expression of his opinion, that the scheme was beyond the ordinary limits of commercial speculation; that it was even something more than interprovincial in its character; that it was included the greater object of reducing the time necessary to pass between Europe and America.

In Saint John, New Brunswick, a deep interest was felt in the scheme, and, although a degree of rivalry existed between that place and St. Andrews, the press of Saint John gave its support to the project.*

*We most sincerely hope that this grand projection may receive the favourable consideration of the King and his government. The great importance of connecting these two ports by railroad will at once be seen, when we remind our readers that Quebec is bound in icy fetters for about six months in the year, while at the same time New Brunswick would receive an additional impulse by St. Andrews being the port of exit for the productions of Canada. We certainly think that our neighbours of St. Andrews are entitled to great credit for the persevering manner in which they for a number of months past, directed their attention to the subject, both in having visited Quebec and causing a survey of the contemplated line of road to be made, and that, too, at their own expense. It is true, they have much to gain if it should go into successful operation; but at the same time, we must feel the benefits to be derived from it, for our interests are so intimately blended, that whatever affects the one must also be felt by the other." — *Saint John Courier*, February 25, 1836.

In January, 1836, a deputation proceeded to England, carrying with them a petition to the King, and remained there engaged in negotiation with the Imperial Government until the following June.

During March, resolutions similar to those passed by the Legislature of Lower Canada were carried in the House of Assembly, Nova Scotia; and in the same month a bill passed the Legislature of New Brunswick, incorporating the "St. Andrews and Quebec Railroad Company," for the construction of a line from St. Andrews, New Brunswick, to Lower Canada.

Lord Glenelg was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and it was to him the several resolutions of the Provincial Legislature, and the reports of what had then been done, were submitted. On April 27th an estimate of the cost of construction, and of the probable traffic, was also laid before him. The cost of the work was estimated at \$4,000,000, and the revenue to be derived at \$606,000, apart from the carriage of mails.*

**Estimate of cost of construction.*

Grading 250 miles at \$5,000 per mile (currency)

£312,500

Making the road and putting down rails for a single track, with
turnouts, etc., at \$7,000 per mile 437,000
Whole estimated cost £750,000

The association thought safe to allow for contingencies, in addition thereto

	<u>£250,000</u>
Total	£1,000,000
Or, in sterling money	£ 888,889

Exports from Quebec.

Flour and provisions, say 110,000 barrels, at 3 shillings per barrel	£16,500
Wheat, barley, oats, etc.	10,000
Staves, ashes and miscellaneous articles	10,000
Passengers, as per contra	<u>15,600</u>
Amount from exports	£52,100

Imports to Quebec.

West India produce	£5,000
European manufactures and merchandise	10,000
Passengers, averaging 15 per day, 260 days, at 80 shillings each	15,600
Miscellaneous articles, equal to 50,000 barrels at 5 shillings each	12,500
Emigrants,	<u>5,000</u>
Amount of imports	£48,100

To and from the intermediate country.

100,000 tons deals, timber, boards, and planks, at 7s. 6d. per ton,	£37,500
Shingles, staves, sawlogs, scantling, and other dimension lumber	7,500
Provisions, goods, passengers i.e., settlers and operators	<u>6,300</u>
Total	£51,300

Probable income	£151,500
Equal in sterling money to:	£134,666

Allowance for carrying mails and other items not included.

The deputation urged the importance of an immediate survey on a more comprehensive scale than that of the previous explorations, and suggested that a sum not exceeding £10,000 be expended in an exploration through the wilderness country, an expenditure which would save thousands in the end; and as the service could not be completed in season, that it should be commenced without delay. The deputation further proposed, as the means for raising the necessary capital, that the sum of £250,000 should be given as a bonus or special grant to the company on the principle established in the province for the construction of roads and internal improvements; that a further sum of £500,000 be invested in the stock of the company, the dividends to form a part of the casual revenues; the remaining £250,000 to be obtained in stock in the Canadas and New Brunswick.

On May 5th, 1836, the deputation addressed a letter to Sir George Grey, then Under-Secretary of State, acknowledging the receipt of his letter of the 4th instant, which conveyed to them the gratifying information that their application for a sum of money not, exceeding £10,000, to be expended in the exploration and survey of the proposed line of Railway from St. Andrews to Quebec, had been granted; and that the other propositions submitted by them would receive the attention of Government so soon as the result of the survey should be known. The deputation concluded their letter with an expression of thanks to Lord Glenelg.

The day after the arrival, from England, of the deputation at St. Andrews, June 10th, 1836, resolutions were passed at a public meeting to the effect — "that the munificent donation of £10 000 by His Majesty, "for the purpose of carrying into effect an exploration of the line for a "Railroad from St. Andrews to Quebec, affords an additional proof of His Majesty's solicitude for the prosperity of his British North American Colonies, and is hailed by the members of the Association as an earnest of the ultimate completion of the work." Sir Archibald Campbell was also thanked for the countenance and encouragement, he had given to the work.

The survey was entrusted to Captain Yule, who had a high reputation in the Royal

Engineers for practical knowledge and professional ability, and upon the July 24th, 1836, that officer commenced the work at Point Levis.

The object was to ascertain whether the country was suitable for railway construction; also, to obtain such data as time would permit, in order to form an opinion as to the most eligible line. The scope of the examination was not confined to the project of connecting St. Andrews and Quebec. It was extended to the wider question as to the benefits which the work would confer on the whole county. The survey followed the valley of the Etchemin River to Etchemin Lake, which had been previously examined by Captain Yule, and recommended for the route of the Levis and Kennebec Railway. From Lake Etchemin, the line of exploration was as straight as possible towards Mar Hill and then direct to St. Andrews.

Between the upper part of the River St. John, nearest the Lake Etchemin and Mars Hill, several short lines were explored. Until that period, the country from east to west, was unknown. The only reports made of its character had been given by hunters who had passed in canoes along the St. John, the Allagash, or the Restook, and the general belief was that it was generally level; at least, without great inequalities.

In the exploration made by Captain Yule not a single feature, stream, lake nor mountain could be identified until the Restook was reached. There was neither map nor land-mark to assist the exploring party.

The survey showed several level tracts; but at other points the route was occasionally turned to the right or left by high hills and ridges. On the portion of the line between Mars Hill and St. Andrews, no important obstacles were found. The route, as a whole, was found to be remarkably free from such obstacles as might have been looked for in a large tract, of which part was believed to partake of a highland character; while there were few abrupt rocky ridges to lead to a deviation of the route from a direct course. But four large rivers, and a few broad and deep ravines were met. One unusual cause of expense was to be looked for, viz., the difficulty of obtaining supplies. The distance was estimated at 300 miles, and the cost of the line at one million pounds.

The scheme was favourably received by the Governor-General and by the great body of the people.

It was generally looked upon as promising extraordinary advantages, and as a project which would give an impetus, never before experienced, to the prosperity of the country. On all sides it was held that every effort should be made to obtain an uninterrupted communication with the seaboard.

Moreover; the project was thought to be the commencement of a system of internal improvements to extend to the Far West, which had only to be put in operation to create an immense traffic and greatly to add to the wealth of the provinces. It was argued that this consideration should be kept prominently in view. The value of the export trade from the West, was inferred from the rivalry between New York and Pennsylvania in their endeavour to control it.

The people of the United States, moreover, appeared clearly to understand the advantages

which would result to the British Provinces from the undertaking. Illustrations of the spirit in which the project was reviewed, can be found in the press of New York of that date.* These furnish an early indication that it was this project which suggested to parties in the United States the policy of claiming a portion of New Brunswick as a part of Maine, so that the proposed line could not be followed.

* GREAT PROJECT — The plan which the Canadians and the New Brunswick people, under the auspices of the British Government, have projected, of a railroad from Quebec to St. Andrews, in New Brunswick, or the City of Saint John, so as to make, as it is said, St. Andrews a *wharf* and the Bay of Fundy a *harbour* for the St. Lawrence, is one of the most magnificent that has yet been projected upon this continent, and calculated to involve, ultimately, the most important political consequences. The idea was stolen from the Maine Legislature (!) where the project originally started; but Great Britain, with that sagacity and foresight that distinguish all her political movements, has taken it up and adopted it, and is likely, for want of sufficient enterprise in the Maine Legislature, not only to rob that State of the honour and the profit, but even of the *territory* over which it is absolutely necessary to construct the road; hence, undoubtedly, the reason why Sir Charles Vaughan, in his correspondence with our Government, relative to the North Eastern boundary, after the starting of the project, refused even to fall back upon the award of the King of Holland, as to the dividing line between Maine and the British Provinces, though he was very willing to adopt that line immediately after the award. The object of the British Government now is to secure enough of this disputed country to make a railroad upon, between the Bay of Fundy and Quebec.

"This project we have called magnificent, not only on account of the undertaking itself, but on account of its high and weighty consequences. It enables the British Government to send all her troops, munitions of war, etc., with all possible speed, from that important naval position, Halifax, where the British Government is now fitting up one of the strongest fortifications in the world, to Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, the Lakes, and all along our northern and north-western territories. In five or six days, soldiers can be taken from the great military and naval depot at Halifax and put upon the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Ontario. The difficult and dangerous navigation of the St. Lawrence is thus avoided. The British will also thus have a port where their produce can be sent to and from the West Indies. Military and commercial advantages prompt the British Government to expend \$4,000,000, for with the harbour of Halifax, as it is near Europe, a cordon of British bayonets can be made to surround us in the shortest possible time, and the produce of the Canadas, now seeking a mart in New York in American ships, can thus be turned to St. Andrews or Saint John in British bottoms. But rely upon it, there is no question with a foreign power now so vastly involving the future destinies of this country, as the disputed boundary line with England."

At that time the entire country through which Captain Yule prosecuted the surveys was held to be wholly within British territory.

It was in 1837 that the Government of the United States made objection to the route proposed, and Canada was then in rebellion. Were the troubles of that date too tempting, an opportunity to be neglected? Had that outbreak not taken place, would the claim ever have been advanced?

It is true that in the treaty of 1783 the boundary was very vaguely described; but it was capable of arrangement. Unfortunately however, Canada, then weak, at war with herself, without cohesion, shaken by political difficulties, offered herself a willing prey to a strong and ambitious neighbour.

If the loss has been hers, the fault has, to no small extent, been hers also. The facts are now the history of the past, and there are few incidents of modern times which more plainly tell their lesson. Let us only hope that the lesson is not to be read in vain, and that those who follow us will profit by its teaching and will not again, by disunion and political discord, court spoliation, or dismemberment. The promoters of the Railway were, for, the first time, made aware of the action of the United States Government, through the deputation of the association then in England. Upon their application for an interview with Lord Glenelg, the deputation received a dispatch from Sir George Grey,* Under-Secretary of State, to the effect, that as the

Government of the State of Maine had protested against the prosecution of the undertaking, on the ground that it involved an infringement of certain stipulations respecting the unsettled boundary question, the Governor-General of Canada and the Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick had been instructed to prevent further proceedings until measures had been taken to remove the objections of the State of Maine.

* July 3rd, 1837.

In pursuance of this interference, on the 24th of the same month, the secretary of the association received a communication from Sir John Harvey, Fredericton, to the effect that he had received the commands of His Majesty's Government, in consequence of a representation from that of the United States, peremptorily to prohibit any further proceedings for the construction of a railroad between St. Andrews and Quebec until the points in dispute should be settled. Captain Yule also wrote to the association on the sudden turn of affairs, adding a few words of sympathy and hope, and the of the association were abruptly closed.

An attempt was made in 1838 to revive the project, but the boundary question had then assumed grave importance, and nothing could be done.

The difficulties with Maine, which followed the sudden and unexpected suspension of the Railway survey, and the troubles connected with the rebellion in both Canadas, pointed to the fact that if Northern America was to remain British America, there must be a speedier connection between her and the Mother Country, and that in winter there must be a mode of approach to the Canadas other than the frozen St. Lawrence. The first indication that light had dawned in the Colonial office upon this subject, is found in a dispatch from Lord Glenelg to Sir John Harvey,* to the effect that the Imperial Government had resolved to advertise for tenders for carrying the mails between England and Halifax by steam instead of sailing vessels; and that the Imperial Postmaster General had turned his attention to the necessity of increased expedition in the carriage of mails by land.

* October 24th, 1838.

In a dispatch dated May 4th, 1839, Lord Normanby informed Sir John Harvey that a contract had been entered into for a semi-monthly mail by steamships between Liverpool and Halifax, and the improvement of the mail roads was again earnestly pressed on the Colonial Governments.

It was, doubtless, the knowledge of the views of the Imperial Government which led Lord Durham in his celebrated report to allude to the future of British America.

Some explanation has always been sought for his expressions at this date.* The words, it is true, are not many, but in the light of our present knowledge they are pregnant with meaning. He says: "The completion of any satisfactory communication between Halifax and Quebec, would in fact produce relations between these Provinces that would render a general union absolutely necessary." He was indeed more of a prophet than was believed for many years. In theory, the railway was undoubtedly the pivot of the Dominion, in fact, the railway owes its existence to the Dominion. In February, 1839, a body of armed men from the State of Maine attempted to take possession of the disputed territory. The organisation of a force to repel the

invasion must have established the necessity of a military road through the length and breadth of British America. These various difficulties led to a report from the post-office authorities at Quebec,** in which the road then used for carrying mails between Quebec and Fredericton is described as passing through the territory in dispute, and stating that in giving up this route there was but one other choice, "the neglected road partially opened by Sir James Kempt," between Metis on the Lower St. Lawrence and the River Restigouche.

* January 1839.

** Quoted by Lord Normanby in dispatch, May, 1839.

The advantage of the Metis road, since known as the Kempt road, at that time was, that it passed through undisputed territory. From a military point of view it commended itself to the Government on the ground that troops and supplies could be brought by water from Halifax up the Restigouche to within 300 miles of Quebec, at periods when the St. Lawrence is not practicable. An exploration and survey of a road from the Restigouche to the St. Lawrence was therefore made in the summer of 1839, and in the following year an appropriation was voted by the Imperial Parliament for the completion of this communication between Lower Canada and New Brunswick. It retained the name of its first projector, Sir James Kempt; for many years previous to 1839 it had fallen into disuse, and had almost become forgotten, but the dark and complicated aspect of affairs again brought it to notice, and led to its restoration.

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