

A RAILROAD

FROM

LAKE SUPERIOR TO THE PACIFIC.

To shorten, by a Western passage, the route to the Indies, which is now conducted around the fearful barriers of Cape Horn and Southern Africa, is a design that has long occupied the attention, and aroused the exertion of all maritime nations. England's exploring expeditions to both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, have pryed into every sinuosity of shore, from Lat. 30, South, to the borders of the Frigid Zone, and in the defeat of her exertions, projects have been forming to pierce the Continent within the limits of a foreign country, and where England would be placed at the mercy of her rivals. Whilst France, Mexico, the United States, and other Powers meditate the separation of the Continent at the Isthmus of Panama, let England at least enquire whether she has not, within her own territories, superior facilities for accomplishing the same grand purpose which impel them.

Within this past year, three works have been published in England, emanating from different sources, urging the necessity and advantages of a Railway connection between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, such railway to be constructed through the British Possessions. My present object is not to canvas the schemes proposed by any of these several parties or projectors, whereby they would seek to carry out their views, but, if possible, to direct the attention of the Canadian public to the existence of such a project, and the incalculable advantages which must result to this and the Mother Country, could such a connection be accomplished. In one of the pamphlets referred to, by Major Smith, the plan proposed by him is to construct such road by convict labour; the others, one by a Mr. Wilson, (who, I believe, was at one time in the employment of the Hudson Bay Company) and the other by Lieut. Syngé, of the Royal Engineers, I have not met with. That the construction of such a road is feasible and practicable, I have every reason to believe, and will propose to build it upon a plan similar to that proposed by Mr. Whitney, for constructing a like Railway communication through the United States,—which plan is so peculiarly adapted to our country, that it cannot fail of finding as favourable a reception here as it did there. The scheme of building a Railway for hundreds of miles through a country which at present is a wilderness, seems at first sight absurdly extravagant, as well as utterly impracticable; and so it would be if the plan contemplated was one to be fully carried out within any short period of time. It must be borne in mind that under the most favourable circumstances, some years would be required for the construction of such a work; with its progress, population must keep in advance, or accompany its advancement.

In determining, therefore, upon the wisdom or practicability of constructing such a road, the *whole matter* is to be looked at *prospectively*,—the question is not how far the present condition of the country and its interests warrant the undertaking, but whether such a state of things