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[Vol 27.]

## THE INTER-COLONIAL RAILWAY.

(To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.)

Sir.—My attention having been called to the proposed extension of the Grand Trunk Railway, towards an outlet or harbour on the shore of British territory—by the letters of the several gentlemen who have preceded me upon this important subject—and feeling a lively interest in the matter before the public, I beg leave to occupy a small space in the columns of your valuable paper, for the purpose of offering a few additional suggestions, both, as to the entire feasibility, as far as New Brunswick is concerned, of that route spoken of in connection with the New Brunswick and Canada Railway, and its very favourable character, as regards distance and cost.

I also purpose making a few further comments upon the impracticability of the much agitated scheme of a Military Road; and briefly comparing the results of such a scheme (providing that it could be successfully carried out), with those of the route immediately connecting two Provinces by the shortest, cheapest, and most practicable route, for a railway.

First, then, as to the route—and in this connection I shall only consider that through New Brunswick—referring the reader to the very able letter of Mr. Wallace, for information respecting that through Canada.

Having before me a profile of the route located, and mostly adopted by the N. B. & C. Railway & Co., from their starting point at St. Andrews, to the high road between Houlton and Woodstock—a distance of about ninety miles—and being acquainted with the country forward by actual examination and report, I make the statement authoritatively, that no road of equal length in New England, at least, runs through a country so well adapted to cheap yet solid and durable railway construction.

The only engineering difficulties met with so far, are at or near Woodstock, in crossing the high ridge of land between there and Houlton; and attaining such level, as will allow of an easy descent into the valley of the river St. John's, above the mouth of the river Presqu'ile.

These difficulties are not formidable however, and obviate—in a degree—the more serious ones, found, running directly into and out of the village of Woodstock.

In an engineering point of view, a much cheaper route than other of these, (in the writer's opinion) could be found by slightly encroaching upon American territory and these difficulties being totally obviated, but as this seems undesirable on account of shutting out, in a degree at least, the trade and communication from that portion of the rich and fertile valley of the river St. John's, naturally having Woodstock for a centre, true policy seems to dictate the adoption of a central route between the two extremes—though cheaper than any and dearer than the others—by which the growing trade of both provinces can be made contributory to the line.

As an inducement to the adoption of this policy, the people of Houlton have a branch line, projected and chartered, which eventually, in way-travel, must be an important feeder to the main line; as, in all probability, it will be the only outlet for the trade of the famous Aroostook region for many years.

Assuming this route then,—which crosses the high road about seven miles from the village of Woodstock and five from the village of Houlton—as the one probably to be adopted;—and correcting the error that the former village is the northern terminus of the N. B. & C. Railway as connected for; (whereas, as yet the choice of routes for the last fifteen miles remains an undecided question,—we shall have a basis upon which to rest our calculations forward.

Mr. Buck, in his letter, states that £5000 per mile will cover the cost of construction. Now make all due allowances for the different superstructure (heavier iron, &c.) required to build a line equal to the other portions of the Grand Trunk Railway, we may safely assume £7000 as a sufficient rate per mile to cover the cost forward, including a fair equipment.

Now then, with the distances (easily obtained from Mr. Wallace's letter)—about 160 miles I believe, in all—every one interested may at once arrive at a satisfactory conclusion with regard to the probable cost of this route, and satisfy themselves also, as to the entire practicability, and probably paying character of the scheme.

In the second place then, as regards the Military Road, it seems to the writer that Mr. Wallace has shown conclusively the utter futility of attempting its construction on the route surveyed by Col. Robinson, unless

to any one who would save the shipwrecked sailors. At the same moment a raft was floated off from the Elizabeth. The Palicaris swam out to the raft, and succeeded in reaching it. One of them quickly detached a cord from his wrist and tied it to the raft.—The captain, four sailors, and three Palicaris were on the raft, and it had been drawn some distance towards the shore, when, unfortunately, the rope broke.—The Palicaris then

dived under the water, brought up the rope and again tied it to the raft, which was safely hauled into Chilli at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. A few minutes afterwards the Elizabeth experienced the fate of the three-masted English merchantman, and was smashed into a thousand pieces. Nineteen of the crew of the English ship were drowned.

On the other hand the peaceful development of country along the St. John's river and on the American frontier, caused, or at least, aided by the construction of a road connecting the two Provinces, would be constantly yielding to the line a rich return of increasing way-traffic.

The argument that the one requires 475 miles of construction through a country—the greater portion of which, as we are told is almost incapable of any great agricultural development;—while the other requires only 100 miles of construction and would open to development one of the finest timber and agricultural regions in North America;—seems to the writer's mind to be one of overwhelming force, in favour of the route through New Brunswick.

The only objection to it that can be plausibly sustained,—its unfitness for military purposes—scarcely ought to give way, before this array of figures.

We have never heard of the Grand Trunk Co's regretting their connection with the line to Portland, now under their sole direction; then why not let the same liberal policy guide them,—in seeking for a more easterly outlet (if necessary)—of connecting with the line proposed, and partly constructed, by a sister company in New Brunswick.

But the truth still remains, (as many will say) that neither of these routes, when complete, will be exactly fit for military purposes, and hence the desirability of the North Shore route over either of the others.

This may be strong argument to Canadians from a military point of view, but have they no desire for a more immediate connection with their sister Province of New Brunswick? Have they no word of encouragement for those few determined men who alone by energy and force of character, have struggled on, mile by mile and from year to year, against the greatest discouragements, hoping at some future day to meet them?—Have they set their minds, so firmly, upon defence in time of war, as to entirely withhold their hands from assisting their brethren of a sister Province, towards opening one of these great artificial channels for peaceful intercommunication and trade,—through which, and into which run the thousand little streams that water the earth with prosperity and plenty, and contribute so effectually towards fraternalizing, liberalizing, and christianizing mankind?

If so, then it seems to the writer that in looking afar off for what they consider to be a pearl of great price, they are slighting one of very little less value, now being offered at their own door.

It being that these suggestions may tend towards keeping this matter before the public, and that they are not so lengthy as to preclude their insertion in your paper, I am yours most respectfully,

JOHN H. BELCHER  
Freeport (near Portland) Me., 13th January, 1860.

SHIPWRECKS.

A letter from Constantinople, received at Paris, Jan. 2, contains the following account of the loss of an English merchantman (three-masted, name unknown, and all hands, on the 23 of November last in a violent gale of wind on the coast of Asia in the Black Sea. The English Bark Elizabeth was wrecked the same day on a sand bank near Chilly, a village situated on the Black Sea. The crew were fortunately saved.

The inhabitants of the village, on hearing of the accident (says the writer of the letter), proceeded to the shore, and some Palicaris famous swimmers, seeing that three of the crew of the Elizabeth were endeavoring to save themselves by swimming, and fearing that they should not have strength to reach the shore, plunged into the sea, and were so fortunate as to save the three men, one of whom was a pilot.

The captain and four of the crew remained on board. The Palicaris made repeated signals to the captain and the others to throw themselves into the water, but they hesitated to do so. A wealthy inhabitant of Pasa, who happened to be a spectator of the scene, addressed the Palicaris, and said he would give five purses (2,500 piastres) to any one who would save the shipwrecked sailors. At the same moment a raft was floated off from the Elizabeth. The Palicaris swam out to the raft, and succeeded in reaching it. One of them quickly detached a cord from his wrist and tied it to the raft.—The captain, four sailors, and three Palicaris were on the raft, and it had been drawn some distance towards the shore, when, unfortunately, the rope broke.—The Palicaris then

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