

## TO THE SHAREHOLDERS IN GREAT BRITAIN

OF

# THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA.

HAMILTON, Canada West, 14th August 1856.

GENTLEMEN,

This letter is signed in England by John McLeod, Esquire, President of the Amherstburgh and St. Thomas Railway, which is the *Western* half of the line to be called The Great South Western, until we succeeded in making it the South Line of the Great Western Railway; and Mr. McLeod is accompanied by Mr. Dodge, the Chief Engineer of the *Eastern* half of the Great South Western, extending from the Suspension Bridge, Niagara Falls, to St. Thomas, and communicating with the City of Buffalo by the Buffalo and Brantford Railway, which it crosses at Dunnville. I have in brief these gentlemen to proceed to England for the purpose of satisfying you that it will be infinitely better for the friends of the Great Western Railway to unite in constructing the Great South Western Railway, with a view to the eventual amalgamation of the Stocks of the two Lines, than to lay out their money in building a double track on the Great Western.

Most of you are no doubt aware that I was one of the original promoters of the Great Western Railway, and I am led now to interfere to save the interests of the Shareholders in consequence of my having, in conjunction with my brother, Mr. Peter Buchanan, of Glasgow, and our partner, Mr. Harris, the President of the Company, been the means of inducing a large part of the original subscribers, as well as of the present holders of the Stock, to subscribe their money to the Great Western Railway. We gave this advice under the full persuasion in our own minds that the Stock of the Great Western Railway would turn out and continue permanently the best property in the world; *and so it may still be*, if common intelligence and a little energy is used at the present crisis. Every shareholder probably is aware that since the Great Western was projected, another great Railway organization, called the Grand Trunk Railway, was commenced in the Eastern part of the Province; but few are aware of the great exertions by the friends of the Great Western here, which have been required to prevent the invasion of our territory by this powerful company, in their natural efforts to reduce to the greatest extent their magnificent, but unfortunately rather premature undertaking. And within the last month, it has only been by exertions almost superhuman of the friends here of the Great Western, that they have averted a well concerted conspiracy, by a combination of parties here and in England, (jealous of its wonderful prosperity and now excellent economical management) whose success would have made to disappear at once the million of pounds sterling of premium at which our Stock now stands. As one of your allies I see that by a firm and decided effort at self preservation at this moment, the Great Western Railway may not only save its interests in the present, but place them for ever free from the blasting influence of the Grand Trunk, and all its enemies, external and internal, in Canada and in England.

My interference on your behalf has been two-fold. In the *first place*, in concert with some friends here, about six months ago, I pointed out that, in the now altered circumstances, it would be sheer folly to lay out in building a double track of the Great Western the money provided for that purpose in England. And, in the *second place*, in concert with the same friends here, (after receiving the approval of parties in England, connected with the Great Western, who have the best opportunities of judging,) about a month ago, I personally interfered, and, by a rapid movement, defeated a deep laid conspiracy to do away with our independence of the Grand Trunk Railway in Canada, on the one hand, and of the United States Railways, east and west of us, on the other. As there was no time to communicate with England, I undertook the vast responsibility of stepping forward, and, by paying the necessary deposits, I have got possession of the Charters and Stocks of the whole Great South Western Line, so that I am in a position to offer the same to the Shareholders of the Great Western Railway, *pro rata*.

My success will not only save your Stock and greatly increase its value as an investment, but place it beyond the influence for the future of that now wholesome or *disprincipled* competition now universally reprobated in England, and which was some time ago so well exposed in a Railway paper by Mr. Lawrence Heyworth, M.P. I have got the control of both charters which comprise the Great South Western line, and have elected the friends of the Great Western Railway as Directors of both. It was intended that Mr. Harris, the President of the Great Western, Mr. J. B. Smith, M.P., the Chairman of our English Directors, and our English Directors, should have been nominated to constitute half these new Boards, as the best means of securing your confidence, but it was found that the charters required the Directors to be resident in Canada. This, however, can be arranged as soon as these Roads are amalgamated with the Great Western. I myself am President of the Eastern half of the Great Southern line, and John McLeod, Esquire, of Amherstburgh, of the Western half. This gentleman, accompanied by Mr. Dodge, the Chief Engineer of my (the Eastern) half of the Line, goes home by this steamer. They will be found at the office of the Great Western Railway, in London, and will be prepared to go into all details with you either individually or collectively, when I doubt not you will cordially approve of all we have done for you. There is no doubt, however, that if left to stand alone, the Great Southern Road will form the finest property that can be conceived. Most of the way from Niagara Falls to the Detroit River, the country is entirely flat. There is scarcely any Engineering difficulty on the whole line, and the only expensive thing will be the bridge across the Grand River at Dunnville, which it is said will cost Twenty-five Thousand Pounds, or more, according as we are fortunate or otherwise in the foundations of the piers. A considerable outlay will also be required in bridging between Amherstburgh and the United States side of the Detroit River, as in this way it is proposed to reduce the width of the Steamboat ferry to one half what it is at the terminus of the Great Western Railway at Windsor.