

From the New Brunswick, July 6. HALIFAX AND QUEBEC RAILWAY.

NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

We have great satisfaction in being able to announce, that within the last month, most important movements have taken place in London with reference to the construction of a Railway to connect Halifax and Quebec, and that with the approbation of H. M. Government, the nucleus of a Company has been formed for carrying out this great national undertaking. For this interesting information, and for the perusal of three pamphlets on the subject, printed in London little more than a fortnight since, we are indebted to M. H. Perley, Esq., who received them from England by the last steamer.

The first of these pamphlets is on the national, political and commercial importance of a Railway from Halifax to Quebec, with extracts from important despatches and acts of Parliament relating thereto. This pamphlet is accompanied by a large and handsome map of British North America, from Newfoundland to Vancouver's Island, with all the Colonial Railways clearly laid down.

The second pamphlet contains, 'Minutes of proceedings at a meeting held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James' Street, on Saturday the 5th June, 1858, relative to the formation of the Halifax and Quebec Railway.' At this meeting, Viscount Bury, M. P., (son in law of Sir Allan Macnab), was in the Chair, and the meeting was attended by the Rt. Hon. Southern Estcourt, M. P.; Capt. the Hon. John Vivian, M. P.; the Hon. Sir Allan Macnab, Bart.; Viscount Goderich, M. P.; the Hon. S. Cunard; Col. Boldero, M. P.; James Wyld, Esq., M. P.; the Hon. Chas. Fitzwilliam, M. P.; R. P. Nisbet, Esq., M. P.; the Hon. Justice Haliburton; John Neeld, Esq., M. P.; Francis S. Head, Esq.; Alfred Roche, Esq., and others.

The proceedings were opened in a neat speech by Lord Bury, who declared the object of the meeting, and went fully into the advantages and almost absolute necessity of completing a Railway from Halifax to Quebec as a great National undertaking, and quoted largely from Major Robinson's report on the line. The first resolution was moved by the Rt. Hon. Southern Estcourt, M. P., who stated that he had first become interested in New Brunswick, and in the Railway, through letters received from his brother, the late Col. J. B. B. Estcourt, who was employed in running the boundary with the U. States under the Ashburton Treaty. In the course of his remarks on the Railway in a military point of view, Mr Estcourt said:—

'At the time when what was called the rebellion in Canada broke out, I was well acquainted with the movements of the 43rd Regiment.—That regiment was stationed on the seaboard of New Brunswick; it was of the greatest importance that all succour that could be afforded, should be marched with every rapidity that was possible to the places where operations were going on in Canada. That regiment made a most difficult passage through the midst of the country, which had scarcely been explored before they cut their way through—in short, it was one of the most brilliant operations, as deserving to be recorded by an historian as the famous expedition of Cyrus, which was so fortunate as to receive a place in history, and an historian in Xenophon; it was something that could not fail to make an impression upon a non-military as well as a military mind. I know it did upon mine.'

Mr Estcourt then said, that he attended the meeting only as a private individual member of Parliament; that it was not in his power to state anything there on the part of H. M. Government, of which he was a very humble member, but said, that in a national point of view, the Government might fairly be asked to make some pecuniary sacrifice in order to achieve the Railway; and it seemed to him also, that if the figures produced by Lord Bury had any weight, they might go to the Government and say,—"You gain this great Imperial advantage without any risk at all." The Resolution was as follows:—

'That the extraordinary advance which has been made within the last few years in the trade and population of the British North American Colonies renders it imperatively necessary, that Great Britain should no longer be dependent upon the U. States for Railway communication with these important Colonies, especially when a cheaper and more expeditious route can be obtained through the British possessions.'

This resolution was seconded by the Honble. Capt. Vivian, M. P., who spoke in forcible terms of the great military and political advantages of the proposed Railway, and alluded to the march of the 43rd Regiment through the wilderness, having himself taken a part in that march, as an officer of the Regiment.

Very admirable speeches were made by Sir Allan Macnab, the Hon. S. Cunard, Mr Justice Haliburton, (Sam Slick), the Hon. Charles Fitzwilliam, M. P., and others; a number of spirited resolutions were passed, and it was among other things resolved, that a deputation should wait on the Colonial Minister on the subject.

The third pamphlet contains the minutes of what took place between the deputation and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the 14th of June, and also the minutes of proceedings of the Deputation which waited on the Chancellor

of the Exchequer, Mr D'Israeli, on the following day, 15th June. The minutes of what took place at the Colonial Office, being of great interest, we re-produce them in full. They are as follows:—

THE HALIFAX AND QUEBEC RAILWAY COMPANY, LIMITED.

Deputation to the Right Honorable Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer Lytton, Bart., M. P., Her Majesty's Principal Secy. of State for the Colonies, on Monday, the 14th day of June, 1858.

The Deputation consisted of the following Noblemen and Gentlemen:—

Viscount Bury, M. P., *Chairman*.
Viscount Goderich, M. P.
The Hon. Sir Allan Macnab, Bart.
Capt. the Hon. John Vivian, M. P.
The Hon. C. W. W. Fitzwilliam, M. P.
The Rt. Hon. Southern Estcourt, M. P.
The Hon. F. Berkeley, M. P.
The Hon. Justice Haliburton.
W. H. Gore Langton, Esq., M. P.
Samuel Christy, Esq., M. P.
James Wyld, Esq., M. P.
The Hon. S. Cunard. Mr Collins, M. P.
G. G. Glyn, Esq., M. P. Mr Nelson.
J. A. Roebuck Esq. M. P. Mr Brotherhood.
John Neeld, Esq., M. P. Mr H. Masterman.
R. P. Nisbet, Esq. M. P. Mr Stevens.
Col. Boldero, M. P. Mr Sewell.

Lord Bury.—Sir, I attend here to-day to present this influential Deputation to you, as the Chairman of meetings which were held at the Thatched House Tavern, on last Saturday week, and also on last Saturday.

The object of the meeting is to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the responsibility of assisting, in some manner, the construction of a railroad between Halifax and Quebec. You, sir, are aware, from the papers which have been submitted to you, that the Governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada, have each of them guaranteed £20,000 per annum towards the completion of this work, together with certain Crown lands lying within each of their jurisdictions, and they engage to place at the disposal of any Company who may undertake the railway, or rather of Her Majesty's Government, such private lands as may be required for making the stations and other works on the line. The conditions upon which they guaranteed this to Her Majesty are, that Her Majesty shall, either by herself or through the instrumentality of a private company, undertake the construction of the line. Lord Grey was very favourably disposed towards the project, and in a despatch to Lord Elgin, dated the 14th March, 1851, he stated that Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to recommend to Parliament that a minimum interest on the amount to be expended in constructing the line should be guaranteed to them. We should like to put it to Her Majesty's Government whether they would not be equally prepared to assist in this undertaking.

I need not urge upon you, sir, the extreme importance, in a political point of view, of the construction of this line; but I only allude to it now because I know that the view which will have most weight with you will, of course, be that the undertaking is great in a national and political point of view. You, of course, will not enter with such care into the circumstances whether it would be likely to be pecuniarily remunerative to the shareholders of the undertaking. I shall only allude to that part of it in order to show that Her Majesty's Government will not incur any very great risk if they, in accordance with our request, guarantee the sum required for the construction of the line.

With regard to the first point, namely, the national importance, the map which I see before you will immediately show you the manner in which the communications at present take place with Canada, and which involves a very considerable circuitous route, besides going through territories of another power. By our proposed route, you will land at Halifax, and then go from Halifax to Quebec; you will not only go through British territory the whole way, but you will save 400 miles as regards going by steamer to Boston, and 600 miles as regards going by steamer to New York. You now have to go across the State of Maine from Boston, and from the port of New York through the State of New York, to the Canadian frontier; consequently, this our route involves not only a very great saving of time as regards the transit, but it would allow us to complete your communications through the British territory. I need only cite one instance—I am sure you are already aware of that one point to which I will allude—that during the last war, when it was desirable to convey stores which were in the arsenal of Quebec for use in the Crimea, the law officers of the crown were consulted as to the possibility of conveying these stores over the railroads of the United States; it was decided by the law officers that it would be a contravention of the neutrality laws to do so, and, in consequence of that opinion, the stores were locked up in Canada, and they were ultimately, I believe, conveyed on sleighs over the very line through which this railway will pass which we wish to undertake. I will not advert any further to the political aspect of the matter.

But with regard to the commercial point of view, Colonel Robinson and Major Henderson

made a very valuable report, at the instance of the Imperial Government. The report of these gentlemen was very favourable, and Lord Elgin was very much in favour of the scheme they proposed. It was in consequence of their scheme that the Legislatures of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia voted a supply, together equal to £60,000 a year. Lord Grey wrote his despatch to Lord Elgin, intimating that the Government would be prepared to guarantee a minimum rate of interest on the construction of the line. What we ask her Majesty's Government now to do is this:—These Legislatures having already voted £60,000 a year to Her Majesty's Government, and certain Crown lands, that Her Majesty's Government would consent to propose to Parliament to guarantee us an equal sum of £60,000 a year, together with the £60,000 a year that has been voted by these Colonies, and the Crown lands they have voted. That would form a guarantee equal to £4 per cent. on the estimated amount of the capital to be expended, which is £3,000,000 sterling.

Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.—I think it is estimated, in some of the papers I have seen, at £5,000,000.

The Hon. Mr Justice Haliburton.—The reason of that is: The original estimate included the Province of Nova Scotia, which railway is now nearly completed through half the length of that Province; and also the estimate of a certain portion on the banks of the St. Lawrence, in the province of Canada, which is already in process of completion from Quebec to Trois Pistoles; and therefore it thus merely leaves the past from thence, through New Brunswick to the borders of Nova Scotia to be constructed.

Lord Bury.—These amounts will make £120,000 a year guaranteed by Her Majesty's Government, for which they will have as assets £60,000 a year guaranteed by the Legislatures of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada, and for the remaining £60,000 a year the company will undertake to convey Her Majesty's mails, stores, and troops free of cost. The mails throughout the year, the warlike stores, or any other stores Her Majesty may choose to send, and the conveyance of the troops free of cost, whenever Her Majesty may choose to send them. That, sir, is the proposal which we wish to make to Her Majesty's Government.

I may say that the meeting appointed a financial committee to confer with you in case her Majesty's Government should feel generally disposed to afford us any guaranty, and should wish to confer with respect to the amount of that guarantee, and the details of it; and that committee would wait upon you at your convenience in case you feel favorably disposed to entertain the proposals.

I may add to this that a memorial has been prepared for presentation to you, embodying the resolutions of the first meeting, which was held at the Thatched-house Tavern, on Saturday week, and also embodying the resolutions of the adjourned meeting, held on Saturday last, touching the financial part of it. I will hand this to you, but it is subject to a slight alteration in the latter part of it, so that perhaps you will not consider it as quite complete.

I omitted to state a very important fact touching the political aspect of this railway, and that is this: The harbour of Halifax is the only harbour, even so far south as New York, which is never closed by ice; you can enter the harbour of Halifax at all seasons of the year. The map before you, sir, will show it satisfactorily to you. The distance from Halifax to Boston is 400 miles, and by the route from Liverpool as shown on that map, you will land at Halifax and proceed upon British territory, and thus effecting a saving of 400 miles by sea. New York is 200 miles further than Boston, and then you would have to come up to Montreal. The part down to St. Thomas's is completed, and the part from Halifax to Truro is about completed, and it is in the course of construction from St. Thomas's to Trois Pistoles, and that makes the difference in the estimate of the £5,000,000 and the £3,000,000.

Sir E. Bulwer Lytton.—I think the question divides itself into two great divisions: one is the political and the other is the financial. So far as the political is concerned, which more immediately comes under my notice, I have given the best consideration I can to the subject, and I think that the imperial advantages are not exaggerated. I think that there is a sufficient degree of imperial advantage to be derived, from the proposed line to justify to my mind the Government in giving assistance to the colonies; and the more I look at the great importance of it, the more favorable I think the proposed course is.

But then there comes the other question, which clearly does not come into my department, which is the financial, and that is really a question for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is a question for him to consider whether he thinks the financial state of the country would justify it and he also has to consider how far he thinks there would be a sufficient degree of Parliamentary support for such a purpose. All I can say is, if he will agree, I should be myself exceedingly proud and excessively happy to assist in carrying it out. But I cannot say anything upon that. This is not at all in my department. I think that there are difficulties. You

know very well the great difficulties there are in obtaining, through parliament, anything like guarantees for loans for colonial purposes; and in order to carry that out, you must make out a very strong case, not as to the colonial advantages. As far as I have been able to look at it, which is only within a short time, I must say it appears to me that there are very good grounds for stating there are imperial advantages.

With regard to the speculation, so far as it is a speculation, I have only been able to see a good deal of contradictory evidence, and I cannot pronounce an opinion upon it. A good deal will, of course, depend upon what is the population through which the railway will have to pass. There is a large tract of land, which is stated in one of these reports to be a kind of extended village, in which there is a good deal of scattered population.

Mr Roebuck, M. P.—Sir Edward you ought to bear in mind that at the present moment we do incur a certain amount of expense. We transmit our post, we transmit our warlike stores, and also our troops to Canada—that united makes up an annual sum. Now the post alone makes up an annual sum of £25,000. That is a matter which annually occurs. That would be done away with entirely by the proposed plan, as I understand the noble lord. The railway company undertakes to convey the post of her Majesty from Halifax to Quebec—that is included in the grant of £60,000 a year. Besides that they undertake to transmit all the stores that her Majesty may choose to send to Quebec, and also all the troops that her Majesty may choose to send to Quebec, so that all those three items together ought to be considered as diminishing the expenses of our guarantee. That is, we are, by a sort of forethought, making a contract to conduct our troops, our post, and our stores for £60,000 a year across that portion of the territory.

The Hon. Mr Justice Haliburton.—Sir, there is one thing I must beg leave to mention:—This is to be distinguished from almost all other railways. This is not a colonial railway as affects Canada, New Brunswick, or Nova Scotia individually, but as affecting the whole of them and connecting their intercourse with this country. Mr Roebuck has put that in every forcible way. With respect to the carriage of the mails, which is an actual expenditure at the present moment in the shape of a charge on the revenue, you observe that the mail goes to Boston or New York, before it can reach Canada and the British possessions there, it has to pass through the United States. The treaty by which that right is given to England contains within it a clause that it can be annulled on six weeks' notice being given to either party. At the time when Mr Collins put on his rival steamships to that magnificent line, that marvellous line of Mr Cunard's, they wanted, as they usually do in the States, to get some advantage under the contract; that was refused, and the very moment it was refused, there was an abrupt notice given which terminated the postal arrangement, in consequence of which the whole country was thrown into the greatest possible confusion.—For six months in the year Canada is shut up, relying on this line sending the mails through the United States. No means have been taken for making a practical carriage wheelroad into Canada. It would occasion interminable delay to go all the way round the Pacific, and send the mail through Vancouver's Island. We ought not to be at the mercy of a foreign power for carrying the mails to our own possessions. I want further to state—this is something which perhaps neither you nor myself may live to see carried out; but, beyond all manner of doubt, it is the destiny of this country to have a complete inter-colonial communication all the way, from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean by Vancouver's Island; and there is now, from the entrance of the St. Lawrence to the head of Lake Superior, a larger inland navigation than from Liverpool to New York (which is upwards of 3,700 miles). From the embouchure of that river, in British territory, up to the head of Lake Superior in British territory, it would take a vessel with the same power a longer time to go up through that natural canal, than it would to go to Liverpool to that country. After this is done, you will have an outlet for all the western waters; all the produce that they have in that part of the world must come by this railway to the nearest port of Halifax on the Atlantic, between England and America.—Then comes the Hudson's Bay Company on the other side, and it is not saying too much, after the evidence that has been recently given by gentlemen who have gone over there,—and there is one gentleman in this room who has, I understand, been twice there,—that the land there is capital. From Vancouver's Island you have access across to the Pacific and our Indian possessions, and which you will thus reach through British colonies, without any interruption. We have no Fillibusters there. We have no story of Nicaraguan Canal or the Suez Canal, or any other canals which cannot be cut. Here there are things that are practicable—they begin piece by piece. Through Canada there are locks to connect the lakes and railways at certain points. There is a railway through Nova Scotia; and now it wants but this little bit, and then you get a communication all the way from Halifax to the head of Lake Superior,