

overland route by elemental means across the North American Continent the construction of which would not only provide a **WORLD'S HIGHWAY**, but would plant states and colonies at each footstep of its course. This idea the amazing progress of the railway system suggested to Sir Richard Broun in the close of 1844. On the 7th of November in that year a Committee of the Baronets of Scotland and Nova Scotia was empowered by a general meeting to take all the steps needful to make good the chartered rights of the Order to two million and a half acres of the vacant soil in the royal province of New Scotland as anciently bounded; and to advance this end—one which alike concerns the opulence, the prosperity, and peace of the mother country and the colony—he originated the project of forming, by means of a **JOINT STOCK COMPANY**, a main trunk railway which should connect the three provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada by a direct line of steam communication commencing at Halifax and proceeding thence to Quebec, with power afterwards progressively to extend the same westward to the Pacific Ocean, form branches, and purchase and improve lands upon the line.

This scheme Sir Richard set out in a prospectus which he submitted in January, 1845, to various gentlemen in the City of London; and he also sent it to Dr. Thomas Rolph, late Emigration Agent for the Government of Canada, with a letter requesting to have his opinion as to the practicability of the undertaking. In reply to this communication, on the 22nd of January, 1845, Dr. Rolph wrote to Sir Richard as follows:—"I return to you, as you desire, "the very able prospectus which you have drawn up; and only "wish there had been as much practicability in pursuing the project "as you have evinced ability in designing it. There are, however, "I consider, insuperable difficulties in the construction of such a "railroad as you speak of, from climate as well as from mountains. "In the intermediate distance between Lake Superior and Nootka "Sound there is an extent of country subject to several months of "severe winter; whilst between the Lake of the Woods and the "Rocky Mountains the surface is very irregular."

Whilst prosecuting farther inquiries upon the subject, Sir Richard Broun observed in the *Times* journal of the 23rd of March, 1845, a paragraph copied from a New York paper, headed "**GIGANTIC ENTERPRISE**," mentioning that Mr. Asa Witney, an enterprising merchant in that city, had just propounded a plan for the construction of a railroad from the western shore of Lake Erie to the navigable part of the Colombia River and the Oregon territory, to become the future medium of the Americo-European trade with China. Three months later, whilst occupied with the same matter, he received a note from Mr. William Bridges (who afterwards acted as secretary to the promoters), dated the 26th of June 1845, saying, it had occurred to him that the present was a very favourable opportunity for forming a nucleus to carry out his (Sir R's.) Nova Scotia objects for forming a railway, and offering to assist in getting the requisite city influence. And ten days afterwards, Sir Richard received a second letter from his friend Dr. Rolph, dated, 6 July, 1845, as follows:—"A few months since you wrote to me as to the practicability and expediency of constructing a railroad, which by passing "through, and connecting our extensive valuable possessions in "British North America, might, at the same time, ensure our maritime and commercial supremacy, by uniting the waters of the "Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. It then occurred to me that the