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Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

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The Portland Convention.

From the Portland Advertiser.

EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN RAILWAY.

It is but 20 years since I proposed that a railroad should be constructed from Boston to the Hudson, and that a tunnel should be made through the Housaic Mountain; for this I was termed an idiot! An idiot I may be, but the road is made, and the tunnel through Housaic Mountain is in course of construction. For merely scientific men dealt in abstract theories; now we find the workmen themselves entering into the halls of science, illustrating theory practice, and teaching knowledge to the world. The time was when weaving was a mystery, dyeing was one of the occult sciences, and even the manufacture of soap depended upon good luck for a favorable result; but by the help of practical science, all these matters are now reduced to a certainty.

Gentlemen, I feel satisfied that this Railway must be constructed. It is true there are not wanting those who doubt of its success; but let not this deter you—there are not wanting those who will doubt that the sun shines at midday, unless they can see it for themselves.

Gentlemen if all do not comprehend the importance, the practicability, and the profit of this great project, there are enough who do comprehend, to carry the measure to a successful termination. It was forty years after the discovery, by Newton, of the theory of gravitation, before it could be comprehended; now it is practically understood by every school boy. It is but a short time since the British nation sustained the loss of their Statesmen, Mr Huskisson, struck down by the first car in England, in passing over its iron rails; but now railways have become the ordinary means of traffic and of transportation; we dare even to propose a line to the Pacific, and it is as certain that this line will be constructed, as that line now in contemplation will extend to the Atlantic. Calais and Dover have been the points of embarkation and of disembarkation ever since the invasion of Caesar, and for no other reason but because they were nearest points between the Island of Great Britain and the Continent of Europe. Cape Sunium was the point of concentration for the trade of Greece, simply because it was the nearest point to Egypt; and if you will examine the map of the world, you will find that in all time past, the points of continents or islands which approach the nearest, have become the highways of their intercourse and commerce. It is for this reason that I believe that the highway for the trade and communication between this country and Europe must be made to the eastern coast of Nova Scotia. We read in ancient history, that Cato once produced before the Roman Senate a bunch of fresh figs taken from a tree in Carthage only four days before; and I shall see the time when the rose of England, blending the colors of York and Lancaster, and plucked from the garden of Windsor, shall be twined freshly in America with the beautiful prairie flower "the Queen of the West," and, bound together with the filices of Canada, shall compose wreath, wherewith to crown the Statue of Concord in the Temple of Peace!

Look at the Map of America and see who will be benefitted by the completion of this undertaking!—all of us—from the country bordering on the waters of the St. Lawrence and on the Lakes of Canada, to the fertile valleys of the Mississippi and its tributary streams. There are no less than fifteen States of this Union directly interested in the line, and there are millions upon this territory who will be rejoiced at the prospect opened before them. Fifteen years ago, there was one small schooner for passengers, on Lake Erie belonging to the British, and another on

Lake Ontario belonging to the Americans—now the country is intersected by railways, and the Lakes are covered with steamers.—Then we were more widely separated from the inhabitants on the borders of these Lakes than we are now from Hindostan. But not only will the world be benefitted by the productions of these fertile districts being widely distributed but by freedom of intercourse asperities and misunderstandings between great nations will be softened and removed, and at all events a firm and lasting friendship will be produced between two great nations, speaking the same language, and advocating the same principles of civil and religious liberty; proud am I that the bones of my ancestors lie buried within the shadow of the Cathedral of Exeter; and there is not one worthy descendant of the heroes of Runnymede, wherever he may dwell, that I do not look upon as a brother. The destiny of the Anglo Saxons has but commenced, and more has been done by them for the world, for the common cause of humanity, since my boyhood, than during all time preceding. Man is learning to imitate his Maker, and to do good unto all; there is no time for vice; occupation of the body and the mind is necessary for the age in which we live. Could the commerce and industry of England have been fostered and protected but for the honesty and integrity of her Statesmen? She has taught the nations that right and justice must be done, and wherever, at home or abroad, the flags of England and America float upon the breeze, there her subjects, and our citizens, are protected from insult and from wrong. Our ablest Statesmen have always considered the construction of roads as the means of diffusing knowledge and of increasing the comfort, wealth, and happiness of our country; no sooner was peace declared than George Washington devoted his time, talents, and industry to the subject. Gallatin, and other able Statesmen, have expressed the same principles and acted upon them; and in more recent times companies of wealthy and energetic men have carried out the plans which Washington and Gallatin so ably designed and projected.

We must prove that this work can be done,—that it will be useful,—that it will be profitable; and if this can be done, we need not fear that the means will be wanting. If, 25 years ago, a British Statesman had risen in his place in Parliament, and proposed to throw an iron bridge across the Mena Strait, at a cost of two millions, I have no doubt that some benevolent physician would have been ready with a certificate of lunacy, and that the gentleman who should be so rash and credulous as to propose this, and to believe in the possibility of its accomplishment, would have been promptly provided for in an hospital for the insane! Now we have dared to propose far mightier projects—we would lay the iron rail across the broad continent of America, and would stand upon the shores of the Pacific! But think you we shall only stand upon its shores? No; we must build ships and cross the waters to the far distant shores of China, and shall carry the productions of that country back to us and to you, at its antipodes.

Gentlemen, I am proud to see among us a gentleman of the naval service of Great Britain—one who has earned a higher reputation than that which follows upon victory; some 15 years since, a work was put into my hand by a friend—A Survey of the coast of Africa and the Persian Gulf, by a British Naval Officer—it was a scientific and pacific labor; but the service was one of difficulty and danger, far more appalling than the battles of the Nile or Trafalgar; sickness and death came upon their expedition, recruits were obtained from England, but man after man fell

*Admiral the Hon. William Fitzwilliam Owen.

victims to the fatal disease, until, at the close of the expedition, he alone of all that first went out upon it, he, of officers and men, was the sole survivor! I thought, if I were Sovereign of England, I would make him an Admiral of the white, under the Banner of Peace! This duty was nobly done, and many other duties has he since done for his country, and yet although time has impaired his strength and frosted his venerable head, you see, gentlemen, that he cannot remain, but has left his home, in the British Provinces, and is here amongst us, ready at the call of his country and of the world, in the front rank of this our enterprise.

Gentlemen of the British Provinces, citizens of the United States, or whatever country may be your home, I wish to all of you health and prosperity.

After the cheering which followed this speech had subsided, M. H. Perley, Esq., was called upon by the chairman to address the Convention. Mr Perley said, he came before the meeting under peculiarly unfavorable circumstances, as he had to address them on matters of business, and local description, while yet excited to the highest pitch, by the eloquent, brilliant, and classical speech they had just heard from General Dearborn, which had thrown all others into the shade; but as one of a greatly delighted audience, he was bound to express the intense delight he had felt in listening to the gallant General. Mr Perley then said that the Lower Colonies had been but recently awakened from long-continued quietude, by the introduction of the Electric Telegraph; at first they only heard a rumour of this extraordinary invention, and while they were yet wondering what it was, they were aroused by a smart rap on the pate from a "telegraph pole," and had to clear the way for the Telegraph, which was quickly in operation. The telegraph wire indicated with unerring certainty the line of the railway, of which it was merely the precursor; and he congratulated the Convention upon having the preceding evening unanimously adopted the continuous route, by land. While the Colonies were still lost in surprise at the almost magical operations of the Telegraph, they heard a distant rumbling, and the faint echo of the unearthly scream of the steam-whistle, as the locomotives daily approached nearer and nearer to the frontier of New Brunswick, a country which lay somewhere between Maine and the rising sun. At length they were startled by a loud knocking at their outward wall—and, unwilling to say "stop that knocking," lest it should be followed by a punch in the ribs from a railway-sleeper—they had stepped over their threshold, to ask the people of the beautiful and hospitable City of Portland, what they wanted, and what could be done to advance the Great Railway. Mr Perley then proceeded to describe this Province, a subject with which he is perfectly familiar, and referred to his large Map exhibited behind the President's chair, which had been freely used by almost every previous speaker. After describing the principal physical characteristics of the Province; especially its geological formation and agricultural capabilities, Mr Perley gave a rapid, but striking, description of the zone of vegetation in which it was placed, and the nature and value of its forest trees. This was followed by a description of the Northern coast of the Province, and a notice of the valuable and extensive fisheries in that quarter, which would be rendered of still greater importance by the proposed Railway. The vast and varied mineral resources of the line of country proposed to be traversed by the Railway were also touched upon; and these descriptive details were listened to with great attention, appearing to excite very general interest.

The Hon. Charles Fisher, of Fredericton, next gave his views as to the feasibility of the undertaking, and likewise as to the effect it

would have in binding in closer affinity the two countries. He knew the growing interest that was felt by each in the other's institutions and welfare—referred to the anxiety evinced in New York (some two years ago), when amidst the overturn and commotion that was going on in the governments of the old world, fears were entertained for the stability of the British Government. Stocks fell in Wall-street,—all was gloom—but when the arrival of the steamer made known the predicted outbreak of the 10th of April had proved impotent so far as the government was concerned, how that gloom was turned to congratulations and rejoicings. This had come under his own observation. He spoke of the institutions of both countries as having had their rise in the institutions of Alfred. "Yours is a government of public opinion," he exclaimed, "so is ours. Both have the same object—the greatest good of the greatest number!" Mr Fisher concluded his eloquent and able speech amid much applause, and was followed by the Hon. F. O. J. Smith, of Portland. He congratulated the meeting on the effect which the "three memorable days" of this Convention were likely to have on the social relations between the two countries.—The lesson learnt during these deliberations was far above that of mere railroads, for it was a lesson of the human heart. With respect to the enterprise, he believed it would save one-fifth the time, and one-fifth the capital employed in the communication between England and America, and would be sure to receive the support of the capitalists of both. Mr Smith in a most powerful and original manner, and with a wide sweep of thought, described the great improvements of the present age and the social revolutions which were going on, elevating and refining man, considering all these however, as but the dawning of a still more wonderful era of improvement, which would raise all mankind much higher in the scale of moral, religious, and social improvement.

The Hon. J. B. Uniacke, Attorney General of Nova Scotia, expressed his warmest conviction of the superiority of the continuous land route for the Railway, the resolution for which had passed while indisposition prevented his attendance, but to which he gave his most hearty concurrence. He also thought the selection of the name—*The European and North American Railway*—most fortunate for the success of the enterprise. He referred to the past and present condition of England and America, in relation to each other—they who had been long severed were now, with minds enlightened and refined, being brought together again. Mr Uniacke alluded in very feeling and beautiful terms to Ireland, which had been stricken down by poverty and famine: by this movement it would be brought into union with a land of plenty, and joy would thrill through the hearts of Irishmen when the Atlantic steamers first appeared in their waters.

The Hon. J. S. Little, President of the Portland and Montreal Railroad, adverted to the magnificent enterprise in which the Company, over which he presided, was engaged. He considered it, however, a section only of "the great thoroughfare" that would connect continents and countries, the success of which he considered certain. As to the Portland and Montreal railroad, he pledged himself that it would be completed within two years, and announced that ample means for its completion had been secured, and were on hand.

This announcement was received with great cheering. Mr Little thanked the Delegations from the colonies for the amount of thought and information they had communicated to the Convention, and alluded to the valuable time those delegates had given up in order to be present, no doubt at much personal sacrifice and inconvenience, attended with very considerable expense. The name