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

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The Railway.

NOVA SCOTIA LEGISLATURE.

The following is the conclusion of Mr Howe's Speech on introducing the Railway Bills:—

But, I may be told now, as heretofore, that poor little Nova Scotia should have no Railway at all, because she is so favored in having water communication. Sir, I have ever been accustomed to regard certain peculiarities of our country with pride and pleasure; it may be, however, that Nova Scotia, like all her beauties, is destined to owe her misfortunes to the very charms upon which our eyes love to dwell. Look at her on the map; not only does the sea, like a fond lover, embrace her, but in the Bras d'Or Lake and Basin of Mines it seems to rest on her bosom. Should she then have no railways because the waves love her—because she has been so blessed by Providence. Sir, I wish those who entertain that opinion would glance at this map and see how the rails run side by side with the rivers—down the margin of streams. Upon the points and headlands these railways are to be found. Look at the noble state of New York; beside the Hudson, one of the most magnificent rivers in the world—whose floating palaces strike with wonder and admiration the traveller from the Old World—runs a railway paying handsomely, and not diminishing to the slightest extent the traffic, and trade, and travel flowing down that river. But there is a still more striking illustration of the idea I wish to convey. Let any man look at Long Island; a small narrow slip of land surrounded entirely by the sea, and even where its very waters embrace and girdle it, runs a railway between the waves. Then, Sir, I ask if there be the slightest shade of reason in the argument, that because Nova Scotia has extensive water communication, she should not possess a railway? But again it is said Nova Scotia should not have a railway because she is so small, so young, so poor. Well, sir, we have been told by the Poet that the mind is the standard of the man; and the size of a country is generally measured by the men who are in it.

Let this Assembly but have the elevation of sentiment—the enlargement of soul, the energy, vigor, and enterprise to deal with it as they ought to deal, and its dimensions will be forgotten. We, however, are not so small as many may imagine. Take all Massachusetts, with its numerous railways, extensive trade, vast capital, and place it side by side with Vermont, and together these two States do not comprise so many square miles as little Nova Scotia; Massachusetts having 7,000 and Vermont 9,000—making 16,000. Again Switzerland is not a very large country, and her enterprise is appreciated by every nation of Europe. Holland is not a large country, and yet the people have shut out the sea, and maintained in the very heart of Europe the freedom which elevates and the enterprise which prospers a nation. Why, then, should we despair? Look at our country, Sir. I have rambled and travelled over the most of it time and again, endeavoring to familiarize myself with the resources of which she is possessed. Take her inexhaustible fisheries, and fruitful soil; her mines, minerals, water power, timber, all the natural advantages she possesses, and I do not believe there is a spot of ground of equal area on the face of this continent, combining and including on its surface and in its bosom so many natural advantages as does Nova Scotia. The rough elements of prosperity lie in profusion, within the grasp of all who choose to avail themselves of them; and with all this she has a long line of sea coast, nearly equal to the whole available sea line of the United States. Go into her Western counties, and contrast with those of Canada West, and, sir, I firmly believe that we should not lose by such a comparison. I have travelled in the United States and in Canada, and have never entered a farmer's house where I could obtain a more abundant or substantial meal than in the valleys of Cornwallis, or on the mountains of Pictou. The roads of this Province are better and more numerous than those of many of the old continental nations, and are quite equal to those of the United States. It is true that in the neighborhood of New York or Boston you may find portions of turnpike road broader and more expensive than our own—but, looking at the whole, we are very little behind them in that respect.

When in England men talked to me of the size of my country. I felt a pride in saying that we could bring as many ships from Nova Scotia's seaports as would blockade the entire coast of Ireland—that we could raise a fleet sufficiently large to take captive the mane of all their Southern and Eastern colonies put together. And, Sir, whatever success attended the delegation in which I was

engaged, I believe it to be attributable to the fact that I was enabled to bring all this fairly before those from whom I sought the boon asked. Let it be remembered, however, that it was not I, but little Nova Scotia that spoke for me; that it was the hardy hands and honest hearts of those who had brought her up to the position she occupies, that obtained the concessions required—I had but to paint her as she is. And, sir, dealing with such a country, we have to ask ourselves, whether we will unite to give her loftier elevation, and place her in that position which nature destined she should occupy.

These Bills call on this House to sanction the borrowing of one million pounds to expend in conjunction with the other Colonies in constructing a great public work. The very worst view we can possibly take of the results to follow such a step is that this people may be taxed to the extent of £35,000 annually in order to pay the interest on the loan.

For, let it be distinctly understood, that this Province will not be required to pay one farthing of interest except for monies really borrowed by it. Suppose, then, sir, the undertaking do not pay; the entire interest upon the sum which these Bills authorize the Government to borrow, at 3½ per cent., will be £35,000. I will present one very simple view of this question, and put it to the House whether it be not sound and practical. Mr Perley, of New Brunswick, in a lecture delivered before a large audience in this city, declared that the population of that Province is taxed at the rate of about 10s. per head. We obtain our revenue by taxing the population of this Province 7s. 6d. per head, or 2s. 6d. less than is paid by the people of New Brunswick. Let us then, for the sake of argument suppose that the railway for the first few years will yield nothing over and above the sum required for repairs and working expenses; the imposition of 2s. 6d. per head, in addition to the amount now paid by the people, would realise more than enough to meet the whole interest, and even then we would be rated no higher than the people of New Brunswick are at present. We have been told, sir, that Nova Scotians will be unable to bear up under the weight of taxation, which the supporters of this bill are about to impose. I have heard and read this statement, and I have wished that I could but direct back to the past history of our Province the gaze of those who used it. I would have them contemplate the position occupied by them in years gone by. Let me say to my hon. friend from Yarmouth—whose strenuous opposition I have been led to expect, that whatever that opposition may be, nothing can ever lessen the respect I entertain for his ability and judgment. But I wish he could have viewed the old sturdy settlers of Yarmouth, as they stood beside the sea-shore, constructing the first ship that floated on the waters fronting that rising village. Sir, these old men had the nerve and energy to brave the dangers that surrounded them—with the primeval forests and unbroken solitudes stretching behind them—peopled by the red man—then their foe. With no roads, no bridges, no schools, no churches, scanty means for schools or civilization; yet with strong arms they hewed down the timber, built their vessels and dared all the risk.

But, sir, how would that risk have been lessened—the toil and danger sweetened—if that little group, gathered around their first ship, about to be launched, could have been informed that, but a few years later, and their offspring would have peopled Yarmouth with a thousand inhabitants; and own 2 or 300 sail of vessels; that their roads would intersect the surface of the whole country, connecting them with its most remote districts; their bridges span every stream, their churches dot every village—that Schools would be found the country over, offering every facility for internal improvement and progress—and in addition to all this, that they were on the eve of having railway communication with the whole Continent of America, already having obtained rapid steam communication with the Continent of Europe, and that, in order to obtain all this, they were to be taxed just 2s. 6d. per head. (Great Laughter.) Think you they would have been afraid to launch their vessel? No! they would have smiled at any man who attempted to terrify and frighten them with such a weight of taxation as that. Let me turn the attention of the hon. member for Clare—and no portion of the Province has been more frightened from its propriety by this taxation bug bear, than the township he represents; let me direct my hon. friend's attention to the trying circumstances through which that hardy French population passed, in the early settlement of this Province. If, sir, while their villages were in flames—their Churches being destroyed by the axe; while general confiscation of their marsh and upland was made, any man had said to them, you shall have security and peace—the free

exercise of your own religion—secure possession of marsh and upland; nay more, you shall have an immense market opened up to you in the other British possessions on this Continent, with which you will be connected by railway—and you may hear weekly from your friends in France; but, mark you! you shall be taxed two shillings and sixpence per head!! Sir, I understand the spirit of that by-gone race better than to believe that such an apprehension would have alarmed them. They would have felt bound to transmit down from generation to generation, all the improvements they could possibly make in the country—and 2s. 6d. per head would not have prevented them from doing their duty.

Sir, I fearlessly assert, that even though Nova Scotia were an Island! did the Bay of Fundy mingle its waters with those of the Gulf and Northumberland Straits, still would I cover her surface, link by link, with a railway system, and meet as rapidly as possible. But she is not an Island, and I fervently say, thank heaven for that fourteen miles which connect us with the Provinces behind. I went the other day to the joyous Railway celebration at Boston, and I may say that the hospitality, kindness, enterprise—the general grace and marked features of the pageant interested me much. But there was one strong delusion under which which persons there assembled seemed to labor; and I could hardly help smiling at the resolution passed by a number of Canadian gentlemen while in that city, as follows, "Resolved, that there is another place on this Continent besides New York, and that place is Boston." Sir, let me say that there is another place on this Continent besides Boston, and that place is Nova Scotia. (Cheers and laughter.) I hold in my hand a table of distances, showing the saving of time consequent upon the construction of this work, and proving satisfactorily that much of the trade and travel now passing through the City of Boston would be attracted to the line of railway we propose constructing.

Mr Howe here read the table, showing a saving of time and travel which would result from the building of the Halifax and Quebec line.

I frankly admit to my hon. friend from Guysborough that if the railway were built to Whitehaven, a still further saving of time and expense might be made—that, however, I am sorry to say, is not practicable at the present time, but I sincerely hope the day will arrive when a railway to that harbor will be laid. I believe the views propounded by my hon. friend from Yarmouth to be sound, when he says that much of the trade now flowing over the American lines to the cities of the Union cannot, in the outset, be diverted into this channel. But I ask him to look at the vast territory lying below Montreal, the trade of which neither the lines to Portland nor Boston, nor any of the railways of the United States can tap. Immediately behind Nova Scotia, below Montreal and Quebec, lies a territory the natural back country of this Province—which it is the duty of every Nova Scotian to animate and enliven. I questioned a gentleman while absent in the United States lately, thus; suppose you owned the country which lies behind the Province of Nova Scotia, would you be content with the line to Portland tapping the country as far down as Montreal or would you not build another over which should run the vast traffic from the region below. The answer was, "we would be insane not to do so." Then I say that any Nova Scotian understanding and appreciating the relative position his Country occupies is not doing that country justice or performing the duty he owes to succeeding generations, if he leaves this region unopened, unpeopled, unenlivened, and he would allow the stream of wealth which may be drawn from it to flow by us, adding to the power and prosperity of another land can understand but little of the past aspect and future progress of the country.

I repeat again that even though Nova Scotia was an Island; though she possessed no back country like that I have just described, to animate and improve—still would I, as fast as fast as possible, lay railways within her own borders: how much stronger, then, the inducement when all these advantages lie before us ready for our use—and which may be made the means of invigorating our commerce and adding to our wealth. Sir, the belief is too general that the portion of Canada through this road will run is but a howling wilderness; this idea has been extensively propagated, and from its prevalence much of the opposition offered to this scheme has arisen. Let me answer this by reading a letter lately received by me from Canada, the information contained in which at once sets at rest all these vague and general assertions.

"It is a very common error to suppose that the country between Quebec and New Brunswick is a wild, uncultivated and uninhabited portion of Lower Canada. It has been represented as such by

many persons, and I believe an impression of the kind exists amongst many of the public men in your province.

"To enable you to meet such statements, I have taken the liberty to enclose a memorandum of the population of the five Counties on the South-side of the River St. Lawrence, below Quebec, through which the Trunk Railway would pass. They contain a population exceeding one third of the whole of Nova Scotia; and if the County of Quebec, which, though on the north side of the Saint Lawrence, may be considered the terminus of one section of the Great Line, be added to the Counties on the South, the population will exceed one half that of your province. This is exclusive of the counties in the Gulf, Gaspé, and Bonaventure, in which there may be about 17,000—making in the whole from 190,000 to 200,000. Soon after you receive this letter, you will be deeply engaged with this great measure, and I need not say that I hope and trust you will be successful. Mr Fairbanks, who is here, appears determined to give it his support. We look upon Mr Wilmo's election for St. John, as a favorable indication of the public mind in New Brunswick I will be obliged to you to keep me informed, from time to time, as your other engagements admit."

But look at New Brunswick. The population of the counties of Restigouche, Gloucester, and Northumberland, added to that of Westmorland, makes 60,000. The population of that Province, as late as 1824, was but little more; now it numbers some 208,000. So that, at this day, the population of those counties through which the railway must pass, is as great as the entire population of the country in 1824. But it is said, this is a poor and sterile country. Sir, having been lately transferred from the representation of this county to that of Cumberland, I may be told that my imagination is a little excited by the beauties thereof; but I do not hesitate to affirm that the counties of Westmorland and Albert, in New Brunswick, and that of Cumberland, in Nova Scotia, can compare with any equal area ever presented to my eye in any country on the globe. I have not been further north, but referring to Dr. Gesner's and Professor Johnston's Reports, and finding that up the Restigouche river the interval is five miles broad—and the soil of all kinds not only fit for cultivation, but exceedingly fruitful and productive—yielding ample returns for the labor bestowed upon it—I cannot but feel convinced that the resources and fertility of the country through which the road must run, fully justifies its construction, and sets at rest the arguments urged against its being productive.

Again, let us turn our attention to the character of the country above Montreal. Let any man traverse it as I did this summer, and mark the lines of villages and towns skirting the borders of the great lakes; the rapidity with which population is increasing, commerce extending; and then say whether it be for our advantage or not to connect ourselves with such a country as this, inhabited by one million of people, who are our brethren, our friends, our neighbors, whose interests will be our interests whose progress and prosperity will be ours. Mark how the only outlet by water for the commerce of the country is closed for four or five months of the year; see Nova Scotia jutting out into the ocean and meeting the warm waters of the Gulf stream, with her harbors open and her trade continuing the year round, and then say whether we can be blind to the destiny which must be ours for all time to come. For, just so fast as that country behind us becomes improved and populated, just so fast will our commerce and commercial marines increase in magnitude and numbers. Lying as we do, down here upon the sea board, merchant, factors, carriers, will line the coast, and add to the wealth of the country.

But Sir, have we no business relations or business connections in Quebec or Montreal at present? We have, and those connections and relations will increase and strengthen, mutually benefitting those between whom they subsist. But, sir, beyond the Canadian possessions in the very heart of the country which lies between us and the Pacific is a region, which for natural fertility—temperature of climate—exuberant production, all the attributes by which human beings may obtain wealth and civilization is equal to any part of America, through the very bosom of which navigable waters run for 1500 miles. But, Sir, I will not weary this committee with a minute detail of all the facilities which it offers for the advancement of its own and our prosperity—during the progress of this debate, however, occasion may arise for my so doing; it is necessary now that I should turn the attention of Hon. Gentlemen to the more immediate subject considered in the Bills which lie on the table. It may be said, "your estimate of the expense attending the construction of those works is too low," Sir,