

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

Those early times were palmy days for Prince Albert; but changes were coming. There were now three rival villages in Reach—Prince Albert, Port Perry and Manchester. Each place had its strong men who studied and fought to secure advantages for their respective villages. In Manchester there was Adam Gordon a man of quiet determination, who had considerable influence, as he at one time represented the riding in Parliament. At Prince Albert, Joshua Wright was the champion at first, but later he transferred his allegiance to Port Perry. He was a great fighter, fond of a debate, and often able to carry his point by sheer force of personality. There are many unwritten stories told of the prowess of Joshua Wright in debate. In Port Perry Messrs. Bigelow and Paxton were the men who looked after the municipal interests. These men stood out prominently as champions for their various villages.

Up to 1867 all the grain and lumber that had been taken to the front had been teamed there. There was no railway along this route. Often there had been talk of one, but no definite effort had been made for its construction. Had it not been for the rivalry of the villages; it is quite possible that the railway would not have been built until some years later. But Prince Albert was quite outspoken in its contempt of Port Perry, and Port Perry was quite sure that Prince Albert would have to take a second place before many years.

Thinking men knew that none of these places could amount to much until there was railway communication with the Front. The old days were passing and new conditions had to be met.

In 1867 application was made to the Local Legislature for a charter to build a railway from Port Whitby to Port Perry. Messrs. Joseph Bigelow and Thomas Paxton were the men who started the project. Associated with them and forming the Provisional Board of Directors were the following gentlemen: W. S. Sexton, Chester Draper, John Ham Perry, James Holden and Sheriff Reynolds.