

INTRODUCTION.

The experience derived from the English railway system abundantly shews that, at the outset of undertakings so momentous in their consequences, involving a total revolution in the internal communications of a country, it is of primary importance that preliminary enquiry should be made by competent and uninterested persons, with a view to ascertain the comparative advantages and facilities offered by different lines, for the accomplishment of the object in view. Such an enquiry may prevent public injury, arising from false steps so likely to be made in the commencement of new projects of this kind, as well as individual and national loss, a result that has in England too frequently attended the construction of new lines, rashly entered upon, without the necessary information as to their necessity or advantage.

To avert a similar result in the contemplated Northern Railroad, where a failure arising from the selection of an injudicious line, in conjunction with the fears and doubts as to the success of railway projects in this country already entertained by a large portion of the people, might retard our railway progress for the next twenty years—to avert such a catastrophe, an investigation should at once be made as to the best mode of directing the development of the means of intercourse to that channel whereby the greatest advantage may be obtained at the smallest outlay, with the greatest possible col-

lateral benefits to internal communication; taking into consideration not only the existing means which the country presents, but also those which may be anticipated from resources which may in future be developed.

With a view to facilitate such an inquiry, the following useful statistical information, of the most interesting nature as to the condition and prospects of that section of the country immediately contiguous to the lines proposed for the Toronto, Simcoe and Lake Huron Railway, has been compiled from authentic sources, principally the census returns made to parliament; the rest has been collected from many different persons, possessing the requisite local knowledge, from whom the facts detailed have been elicited during an inquiry sedulously pursued, whenever an opportunity presented itself, for several months past. The statements thus obtained have been carefully collated, previous to placing them before the public. The pamphlet contains data that cannot fail to prove highly useful in making estimates, embracing that most important item in railway receipts *the way traffic*, as well as matter which must necessarily be maturely considered whenever the attempt shall be made to accomplish that desideratum, a correct estimate of *the anticipated through traffic*; all of which is respectfully submitted to the public by the author.