

# THE GLEANER:

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

[COMPRISED 13 VOLUMES

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MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 5, 1852.

No. 24.

## Communications.

TO THE

HON. JOHN AMBROSE STREET,  
ATTORNEY GENERAL AND *Leader of the*  
*Government!*

Sir,—As a Freeholder of this County, and one who signed the Requisition calling upon you to resign, I take the liberty of addressing you, in reference to your reply to that call, to your conduct as one of our Representatives, and your acts as *Leader of the Government.*

In the first place, Sir, let me inform you that your answer is just such a one as was expected from the *Hon. J. A. Street—the man of "high-minded principle"*; and knowing you, Sir, as I do, I felt assured of the course you would pursue; and all who know you believed that some excuse or subterfuge would be adopted to enable you to hold on to power and eminence.

You thank us for the "*very temperate and courteous language* in which this peremptory demand is couched." You might have spared the cautious point of that remark, if sarcasm was intended by the dash, for language more courteous could scarcely be used towards any gentleman; no "peremptory demand" is contained in the requisition; it is a simple request, in the mildest language, and couched in terms least likely to wound your feelings,—for this you may thank your friends, amongst whom the movement originated, for had your political opponents prepared that document, they would have regarded a correct statement of facts much more than your feelings, and would not have left it open to the objection which is made to it, in the omission to state that you had completely lost the confidence of your constituents—misrepresented their sentiments—and disappointed their just expectations.

Your gratitude is quite characteristic, and in keeping with the professed interest you feel in our County.

You favor us with several extracts from speeches delivered on the hustings on several occasions, but take care that they are from speeches delivered after your several elections. Why not quote from speeches delivered before an election? You speak of these being the principles on which you offered and were returned. You know better, and the County believes that you never were returned on principle, and with all your boasted "independence," they give you credit for being taken there, neither through any principle or interest that you yourself possessed, but simply because the influence of a certain honorable gentleman put you where you are, and this you know well. You say "that in local matters you will consult the wishes of your constituents—in Provincial matters you will consult your own, and you ask if the Railway question is not one of a Provincial nature. You, Sir, and the Government to which you belong, have made a local question of it. You found a majority of your Council adverse to our line, and in favor of a Southern one; not because it was a better one—would cost less in its construction—or offered greater Provincial advantages—but because it passed through their Counties—suited their local interests, and would increase the prosperity of your constituents, while it sacrificed your's; and you cannot deny that its route was determined by local interests, and on that ground alone. But suppose I admit your position, that it is a Provincial question—it is your duty to support the measure that offers the greatest advantages to the Province, and is most likely to promote your Provincial prosperity. Are these objects likely to be attained by a Southern route, which for hundreds of miles runs either along or nearly parallel to a great river—through a territory the greater part of which is either granted, or unfit for settlement—over a tract of country almost impracticable even for a common road, and along a line never yet explored? or would they not rather be secured by supporting the Northern route, which has been surveyed, found practicable, and highly recommended, by opening up an immense field for emigration—by the oc-

cupation of our fertile and valuable lands—passing over the most level and valuable tract of land in the Province, intersecting in its course immense rivers, and facilitating the prosecution of our Fisheries, an invaluable source of wealth. The cost, too, would be one-third less than through the rocky territory of the South and West; and as a national defence—as in all other points in which we have considered it—the Eastern route is infinitely superior to any other that can be obtained. This you admit in your speech in introducing the question. Is it then necessary, with those facts and your own admission before you, to ask "in what have I forfeited your confidence or betrayed your trust?"

Again, you say in your reply—"Had the question been simply this—whether the Railway was to go in the North or the South side of the Province, and my vote would have carried it on your side—then indeed you might have had cause to complain had I decided against you; but such, gentlemen, you know, or at all events most of you ought to know, was not the question."

I deny that such was not the question. On that point the question turned, and the route was decided. The money could not be got for the Portland line, and therefore the North, or the South, must be abandoned. Which should it be? Mr Chandler tells us that the Northern route was abandoned without a dissenting voice; not even the Leader's was raised in favor of it. Was this serving the interests of Northumberland?

You say that it "was necessary that the three Provinces should agree upon a route in order to get the money." "Until the meeting in Halifax, no line had been agreed upon." Both these propositions I deny! Why was it necessary that Canada should dictate to New Brunswick, or why should our Government submit to it. You did not, I presume, dictate to Canada the particular locality of her line, nor do I believe that she dictated to you. It may have been necessary that the Provinces should agree upon the respective amount of the responsibility each should bear, but certainly not upon the local route. If no line was fixed until the meeting in Halifax, why did you say in your speech of the 21st February last, "that a Bill was prepared by the Government of this Province in strict conformity with what was agreed on at Toronto,"—"that was a scheme for a great Trunk Railway by a route very different from what was now contemplated,"—"afterwards matured at Toronto,"—"Major Robinson's line." The whole tenor of that speech goes to prove that a line was fixed upon at Toronto, and therefore before the meeting in Halifax, and that you have mis-stated an important fact, either in your *Speech* or *Reply*. Which is it?

In your *Speech* you say "that the Governments of Canada and Nova Scotia were unanimous with respect to a particular route; they said the Northern route must be abandoned." In this you are undoubtedly incorrect. It is a matter of history that Nova Scotia was desirous of adhering to the Northern route—that a committee of the House rejected the proposal of the Delegates by a majority of 9 to 1—that it was with the utmost reluctance they consented to the present scheme, and only when they found that New Brunswick was leagued with Canada to force it upon them. Yet you very coolly tell us in your *Reply* that "they at once came into the proposition made by Canada."

As, therefore, in your *Reply*, you have been so inaccurate in stating facts, the arguments deduced by you therefrom are comparatively worthless, and cannot be sustained or depended upon!

You say again—"had I done otherwise, I might, it is true, have given some temporary embarrassment to the Government, but could not have frustrated the arrangement, or effected a change in the route."

This issue is worthy of you, Sir, and though very plausibly taken (as you lawyers say), it is not the point to be now decided on. The question for us to consider is, what was the duty of a man possessing "principle! honor! consistency! and having the interest of Northumberland at heart," all which, both you and your friends are continually parading before the public

as possessed by you—and this point we will now discuss.

There were two courses open for a man of "principle," when he found so large a portion of the Council in favor of a change of the route agreed upon at Toronto—so deeply affecting the interests of his constituents—either to insist, as matter of compromise with his colleagues, that the route should be left open, to be settled by British Commissioners; or else to take the only other alternative for an honorable man, and resign his seat at the Council Board. It does not appear from your *speech* that you advocated the former course, and we may reasonably conclude that you did not, or you would have told us of it, as I feel assured you would not miss advancing such a good ground of justification; but it appears from its whole tenor (with the exception of one clause, which, I dare say, was not inserted without a purpose), and also from your reply, that your own convictions were against the Eastern route! You say "that the delegates had adopted a different line. He could not conscientiously say they had done wrong, but he was satisfied of the contrary." Yet you say in another part of your speech "that you thought the Northern line the best." What are we to understand from such inconsistencies? I draw this inference—that you mean that the Northern line was best for the interests of your constituents—the Southern line for your own—and I dare say I am not far from the truth.

I will now consider the other alternative. You say that up to the receipt of the "exposition despatch," which arrived about the end of December, that the Northern route was the one fixed upon, therefore your resignation would not have had for its object the "frustrating the arrangement, or effecting a change in the route," as you would wish us to believe, but if you just reverse the case, it will be more correctly put, as the arrangement for the Northern line had for months before been fixed upon at Toronto, and therefore the object of your resignation ought to have been to sustain the arrangement, and support the route.

I differ with you in the effect your resignation would have had upon the Government, and feel assured that your withdrawal would have resulted in its downfall, for I doubt not that your honorable colleague from this County would have taken the same course, as it is generally believed that he would long since have withdrawn, but from a desire to sustain you, and promote your advancement. This would of course take the six "tame followers" of the North, which, being eight off, would make a difference of sixteen in counting votes. Where, then, would the Government majority be? They would not have had the courage to risk the Bill; but suppose they had, and that opposition members had supported the measure, and secured its passage (which they would not have done if the Government were divided), the Government would have been defeated on the very next question that arose, and they would have had to resign. "Temporary embarrassment"! indeed! If you had said *total annihilation*, it would have been a much more correct prophecy.

Your resignation would not have been necessary; a simple expression of your determination to do so, would have had the same effect; for your colleagues in the Assembly, who of course are the chief persons to be considered, are too wily to risk a course that would have placed them under the necessity of an appeal to the country, which they would have been forced to do had you stood firm. Three out of the four must have been defeated in such an appeal, while your honorable colleague and yourself would have been returned as triumphantly as you would now be disgracefully defeated, if you dared to insult the Freeholders of Northumberland by again seeking their suffrages.

You may possibly misunderstand the conclusion to be drawn from a portion of this letter, and imagine that I consider you the *Atlas* of the Executive, simply because your withdrawal would cause its fall—(this could equally be effected by the resignation of your honorable colleague, and which I should not be surprised at if it occurred). But if you gratify your *egotism* by such an opinion, you make a great mistake, for I

have quite a different opinion of your importance, and so has the wily politician who leads you, by tickling your foibles with straws, and gratifying your avarice and ambition by a good fat office, the stepping stone to promotion, while he quietly sits by, and chuckles over your pompous and oft-repeated enunciation of "*Leader*," and persuades you that in reality a change of route and a southern Railway is after all the only way to advance the interests of the Province generally, and the North in particular. The motto seems to be,

"Get place and wealth, if possible with grace, If not, by any means get wealth and place."

Want of space prevents me from fully noticing your reply, but you will probably hear next week from

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Newcastle, March 26, 1852.

Mr Editor,

A Requisition having been signed by many persons in Miramichi, addressed to the Honorable John Ambrose Street, calling upon him to resign his seat as a Representative of the County of Northumberland, in consequence of his having supported a Railroad connecting Halifax with Quebec, via the city of St. John and the Grand Falls, you will, I trust, allow me a place in your Journal, to examine the subject, and ascertain if there are any just grounds for thus hastily condemning a gentleman who for twenty years has faithfully and indefatigably represented his county in the Legislature of the Province. I think those who have known Mr Street will never charge him with neglecting the interests of the County, or that Northumberland has been overlooked in the distribution of the public revenue, for local improvements; but because the Line for the proposed Railway to Quebec is not to pass through Northumberland, and this from circumstances beyond his power or control, he is to incur the whole odium of its not doing so. No other cause of complaint against Mr Street is urged, but his conduct on the Railway. How stands the question?

In the Session of 1850, the House of Assembly by their address to Her Most Gracious Majesty, sought the aid of the Imperial Government to assist in constructing a Railway to Quebec through this Province, on the Line recommended by Major Robinson. An unfavorable reply was received to that address, and all hopes of a Railroad to connect us with Canada were nearly extinguished. In August of that year the Portland Convention took place, and a scheme to connect Halifax via Saint John to Portland by Railway, was urged as being a Line which, if built, would be remunerative, and was within the means of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to accomplish. This Line was the favorite one, and still is viewed by many as of more importance to the Province, than one from Halifax to Quebec. An Act to incorporate a Company for the purpose of making this Line, and a Grant from the Province of £250,000 stg. passed almost by acclamation—the only members voting against the measure were Messrs. Montgomery, Barberie, Gilbert, Earle and Pickard. An Act was also passed in addition, giving over a million of acres to the stockholders.

The Honorable Joseph Howe, who had been delegated by the Nova Scotia Executive to proceed to England to obtain a Loan, or ascertain upon what terms a Loan could be procured, either from Her Majesty's Government or private capitalists, was then in England, employing his powerful talents in bringing the subject of Railways connecting these North American Colonies under the notice of the Imperial Government and the British people, which, after some negotiation, which is well known, resulted in Mr Hawes's celebrated letter of the 10th of March, 1851, offering the Imperial guarantee upon certain conditions for funds to construct a Railway from Halifax to Quebec, upon the line recommended by Major Robinson.

The despatches from the Colonial Office to the Governor General, including Mr Hawes's letter, were duly communicated to the Assembly of this Province, and after taking the same into consideration, the House unanimously refused to do more than recognize the pledge given by the Assembly in 1849 and 1850, for aid towards