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

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## The Railway.

### RAILWAY MEETING AT HALIFAX.

[We give below Mr Howe's Speech at the meeting held at the Masonic Hall, in Halifax, on the 15th May, at which the Mayor of that city presided. It is well worthy a careful perusal.]

The Hon. Joseph Howe rose and said. Mr Mayor and Gentlemen—This meeting has been called to ascertain whether the citizens of Halifax, after six months' deliberation and reflection, are as unanimous as they were in August last—whether they are still disposed to entrust to their Government the task of constructing our Inter-Colonial Railways—and whether they are prepared to accept the terms which have been offered to the Province in Mr Hawes' letter of the 10th of March.—The position which the negotiations have assumed, renders it necessary that efforts should be made to overcome difficulties that have arisen beyond our own frontier. The Government contemplate sending a deputation to Canada, to confer with delegates from the neighboring provinces, in the confident hope that those difficulties may be overcome, and that unity of action and mutual harmony may be secured, by which alone the great works which we contemplate can be rendered practicable, and easy of accomplishment within a reasonable time. But to appoint men to perform this service—to send them from amongst us to negotiate with the governments of Canada and New Brunswick, in ignorance of the state of public feeling at home—before they know whether the ground behind them is firm and staple—would be unwise, premature and useless. They could not with confidence ask New Brunswickers or Canadians to give their sanction to any line of policy, before they know whether or not the Nova Scotians were determined to sustain it. I am happy in the belief that the unanimity which presages success—the manly forbearance and generous rivalry which ensure the perfection of large and comprehensive measures, upon sound principles, do exist among us, do pervade the community, actuating and animating the large and highly respectable body of our fellow citizens here assembled. So far as I have been enabled to gather the general sentiment since my return—from frequent communications with leading men, representing great interests, and the opinions of large sections of our people—I believe that the resolutions which have been prepared for submission will meet the unanimous support of this vast assembly.

The Imperial Government, with a magnanimity which does honor to the British people, sustained by that unanimity of sentiment among the great leaders of public opinion at home, which promises a long continuance of the honorable relations which exist between them and us, has offered to the three British North American Provinces seven millions of pounds sterling, at the lowest rate of interest at which money can be obtained in the world, to enable them to complete, in an incredibly short space of time, and with security and ease, those great internal improvements which their advanced condition renders so desirable—which will bind them together into one prosperous community—animate them with new hopes and aspirations; and ultimately elevate them from the colonial condition to that of a great and prosperous nation, in perpetual amity and friendship with those glorious Islands to which we trace our origin, and to which, through this great boon, so much of our material prosperity will, in all time to come, be traced. (Cheers.)

Halifax has been formed by nature, and selected by the dictates of sound policy, as a common terminus for these great inter-colonial railways. Three hundred and thirty miles will connect us with Portland, and with all the lines which interlace the American Republic and bind together the prosperous communities of the south and west. Six hundred and seventy miles more, opening up the central lands of the settlements of New Brunswick, will not only connect us, as we originally contemplated with Quebec and the Saint Lawrence, but passing through 180 miles of settlements on that noble river, will place us in communication with the populous city of Montreal, which will soon be in connection with Portland on the other side, the circle being thus complete, and chains of intercommunication established, easily accessible, by shorter lines, to all the rising towns and settlements which that wide circuit will embrace.

But when Montreal is reached, shall we stop there? Who believes it? Who can think so lightly of the enterprise of Western Canada, as to apprehend that she will continue this iron road, link by link till it skirts the shores of Ontario and Lake Erie, and draws its tributary streams of traffic from the

prolific regions of Simcoe, Superior and Huron? Already municipalities are organising and companies are forming to extend this railway for six hundred miles above Montreal. Once completed to that city; how will those interior lines advance? How many interests will combine for their extension? The British government and people will take a natural pride in the continuation of this great national work. The success of the lower lines will be promoted and ensured by extension. British capitalists and contractors, lured into this boundless field, will seek further employment for their capital and labor, and millions of industrious people will flow into provinces where employment is certain and land is cheap. This is a prospect before us, sir, and the duties it imposes we must learn to discharge with energy—the destiny it discloses we may contemplate with pride. England foresees, yet fears it not. She relies upon our resources and upon our integrity to repay her money. She believes in the existence of the old feelings here, which are to strengthen with our strength, and bind us to her by links of love when pecuniary obligations have been cancelled. She virtually says to us, by this offer—there are seven millions of sovereigns at half the price that your neighbors pay in the markets of the world—construct your railways—people your waste lands—organise and improve the boundless territory beneath your feet—learn to rely upon and to defend yourselves, and God speed you in the formation of national character and national institutions. (Cheers.)

But, sir, daring as may appear the scope of this conception, high as the destiny may seem which it discloses for our children—and boundless the fields of honorable labor which it presents—another grander in proportions, opens beyond, which the imagination of a Poet could not exaggerate, but which the Statesman may grasp and realise, even in our own day. Sir, to bind these disjointed Provinces together by Iron Roads—to give them the homogenous character, fixedness of purpose, and elevation of sentiment, which they so much require is our first duty. But after all, they occupy but a limited portion of that boundless heritage which God and Nature have given to us and to our children. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are but the frontage of a territory which includes 4,000,000 of square miles, stretching away behind and beyond them, to the Frozen Regions on the one side and to the Pacific on the other. Of this great section of the globe, all the Northern Provinces, including Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, occupy but 450,000 square miles. The Hudson's Bay territory includes 250,000. Throwing aside the bleak and inhospitable regions, we have a magnificent country between Canada and the Pacific out of which five or six noble Provinces may be formed, larger than any we have, and presenting to the hand of industry and to the eye of speculation every variety of soil, climate and resource. With such a territory as this to overrun, organise and improve, think you that we shall stop even at the western bounds of Canada; or even at the shores of the Pacific? Vancouver's Island with its vast Coal measures lies beyond. The beautiful Islands of the Pacific and the growing commerce of that ocean are beyond. Populous China and the rich East are beyond, and our children's children's sails will reflect as familiarly the sunbeams of the South as they now brave the angry tempests of the North. The Maritime Provinces which I now address are but the Atlantic frontage of this boundless and prolific region—the wharves upon which its business will be transacted, and beside which its rich argosies are to lie. Nova Scotia is one of those. Will you then put your hands unitedly—with order, intelligence and energy, to this great work? Refuse and you are recreants to every principle which lies at the base of your country's prosperity and advancement—refuse, and the Deity's hand-writing upon land and sea, is to you unintelligible language—refuse, and Nova Scotia, instead of occupying the foreground as she does, should have been thrown back, at least behind the rocky mountains. God has planted your country in the front of this boundless region—see that you comprehend its destiny and resources—see that you discharge with energy and elevation of soul, the duties which devolve upon you in virtue of your position. Hitherto, my countrymen, you have dealt with this subject in a becoming spirit, and whatever others may think or apprehend, I know that you will persevere in that spirit until our objects are attained. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) I am neither a Prophet nor the son of a Prophet, yet I will venture to predict that in five years shall make the journey hence to Quebec and Montreal, and home through Portland and Saint John by Rail; and I believe that many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the Steam Engine in the passes of the Rocky mountains, and to make the journey from Halifax to the Pacific

in five or six days. With such objects in view, with the means before us to open up 1000 miles of this noble territory—to increase its resources, and lay bare its treasures, surely all petty jealousies and personal rivalries should stand rebuked—all minor questions of mere local interest should give way. The smoke of past contests has perhaps at times clogged my own mind; like an old chimney, the soot may have stuck to it, after the cooking of constitutions was over. But the fire of this noble enterprise has burnt it out, and I come back after six months' absence, prepared to co-operate with any man who will honestly aid me to work out the prosperity of our common country; and I am glad to discover that a reciprocal and cordial feeling is manifested by those whose opinions differ, on other subjects, from my own.

It is frequently said, sir, that a Government should not touch these public works. But the roads of a country—the Queen's Highways, surely come under the cognisance of the Executive. In this case it is clear that unless done by the Government, these great Railways cannot be done at all. Even if companies could do them, they would cost fourteen millions instead of seven. But, sir, what is a Government for if it is not to take the lead in noble enterprises—to stimulate industry—to elevate and guide the public mind? You may set eight or nine men on red cushions or gilded chairs with nothing to do but pocket their salaries, and call that a government. To such a pageant I have no desire to belong. Those who aspire to govern others should neither be afraid of the saddle by day nor of the lamp by night. In advance of the general intelligence they should lead the way to improvement and prosperity. I would rather assume the staff of Moses, and struggle with the perils of the wilderness, and the waywardness of the multitude, than be a golden calf stuck up in gorgeous inactivity—the object of a worship which is debased. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

But how came this work to be assumed by the Government? The citizens of Halifax, by acclamation, handed it over to us at the great meeting held in Temperance Hall, after the return of the Delegates from Portland. The Capitalists of the Province were there, and confessed that the enterprise was beyond their grasp. The people were there and the feeling was universal that this work was to be done by the Government if done at all. At that meeting many an old antipathy was buried, and the government assumed and has carried on the work in the same spirit in which it was tendered. That meeting was held in August. Sir John Harvey's Despatch asking for the Imperial Guarantee bears date on the 29th of that month. The retinal which led to the Delegation reached Halifax in October. On the 1st November the delegate left for England. The first interview granted to me was on the 18th. I could not decide upon any course till that was over. In a week after the first letter to Earl Grey was written and went in on the 25th. So far, you will perceive, that from August to the end of November not a moment was lost. The meeting at Southampton came off on the 14th of January—the second letter to Earl Grey is dated the 16th. Six weeks elapsed between the dates of the two letters. How were these passed? In reading a cartload of books and pamphlets, and Parliamentary records and reports, that I might gather facts and ascertain what others had written and said on the subjects I wished to treat—in diving by day and night into the mysteries of that industrial and social life which it might become my duty to illustrate. However impatient some of you may have been, no Nova Scotian who had not seen England for ten years could have wisely appealed to its intelligence without this preparation. The best proof that the time was not wasted is to be found in the fact no hostile criticism met my eye before I left England; nor was a single statement attempted to be gainsayed.

From the 16th of January to the 14th of February the whole subject was under the consideration of the Cabinet with Lord Grey's confident assurance of a favorable result. But delays were inevitable. The Nation was boiling with excitement upon other questions, and the Ministers were much engrossed. Even after the generous debate in the House of Lords, some delay was inevitable, and it was not until the 20th of February that I had Lord Grey's Draft of the propositions embodied in Mr Hawes' letter. With that upon my table, honorably crowning my mission, you may imagine what I endured during the Ministerial crisis which lasted a fortnight, and during all the time no official character could be given to the draft. Mr Hawes' letter came on the 20th March and my friends in England congratulated me on the termination of my labors. But I knew better. The local interests and apprehensions, the personal rivalries and jealousies, of three Provinces over the sea rose up before

me, and I thought a month would be well spent in preparing to deal with these.

Before I show you what I did, let me say a word or two to those, if any there are, who hold the opinion that the offer of the British Government is not as liberal and magnificent as it has been described, because no direct contribution has been given. In the first place, as a Nova Scotian, whose forefathers have gone through difficulties and privations which the present generation are not called upon to endure—who has inherited a country already valued at fifteen Millions—which owes nothing abroad, and but a nominal debt to its own people which a year's revenue would pay off; I am too proud to accept as a gift a single sovereign from my brethren in the British Islands. With all the surplus wealth of England, the taxation to meet the interest of weighty obligations, and an imperial expenditure is onerous. What right have I to take a shilling out of the pocket of a Manchester Weaver or of a poor Orange Woman in the strand to make our Railroads? The credit of the Imperial Government I would freely use without a blush of shame, or a sense of dishonorable obligation, but trust me there is not a high spirited Nova Scotian who would take a shilling of its money. But suppose money had been given. Suppose Earl Grey had said to me, there Mr Howe, are a million of Sovereigns, go and get the other six millions where you can, the six would have cost us just £150,000 a year more than the whole will cost now. Suppose his Lordship had given me two or even three millions, and the most exacting spirit over the border would hardly require more. I must have paid £240,000 a year for the four millions at 6 per cent, while the whole seven will now cost but £245,000. Is it not clear then that if I had accepted even two millions in solid gold, instead of the terms offered in Mr Hawes' letter, I should have been an idiot? Is it not equally clear that the interposition of Imperial credit, while it leaves our pride untouched, and the resources of Great Britain undiminished, actually saves us nearly three millions of pounds sterling in the construction of our public works? Could I have stood here to day, with brow erect, if overtaxed Englishman's money was in my hand? Would you have taken it if I had? No you would not. The service done us is incalculable. The sense of obligation should be as deep as it will be lasting. We incur this debt without dishonor as we will discharge it in all integrity and good faith. (Loud cheers.) Those who undervalue this magnificent boon, offered to us by the British Government, should reflect that seven millions of money, drawn from our own resources, or borrowed on our own credit in the general market of the world, would cost us just £175,000 a year more than if we take them upon the terms which it has been my good fortune to secure. (Loud cheering.)

But, Mr Mayor, I thought it was just possible that there might be some obstructions presented, in some quarter, and I thought it might be as well to put Nova Scotia in a position to act independently of those obstructions. I am happy to say that she is now prepared at all points. I hold in my hand two letters, one from the London and Westminster Bank, the other from the Commercial Bank of London. The first is perhaps the strongest monied institution in Great Britain, next to the Bank of England—the position and resources of the other are well known. Either will open an account with Nova Scotia alone, with or without guarantees. Honor our drafts, sell our debentures, protect our credit, and we may draw to morrow for £20 or £30,000. Here is a letter from another capitalist, who will do all this, and place £100,000 at our disposal. The interest is high, it is true, but this may be useful, in the meantime, should Nova Scotia be compelled to fall back on our own resources.

Even with these, you will perceive, we are tolerably well armed, but here are three letters from English contractors, either of whom could and would make one of our short lines, and some of whom offer to make the whole line to the St. Lawrence. [Mr Howe here read one of these letters, signed by two gentlemen whose notes would float, he said, through any bank in London for a million of pounds, and who were associated with others equally wealthy and enterprising. They claimed to have made, either jointly or severally, one third of all the Railroads in the United Kingdom. Were prepared to lodge £30,000 in the Provincial Treasury as security for their good faith. And make either a line through a single Province or all the lines required in any time that might be stipulated for, and upon any terms that might be fixed by Imperial and Colonial Engineers. Another of these contractors, said Mr Howe, will make the forty miles from Truro to Pictou, or 50 from the trunk line to Windsor or Cornwallis, in less time, and with less chaffering than would be required by some of our great,