

## The Provincial Railway of New Brunswick :

### WHY SHOULD IT NOT PAY?

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This question is interesting to every inhabitant of the Province, because, whether voluntarily or otherwise, he is placed under bonds for the due and regular discharge of the interest, and eventually of the whole investment. Since the commencement of the work, a sum not far from one million four hundred thousand dollars has been levied upon the public, in the form of customs duties, and remitted out of the country, to make good the deficiency of the railway earnings to meet the interest.

This is a clear addition to the original cost. After upwards of five years' experience since the road was completely opened, the average annual deficiency is very nearly, if not quite, a quarter of a million of dollars, with but faint symptoms of any diminution of this progressive accumulation of outlay for the benefit of local and private interests alone. It involves also not only the so-far unproductive absorption of the public treasure, but of the means of adequately providing for works and improvements, strictly provincial in their character, and required by sound economy. The evil in question must continue, just in the degree that the net earnings of the railway fail to be sufficient to meet the interest on the cost. They have signally failed in this respect, during the five years that the work has been under experiment, and to all appearance will, if subject to existing regulations, continue largely to fail for many years to come. Hence the interest and import of the question to all concerned: Is this progressive and indefinite addition to the unproductive cost an inevitable necessity, under the peculiar circumstances of the provincial railway; or why should it not pay?

Though plausible reasons may be adduced why this work should not be expected to pay, such as the excessive cost, smallness of population and trade, and want of connection with other railways, or "isolation," yet it may be demonstrated that one and all of these reasons form no admissible excuse for its present or past financial position, or for its burthensome and inequitable pressure upon the mass of the provincial community who do not use it, and to whom it is of no appreciable benefit.

It is now proposed to submit a fair and unreserved exposition of the relationship of this work to the true interests of the whole provincial public; including those who derive all the benefit, and the large majority who bear the burthen without benefit.

Aided by materials furnished in the Annual Reports of the Commissioners of the Railway, and by other public documents, the following tabulated statement has been prepared, exhibiting certain data in a compendious form for convenient reference. The information under some of the heads, through absence of the requisite materials, is not so perfect as desirable, but the particular conclusion involved is not thereby affected. The chief imperfection alluded to, is that which arises from the necessity of calculating the interest upon

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