

PLAN FOR SHORTENING THE TRANSIT BETWEEN NEW YORK AND LONDON—
EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN RAILWAY—PUBLIC LANDS.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. I. WASHBURN, JR., OF MAINE,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MARCH 10, 1852.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the bill for the encouragement of agriculture, manufactures, and other branches of industry, by granting to actual settlers homesteads out of the public domain, &c.—

Mr. WASHBURN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will so far depart from the line of debate which has been taken by gentlemen who have preceded me, as to abstain from the discussion of the claims and qualifications of candidates for the Presidency. The party with which I act will, in due time, place in nomination for that office a gentleman whose ability, fitness, and patriotism will need no advocacy on this floor, and whose cause is safe in the hearts and hands of the American people. I propose to submit at this time a few observations upon the matters embraced in a memorial which I had the honor to present to the House sometime ago, in which application is made for a grant of land to the State of Maine, in aid of an important and truly national work—the European and North American railway,—and to state some of the reasons why, in my judgment, the aid should be granted which has been prayed for. The memorial also asks for the passage of a law authorizing a permanent contract for carrying the mails between New York and Galway, and over this railroad.

In stating the grounds upon which the memorialists rely, it will be necessary for me to refer to some facts and statistics. From Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Galway in Ireland, the distance is two thousand one hundred and thirty miles. From the nearest available harbor to Cape Canso on the most eastern point of Nova Scotia—that of Whitehaven—in latitude 45° 10' north and in longitude 61° 3' west, to Galway, in latitude 53° 13' north and in longitude 9° and 13' west, the distance is about two thousand miles. Whitehaven, according to a report made by Admiral Owen to Sir John Harvey in 1846, "is a most splendid and commodious port, at the nearest available point of North America to Ireland." And Galway harbor is well known to be one of the finest in the world, pos-

sessing great advantages over Bristol or Liverpool as a steam-ship terminus.

From Galway to Dublin, a distance of one hundred and twenty-six miles, a line of railway is in progress of construction, if, indeed, it is not already completed. From Dublin, the distance of sixty-three miles across the Irish Channel, to Holyhead, is passed with steam-packets, at the rate of eighteen miles an hour, to which place the Chester and Holyhead railway is already finished, connecting with Liverpool and London—crossing the Menai Strait by the Britannia tubular bridge, which was opened for traffic on the 18th of March, 1850; the distance from Holyhead to London by rail being two hundred and sixty-three miles.

The memorial which I have presented states, and I have no doubt on the best authority, that able parties are ready to place the required steamers on the route, from Halifax or Whitehaven to Galway, whenever the connection by railway shall have been made between New York and either of those ports. It will be my purpose to show that such connection is both feasible and desirable.

From New York to Waterville in Maine, a distance of four hundred and ten miles, there is in operation a continuous line of railway. From Waterville to Bangor, fifty miles, a charter has been obtained for a railroad, which no doubt will be built by local enterprise and capital at an early day.

The European and North American railway in Maine has been incorporated by the Legislature of that State, and an exploration and survey made by an able Engineer, under the authority and at the expense of the State—\$7,000 having been appropriated for that purpose, and for the publication of the report of the Engineer and other important papers bearing upon the enterprise. The report of the Engineer shows that, from Bangor to the eastern line of the State and the point of connection with the road in the Province of New Brunswick, the length of road to be built in Maine will be from eighty-five to one hundred miles, according to the route