

The question, therefore, presented for consideration, is,—  
Can the Halifax and Quebec railway successfully compete for the great trade of the West?

Assuming that the interest upon the amount necessary to construct the road be guaranteed by the Imperial Government, it will not require to raise a greater sum per annum to pay the amount of that guarantee than any existing line of railway running from the Atlantic sea-board to the St. Lawrence.

Distance for distance (excepting the Gulf of St. Lawrence, because it is open only during the summer), taking Halifax as the starting-point, the shortest route to Canada and the great West will be by this line, inasmuch as Halifax is 400 miles nearer to Europe than the seaports of the United States.

Two companies will own and control one continuous line of railway running from the harbour of Halifax to the shores of Lake Huron, 1,235 miles.

If the cost of transport for goods and passengers does not exceed that of the cost upon other lines, it will not only present the most favourable route for the great Western trade during the season when the Erie Canal and St. Lawrence navigations are closed, but it will retain through the winter, and permanently establish, the channel of trade *via* the St. Lawrence. It will at all seasons command the greater part of the through passenger traffic and the conveyance of mails and valuable merchandise between Europe, Canada, and the great Western States.

The amount of local traffic will, in the first instance, depend upon the amount of population, and the state of agriculture and commerce of the different provinces which it intersects.

The present population of Nova Scotia is about 350,000

New Brunswick	. . . . .	220,000
Part of Canada	. . . . .	150,000
Prince Edward's Island	. . . . .	70,000

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790,000

It may be fairly assumed, that at least 600,000 come within the area contributing to this railway, as it is and must always remain the great trunk line of the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and a great part of Lower Canada.

The receipts of the railroads of the New England States average 18s. per head of the entire population.

The receipts of the Great Western Railroad of Canada average 22s. per head of the entire population within the area.