

The Report goes on to state—

"But the great object for the railway to attain, and which if it should be able to accomplish its capability to pay the interest of the capital expended would be undoubted, is to supersede the long and dangerous passage to Quebec by the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

"To make two voyages in a season, vessels are obliged to leave England earlier, and encounter the dangers of the ice in the Gulf much sooner than it is safe or prudent for them to do.

"The loss of life and property which has occurred from this cause, and returning late in the autumn, has been enormous; it cannot be ascertained, but probably it would have more than paid for the railway.

"An opinion may however be formed of it from the rates of insurance, which in the spring and autumn are as high as 10 per cent.—a much higher rate than to any other part of the world.

"The navigation of the St. Lawrence is closed for about six months in every year. During the whole of this period all the produce of the country is locked up, and necessarily lies unproductive on the hands of the holders."

Several instances of this might be given, as for example:

"In the winter of 1847-8 the price of flour at Halifax and St. John was at 40s. the barrel, and it was being imported from the chief ports in the United States, even from as far as New Orleans, in the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time at Quebec, the price of flour was 25s. per barrel. A very great difference, which, had the railway been in existence, would not have occurred."

The Report states, page 23:—

"That the enterprise is of general interest; it concerns the prosperity and the welfare of each of the three provinces, and the honour as well as the interest of the whole British empire may be affected by it. It is the one great means by which alone the power of the mother country can be brought to bear on this side of the Atlantic, and restore the balance of power now fast turning to the United States.

"Every new line of railway made in that country adds to their power, enabling them to concentrate their forces almost wherever they please, and by the lines, of which there are already some, and there will soon be more, reaching to their northern frontier, they can choose at their own time any one point of attack on the long-extended Canadian frontier, and direct their whole strength against it.

"The provinces therefore, and the empire, have such interest in the formation of the Halifax and Quebec line, that it should be undertaken by them in common as a great public work for the public weal."

At page 30 the Report states, that

"In a political and military point of view the proposed railway must be regarded as becoming a work of necessity.

"The increasing population and wealth of the United States, and the diffusion of railways over their territory, especially in the direction of the Canadian frontier, renders it absolutely necessary to counterbalance, by some corresponding means, their otherwise preponderating power.

"Their railway communications will enable them to select their own time and their own points of attack, and will impose upon the British the necessity of being prepared at all points to meet them.

"It is most essential, therefore, that the mother country should be