

VALLEY ROUTE FOR G. T. P.

Matter Discussed at a Well Attended Meeting of the Board of Trade.

VERY INTERESTING ADDRESS BY SENATOR THOMPSON

Committee Appointed to Procure Information and Memorialize Government.

ADOPTION OF CENTRAL ROUTE WOULD MEAN DESTRUCTION OF FOREST LANDS.

The Board of Trade at a largely attended meeting yesterday afternoon appointed a committee of leading citizens to procure information and memorialize the government to adopt the St. John Valley route for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

President Weddall occupied the chair and the other gentlemen present included Senator Thompson, Ald Chestnut, George W. Hodge, William Lemont, J. H. Barry, George Y. Dibblee, J. D. Phinney, W. E. Farrell, W. J. Osborne, Coun. McFarlane, A. H. F. Randolph, John Kilburn, Edward Moore and A. R. Slipp.

In the absence of Mr. McCready, Mr. J. H. Barry was appointed secretary pro-tem.

On motion of Mr. Dibblee, Mr. John Gibson was elected a member of the board.

Mr. Dibblee said that he understood that Mr. Gibson and Mr. Scott had a grievance against the railways because of the excessive rates charged on bark. He suggested that a statement be prepared by Messrs. Scott and Gibson and placed in the hands of the committee. The suggestion was approved of by the meeting.

President Weddall explained that the meeting had been called by him to discuss the proposed routes through New Brunswick of the transcontinental railway.

Ald. Chestnut introduced the subject in a brief speech. He said that the route of the proposed transcontinental railway was about to be selected and an opportunity was presented to Fredericton to get on a trunk line that should be taken advantage of. He understood that the final selection of the route through New Brunswick lay with the government. The difference between the two rival routes was not very great and he believed the people of this section were unanimous for the river route. There were now many thriving towns and villages along the river, and a new line of railway would be of untold benefit to them. He thought the claims of the St. John valley should be urged upon the government in the strongest possible manner.

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be liable for it. He believed that a determined effort should be made to have the road located down the valley.

The minister of railways had practically stated that he was in favor of the valley route. He had been given to understand by Mr. Wade that the route would be determined by the government, not by the commission. A more important question has not come before the people of Fredericton in our life time, and will not during the next generation. It would be a great thing to have a transcontinental railway running by our doors, even if the trains passed in the night and did not stop. The only thing against the valley route is 17 miles and the bridges, and that difference would be overcome in the saving of fuel and wear of engines.

There has never been any question as to the feasibility of the route by the St. John river, as all admit that it is practical. The great question in railway construction is to get a level road, and unless it is shown that the estimate already made is wrong our chances are good. The premier has promised that we shall be heard before a decision is reached and we should show them that we are alive to the situation. Then it cannot be said it is our fault if the other route is chosen.

The senator's practical address was well received by the meeting.

OTHER SPEECHES.

Mr. J. D. McKay said he was familiar with the Miramichi and Taxis river country, and did not think that much of it was fit for settlement. He believed it would not be in the interests of the lumber industry to have the road built by the central route. At present an American concern was negotiating for the Richards' lands, but was delaying the purchase until the result of the railway location was determined.

Mr. Phinney said he felt sure the meeting was under obligations to Senator Thompson for the information he had given them. It seemed to him that the report of the commission as published in the press was inclined to favor the central route. It is possible that when the location surveys are completed, even the disadvantage of distance against the river route might be removed. The government would have to decide the question in the general interests of the country, but it seemed to him the river route possessed advantages that could not be overlooked. If the road were built by the central route the extensive lumber lands of the province would be endangered, from fire, and the lumber lands of New Brunswick, if properly conserved, were of as much importance as a railway would be. Already the local government had recognized this and had taken steps to have guardians appointed while the construction work was going on. Mr. Phinney thought the time had arrived when action should be taken with a view of influencing the government in favor of the valley route. He would suggest that a committee of three be appointed to prepare a memorial on the subject to be presented to the government.

In reply to Mr. Barry, Senator Thompson said the valley route had been surveyed from Grand Falls to Fredericton by the western side of the river.

Mr. Dibblee thought the influence of the local government would be strongly in favor of the central route.

Senator Thompson thought it would be a good plan to have a delegation sent to Ottawa later on to discuss the matter with the government.

Mr. Barry said he understood that when the question was first discussed the object was to build a great national highway from ocean to ocean irrespective of local conditions. If we cannot show those who have the final decision of the matter that the valley route, by reason of being populated and having better gradients, is superior to the other route, then our case is hopeless. It is necessary to show also that as a financial proposition the valley route is the best, and with this object in view a practical man ought to be employed to complete information. He believed it would be a good plan to have a com-



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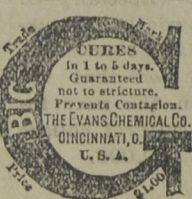
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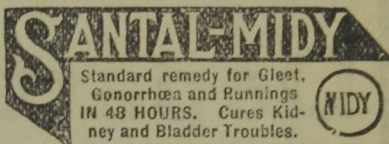
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