

The Observer.

SAINT JOHN, DECEMBER 9, 1851.

RAILWAYS.—The Provincial press seems to have adopted the idea that the money is all ready waiting, and that all we have to do is to fix on the most desirable route for the proposed rail-ways. The papers Nova-Scotia, the British Colonist, and strange to say, the New-Brunswick-er, all agree that the Northern route, following the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Quebec, is the only one that ought to be adopted. It is easy to understand why the press of Nova-Scotia should think in this manner; they desire not only to make Halifax the Atlantic port for the Canadian trade, but they wish to retain their monopoly of the trade with Prince Edward Island and our North Shore. The Colonist sees in this plan the only chance of having a railway at all, while the New-Brunswick-er is naturally interested, as we cannot say, or very particularly interested, as we cannot say, but think of it.

As might be expected, the press of St. John, St. Andrews, Fredericton, and Woodstock, all go for the Southern or Central route, which indeed is the only one that any sane New-Brunswick-er would desire to embrace the interests of this country, would ever think of.

There is one consideration of very great importance, to which we beg to call the attention of the contemporary debaters, and which may have a great weight in the final decision. And this is, simply, that it is utterly our own power to give the required security, and therefore the money cannot be lost.

Let us go back and take a calm and dispassionate view of the matter.

When, after seven months negotiation, the British Minister offered to advance the funds for a railway from Halifax to Quebec, Mr. Howe was required to state before the committee was to be sent to the other Colonies, to agree to the terms of the offer on behalf of Nova-Scotia; and these terms were, that before the scheme could be submitted to the British Parliament, permanent loans would have to be raised, as well to cover the interest as the sinking fund. Now, have these terms been altered or modified? that is the question.

Mr. Howe, on being asked, said that he had held no correspondence with the Colonial office on the subject, but that he had received a complimentary letter from Earl Grey;—and on such grounds as these the Assembly of Nova-Scotia have actually founded their whole legislation,—now this may be brought into the scheme, the advantages to Nova-Scotia are so considerable, that it is difficult to have no difficulty in getting Ten or Fifteen thousand and added to the thirty-five thousand per annum, already secured on the revenues. But, and let us not do the difficulty fairly in the face, how can we, with a population of three less than that of Nova-Scotia, with taxes already levied, and with much greater demands upon our revenue, offer adequate security for even the interest of the loan we require. Let there be no ground or child's play about it, but let us come to the question like honest men, and we will find that the security is not adequate.

To build both our railways, at Mr. Howe's estimate of five thousand pounds per mile, four hundred miles would cost two millions of pounds. The interest of this, at three and a half per cent, would be seventy thousand pounds per annum. The greater portion of our present revenue is required for the ordinary services of the country, and at the time is already as heavy as the trade of any country can bear; at all events an increase would not add to the revenue.

What then have we to offer that will raise seventy thousand pounds per annum? Where is the financier who can solve this difficulty? It has been argued, not of course by business men, that the railways would help to pay the interest, that the expenditure of so much money would increase the revenues, &c. All this may be, or may not, but before we get the money we must furnish a security adequate to the interest, entirely free from contingencies.

And even if it were in our power to impose permanent taxes sufficient to secure this amount, what man who loves his country and his freedom would willingly give, out of his own pocket, the only freedom we have in this trading age, that of regulating our imports and exports—and give up any prospect of ever being able to improve our condition as a nation, by being so restricted? We should like to see this question fairly argued, for we are satisfied that railways would be of immense benefit to the country, and it is of importance that the question should be carried out in accordance with "Will of the Wills," to be lauded only in song.

But even were the question settled of our ability to provide for the interest, we can see nothing that warrants us in believing that a sinking fund will not also require to be provided for. Earl Grey's proposition remains still the same, and even if he ever read Mr. Howe's speech, which is very questionable, it is not to be presumed that he would imagine that Mr. Howe would within a month after he had made a solemn bargain, repudiate the most essential part of it, and call upon the authority of any kind, promise to his gaping admirers quite other terms.

It is rather amusing to see the cool way he promises the Halifax contingent that "nothing more than the three and a half per cent will be required until the railway pays its own interest," admitting at the same time, when brought to book, that he is speaking entirely without authority;—this kind of argument as good as attempting to persuade the green Nova-Scotians to build two lines of railway to feed his ore, and to give Nova-Scotia two millions acres of land, worth two millions of dollars, for which she will build twenty miles of our railway, not costing more than half a million.

Ferily "some men's shiffrery never filters, and they know not how to blush."

¶ We understand that the Anniversary of the New-Brunswick Auxiliary Bible Society is appointed by the Committee to take place on Tuesday evening, the 6th January next.

A correspondence has passed between Mr. Webster and Lord Palmerston, in which the English Government express their great pleasure for the kind reception given Lord Elgin by the President of the United States, and by the authorities of Boston, during the late rail road celebration.

The festival of Saint Andrew was celebrated with much spirit, by the North British Society, at Halifax, on Monday last, at the Masonic Hall. John Strachan, Esquire, President of the Society, in the chair. The guests were numerous, including heads of Departments, civil and military. Many of the officers of the Nova-Scotia Highlanders were present, in full costume, while the splendid band of that regiment, in the orchestra, discoursed sweet music, and the Pipers, eight in number, in the Scotch spirit sat at 6 o'clock, the martial notes of the pibroch dinned to the ears of the Clans, announced dinner to be on the table, when the company took their seats. After the club was removed, the customary toasts were given and a number of excellent speeches were delivered. At 8 o'clock, the toast by telegraph to the President of the United States, New York, Boston, &c. was announced by the President, and drank with 3 times 3, and one cheer more.

The anniversary was also celebrated at Fredericton, the same evening, by between 40 and 50 gentlemen dining together at the York Hotel, Dr. Robb, President of the Society, in the chair.

¶ LIVERIES.—We are unavoidably compelled to postpone our notice of the Livery of the year 1851, which it shall positively appear. The work is published by Messrs. Thomas, Burns & Co., of Boston, and is for sale by the City.

¶ THE SPEAKER.—We have from an undoubted authority that the Hon. Mr. Cranford is the candidate for the Speaker's Chair, which he formerly occupied. There will, in all probability, be a contest for the honour of first Comptroller, and the decision of the question will be likely to be for a good deal of interest by the public.—Head Quarters.

HORRIBLE TRAGEDY.—

...the wife of the deceased, a woman of great beauty, and who was well known to the people of the town, was found dead in the water, near the shore. The body was recovered by a fisherman, and was taken to the town, where it was laid out in state. The coroner inquired into the matter, and found that the woman had been drowned by the falling of the mill dam. The cause of the accident was traced to a defect in the dam, and the miller was held liable for the death of the woman.

...the deceased was a young man, who had been in the service of the late Government. He had been killed in action, and his remains were found in the ruins of a fort. The authorities were unable to identify the body, and it was laid out in state as an unknown soldier.

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Hats.—

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