

THE GLEANER:

AND NORTHUMBERLAND, KENT, GLOUCESTER AND RESTIGOUCHE
COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

OLD SERIES] *Nec aranearum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster, vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.* [COMPRISED 13 VOLUMES.

NEW SERIES, VOL. VII.]

MIRAMICHI, TUESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 2, 1849.

[NUMBER 10.]

REPORT

ON THE PROPOSED

TRUNK LINE OF RAILWAY,

FROM AN EASTERN PORT IN NOVA SCOTIA,

THROUGH

NEW-BRUNSWICK, TO QUEBEC.

HALIFAX, N. S., August 31, 1848.

THREE principal lines or routes for a trunk line of railway present themselves for consideration; and by combining portions of two of these lines together, a fourth and fifth route may be formed.

1st. Commencing at Halifax and crossing the Province of Nova Scotia to a port in the Bay of Fundy, from thence by a steamer to St. John, in New Brunswick, and then by Fredericton along the St. John River, to the Grand Falls.

From the Grand Falls by the best practicable route across to the mouth of the Riviere du Loup, on the St. Lawrence, and by the right bank of the St. Lawrence to Quebec.

The distance by this route would be as follows:—

	Miles.
Halifax to Windsor	45
Windsor to Annapolis	85
Annapolis to entrance Bay of Fundy	11
Across Bay of Fundy to St. John (by sea)	45
St. John to Fredericton	65
Fredericton to Woodstock	62
Woodstock to the Grand Falls	71
The Grand Falls to the mouth of the Riviere du Loup	106
Riviere du Loup to Quebec	110

Total distance from Halifax by the St. John River to Quebec 600
This line may be termed a mixed route—by railway and steamboat.

2nd. Commencing at Halifax and running to Truro at the head of the Bay of Fundy, thence over the Cumberland Mountains to Amherst, then along the coast from Bay Verte to Shediac, thence by a north-westerly course, crossing the Rivers Richibucto and Miramichi above the flow of the tide, so as not to interfere with the navigation.

Then by the valley of the North-western Miramichi to Bathurst, on the Bay Chaleurs, along the coast of this Bay to the Restigouche River, and by it and the valley of the River Metapedia to the St. Lawrence, and by the right bank of the St. Lawrence to Quebec.

The distance by this route would be as follows:—

	Miles.
Halifax to Truro	55
Truro to Amherst and Bay Verte	69
Bay Verte to Shediac	26
Shediac to Miramichi River	74
Miramichi River to Bathurst	56
Bathurst to the Eel River, near Dalhousie	48
Dalhousie to the mouth of the Metapedia River	30
Metapedia River to the mouth of the Naget River, near the St. Lawrence	86
Along the St. Lawrence from this point to Quebec	191

Total distance by this route 635
This, for the sake of reference, may be called the Halifax and Eastern, or Bay Chaleurs route, through New Brunswick to Quebec.

3rd. Commencing at the harbor of Whitehaven, near Canso, at the northeastern extremity of Nova Scotia thence along the Atlantic coast to Country Harbor and valley of the River St. Mary, thence by or near to Pictou and along the northern shore to Bay Verte.

From Bay Verte to or near to the Bend of Petitcodiac, thence across to Boistown, and northerly to the Restigouche River, crossing it several miles to the east of the Grand Falls.

From thence by the most direct and practical course to the Trois Pistoles River, and along the right Bank of the St. Lawrence to Quebec.

The distance by this route would be nearly as follows:

	Miles.
Whitehaven to Country Harbor	40
Country Harbor to St. Mary's Valley and Pictou	64
Pictou and along the coast to Bay Verte	77
Bay Verte to Bend of Petitcodiac	40
Petitcodiac to Boistown	80
Boistown to the crossing of the Restigouche River	115
Restigouche River to Trois Pistoles, by the Kedgwick and Rimouski Vallies.	105
Along the St. Lawrence to Quebec	131

Total distance from Whitehaven by Boistown to Quebec 652
This may be termed the Direct route.

4th. Combining the Halifax route through Nova Scotia, and the Direct route through the centre of New Brunswick.

The distances will be probably as under:—

From Halifax by Truro and Amherst to Bay Verte, as per route No. 2, 124 miles. In Nova Scotia.

Bay Verte to the Bend of Petitcodiac, Boistown, Restigouche River, as per route No. 3, 235 miles. In New Brunswick.

By the Kedgwick and Rimouski, to the mouth of the Torcadi 75; mouth of the Torcadi to the crossing of the Trois Pistoles River 30; along the St. Lawrence River to Quebec 131 miles. In Canada.
Total distance from Halifax to Quebec by this route 595.

5th. Combining the Whitehaven route through Nova Scotia, with the Eastern or Bay Chaleurs route through New Brunswick to Quebec, the distances will be as under:

From Whitehaven by Pictou and the North Coast to Bay Verte, as in route No. 3, 181 miles. In Nova Scotia.

From Bay Verte to the Bay Chaleurs, and mouth of the Metapedia, as in route No. 2, 234 miles. In New Brunswick.

Mouth of the Metapedia River to the mouth of the Naget 86; along the St. Lawrence to Quebec 191 miles. In Canada.

Total distance from Whitehaven to Quebec by this route 692 miles.

Thus the distances will be as under:

	Miles.
1st. By the mixed route, Halifax to Annapolis, by the St. John River to Quebec, the distance will be	600
2nd. By the Halifax and Eastern, or Bay Chaleurs route, to Quebec	635
3rd. By the Direct route, Whitehaven, Boistown, and Quebec	652
4th. By the Halifax, Truro, Amherst, and Boistown to Quebec	595
5th. By the Whitehaven, Bay Verte, and Bay Chaleurs, to Quebec	692

The first line fails in the most essential object contemplated by the proposed railway viz., a free and uninterrupted communication at all times and seasons of the year, from the port of arrival on the Atlantic terminus in Nova Scotia to Quebec.

The intervention of the Bay of Fundy is fatal to this route.

In summer the transshipment of passengers and goods to and fro would be attended with the greatest inconvenience—loss of time and additional expense; whilst in winter it would be even still more inconvenient, and liable to be interrupted by storms and the floating masses of ice which then occur in the bay.

In the case of the conveyance of troops transport of artillery and munitions of war, the crossing the bay would at any time be most objectionable, and it suddenly required in critical times might be attended with the worst consequences.

Commercially too, it would destroy the fair prospect of the proposed line from Quebec to Halifax competing successfully with the route by the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, and with rival lines in the neighboring States.

But there are also other serious objections to be offered against it.

Passing through New Brunswick and on the right bank of the St. John River, as it must necessarily do, to the Grand Falls, it would for a considerable distance both before and after the reaching that point, run along and close to the frontier of the United States.

In case of war, therefore, or in times of internal commotion, when border quarrels or border sympathies are excited, this line, when most needed, would be the most sure to fail, for no measures could be taken which would at all times effectually guard it from an open enemy and from treacherous attacks.

The passage across the Bay of Fundy so close to the shores of Maine, would invite aggression, and require a large naval force for its protection.

The engineering difficulties as the line approaches the Grand Falls from Woodstock would not be easily overcome.

The space between the St. John River and the Boundary Line becomes gradually contracted to a width of not more than two to three miles, and the country is broken and rough, whilst the banks of the St. John are rocky and precipitous for many miles below the Falls.

From Grand Falls to the St. Lawrence a distance of more than 100 miles, the country is so far known as to make it certain that there is very difficult and unfavorable ground to be encountered, which would require careful explorations and extensive surveying.

This intervention of the Bay of Fundy therefore, and the proximity of this line for a considerable distance, to the frontier of the United States, was so objectionable and fatal to this route, that the attention of the officers and exploring parties was, after a slight examination of the country between Halifax and Annapolis, directed in search of other and more favorable lines.

To understand the comparative advantages possessed by the other routes, as well as to be able to weigh the objections which may be raised against each, and afterwards determine from their relative merits, which is the best direction for the proposed line to take, it will be necessary, previously, to give some description of the country through which the lines pass, the present amount and distribution of the population, and the engineering difficulties which were met with along the lines examined.

As it will be seen in the end, that only one of the lines, namely, the second, has been explored and carried out successfully from its terminus on the Atlantic quite through to Quebec, it may be perhaps considered superfluous to enter upon the discussion of rival lines, but the object to be gained by so doing, is to show that so much has been done and is known of the country as to render further explorations for new lines unnecessary, because completed, they would not be likely to be recommended in preference to the one which will be proposed for adoption.

The distance from the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia to the bank of the St. Lawrence is about 360 miles in a straight line. Intersecting the country which must be traversed by any line of railway and crossing its course at right angles, are five great obstacles which have either to be surmounted or avoided.

1st is a broad range or belt of high and broken land which runs along the Atlantic shores of Nova Scotia, from Cape Canso to Cape Sable. The breadth varies from about twenty miles in its narrowest part up to fifty or sixty miles in other places. Its average height may be about five hundred feet. The strata of which it is composed consist of granite, slate, and a variety of rocks, hard and difficult to cut through. The characteristic features of the surface are rugged and uneven, and therefore very unfavorable for railway operations. No useful minerals of the metallic kind have been found in it, in quantities sufficient to work to advantage.

Valuable quarries of stone for building purposes are abundant, but these will be found everywhere nearly along the proposed line.

This formation is estimated to cover nearly two thirds of the surface of Nova

Scotia. It is, generally speaking, unfavorable for agriculture; the timber on it is stunted in growth, and it is an object of some importance to pass through it and leave it behind as soon as possible.

If a line be drawn from the head of the estuary of the Avon, near Windsor, to the Great Shubenacadie Lake, and then across the Stewiacke River, along the upper parts of the streams in the County of Pictou, to the Gut of Canso, all the portion lying to the south of this line belongs to this formation, and all to the north of it to the more favorable and highly valuable formation of the carboniferous system.

The narrowest and shortest line by which this range or belt can be crossed occurs at Halifax, and at the same time, owing to a favorable break in the chain, at the lowest point in altitude; the summit level through it not exceeding ninety feet.

The Halifax line (route No. 2) is clear of it in twenty miles. Before the same can be done by the Whitehaven and direct line (route No. 3), it must follow the coast for upwards of thirty miles, as far as Country Harbor, and then a further course across it of another thirty miles; involving in this distance two if not three tunnels, and must surmount a summit level of 400 feet.

2. The second great obstacle is the Bay of Fundy. This, as stated, is fatal to the first route. By the other routes it can be turned and avoided.

3. The third obstacle is the range of Cobequid Hills. These extend all along the north shore of the Bay of Minas and very nearly across, but not quite, to the shore at the Straits of Northumberland. In breadth the range preserves nearly a uniform width of about 10 miles. In altitude the hills average from 800 to 1000 feet. The lowest point after a careful survey, was found to be at the Folly Lake, 600 feet above the sea. This range can be avoided and passed by the Whitehaven and direct route, but must be surmounted and crossed over by Halifax and eastern line (route No. 2.)

The prevailing rocks are granite, porphyry, and clay slate, in the upper portions; along the shore of the Bay of Minas and on the northern side, the formation is of the red sandstone and the coal measures.

This range abounds with the most valuable minerals, of which a large mass of specular iron ore, of unequalled richness, occurs close to the line, and only requires facility of carriage for bringing coals to the spot, to be worked with profit.

A large portion of this tract still remains ungranted, and timber of excellent growth, with abundance of the finest stone for building purposes, are to be met with, and still belonging to the Crown, can be had for the expense of labour only.

4. The fourth obstacle is the broad and extensive range of highlands which occupies nearly the whole space in the centre of New Brunswick from the Miramichi River north to the Restigouche. Some of these mountains rise to an altitude exceeding 2000 feet.

The Tobique River runs through them, forming a deep valley or trough, which must be crossed by the direct line, and increases greatly the difficulty of passing them.

The lowest point of the ridge, overlooking the Tobique River, at which any line of railway must pass is 1216 feet above the sea. Then follows a descent to the river of 796 feet in 18 miles, and the summit level on the opposite ridge or crest between the Tobique and Restigouche waters, is 920 feet above the sea, or a rise of 500 feet above the point of crossing the Tobique water. These great summit levels which must be surmounted form a serious objection to this route.

The Eastern line by the coast avoid this chain altogether. The greatest summit level along it will not be above 369 feet, while the distance by each from the province line at Bay Verte to the Restigouche River (the northern limit of New Brunswick) will be as nearly as possible the same, there being only a difference of