

Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railroad.—Report by the Chief Engineer. Hugh Scobie, Toronto, 1853.

This is a straight-forward, business-like document, much more to our fancy than the grandiloquent effusions it is sometimes our misfortune to see issued in connection with engineering projects. We think Mr. Cumberland has exercised a wise discretion in giving so simple a statement of facts, and so plain an exposition of his views in connection with the enterprise with which he is charged: for, undoubtedly, it was originated by persons not honoured with a very large share of public confidence: and that which, on the part of some, was at first a justifiable suspicion, seemed ultimately to strengthen into a blind prejudice and opposition, outliving the causes which induced them. Such a Report, therefore, as that before us, (even apart from its strictly engineering, statistical and commercial features) is well timed, for it puts the public in possession of the present condition and management of the work, and satisfactorily proves that if its earlier controul and government were inefficient, the main objections have been removed, and an independent and vigilant supervision secured for the future.

In connection with these points, we observe that under the instructions of the Railway Commissioners, Mr. Cumberland, in conjunction with Mr. Keefer, recommended "some alterations, tending principally to the reduction of curvature, and the more substantial and permanent character of the structures;" that on his assuming the charge of the works, and prior to the granting of Government aid, the original contract was set aside and a new agreement entered into between the Company and the Contractors, whereby "the entire completion of every anticipated requirement, including harbours, depot service, and full equipment of rolling stock, has been secured on equitable terms;"—and, further, that under that agreement "the whole of the Engineering Staff, previously in the service of the Contractors, has been re-organized and transferred to the service of the Company, and placed under the direct authority and controul of the Chief Engineer. All contracts will hereafter be made by the Company's Officers, as well for depot, rail and harbour service, as for locomotive power and general rolling stock; and the whole authority of construction and management be centred in and exercised by the Direction and its responsible officers, the Chief Engineer being further amenable to the Railway Commissioners for the fulfilment of their regulations." The works are therefore now being carried on under the same system as obtains on others of similar character, and there is no longer any reason for doubting that they will be creditably prosecuted to completion.

With reference to the progress and opening of the line, we see that 31 miles of rail have been laid, and that 44 miles are on hand ready to lay early in the Spring:—that the Road will be opened to Newmarket in May, to Bradford in June, and to Barrie in July next; and that the whole length to Lake Huron is expected to be ready for traffic in September next.

With regard to the location of the line from Barrie to Lake Huron, Mr. Cumberland (prompted probably by a desire to satisfy, if that be possible, the different interests competing for it,) appears to have made a very complete examination of the country, having run no less than five lines of exploration between Lakes Simcoe and Huron, the results of which he details very fully in his Report. We doubt, however, if his perseverance, and the liberality of the Directors in authorizing such unusually extensive surveys, will be appreciated by any but the shareholders and those connected with the adopted line; for, although to an unprejudiced judgment he seems to justify his decisions, he will scarcely escape the sectional opposition always resulting from disappointment.

The recommendation made to carry the line westward to Sydenham and Saugeen, is highly judicious, for undoubtedly with 94 miles already made, this Company by a short extension, can serve the whole of the Owen Sound Tract as efficiently, much sooner, and more profitably than it could be served by any other means; and the more especially, as that Tract can scarcely be said to be yet so advanced or thickly settled as to justify any independent scheme, or offer for years

to come a remunerative field for a special line. We are, therefore glad to hear, from other sources, that Mr. Cumberland has been instructed to carry his proposal into immediate execution.

Whilst referring to the *Northern Terminus of the Road, to which so large a proportion of the Report is devoted*, we cannot refrain from expressing our surprise that so little should have been said as to the Toronto Depôts, concerning which so much excitement at present prevails. On this point Mr. Cumberland writes with great caution,—indeed, we may say, with a studied mystery or affected indecision. But why assume that to be secret which is known to everybody? Why play the diplomat when there is nothing to withhold? Is it that mistaking the opposition of the Corporation for the feeling of the citizens, he permits himself to be frightened from his propriety; or does he pay the commercial men of the City of Toronto so poor a compliment as to believe that they desire to see their water frontage for ever lying waste and unproductive, as it is and has been. For our parts, we have known long before his Report was published, that the vacant grounds at the Queen's Wharf, and between Yonge and Bay Streets, were to be appropriated by the Northern Company; and, undoubtedly, if the interests of the City as well as of the Railroad are to be consulted, these are the positions best adapted to the purpose. In our opinion it would have become the Chief Engineer better to have spoken out boldly, for although he may entertain a very natural dread of awakening a body which is said to be harmless only when it is asleep, the selection is so judicious as to command a general support far too powerful to be overruled by any adverse corporate decision.

Appended to the Report are some interesting statistical tables, and two excellent maps—one of Canada, and the other of the Counties of York and Simcoe. Indeed, the whole document seems to have been prepared with great care and completeness, and is well worthy of attentive perusal, especially by those who desire to have an insight into the prospective trade and traffic between the seaboard and the far west, which this line is intended to accommodate, and which marks it therefore as a road peculiarly valuable to Toronto and worthy of its support.

"Seventh Report of the Board of Works (of Toronto) for 1853."

This Report, as published in the Toronto newspapers, occupies exactly twenty-seven lines, (including the date and Chairman's signature,) and recommends an expenditure of £27,108 2s. 0d.; being at the rate of about £1,001 per line! The coincidence is as strange as the standard of critical admeasurement is novel; but the brevity of the explanatory and the fullness of the financial portions of the document contrast so harshly, that we felt bound to search for something in common—some connecting link between them—and have to thank the printer's devil for supplying, with sly drollery, that which the authors had certainly evaded or forgotten.

Although this Report is suggestive of very grave considerations in connection with general corporate administration, we shall, in any observations we may make upon it, confine ourselves strictly within the limit consistent with the specific purposes of this Journal, which certainly extends to all works of public improvement, and especially comprises whatever is connected with the application of sanitary measures.

On an examination of the Estimates of the Board of Works, (which at a glance it is evident have neither been prepared or recommended under professional advice,) we perceive that an expenditure is contemplated during the current year of no less a sum than £17,644 15s. 0d., on the item of sewerage alone! We naturally enquire—"Upon what principle is this large expenditure to be made?"—"has any system of sewage been adopted applicable to the whole City, and capable of extension with its growth?"—and, if so, is it such a system as is warranted by the experience of the past, and justified by the results of recent scientific and legislative investigation?" We are bound to say that there is evidence in this Report that it is not, and