

HALIFAX RAILWAY, AND PUBLIC WORKS IN CANADA. 9

BRITISH
NORTH AMERICA.

In Nova Scotia, this formation occupies its northern section, and amounts to nearly one-third of its whole area. It then extends all over the southern and eastern parts of New Brunswick.

In this respect, therefore, the route No. 2 has a decided advantage.

The greatest and most valuable coal-field is that of Pictou.

It is situated on the south side of that harbour. The exact extent of the bed is not known, as it is broken by a great (geological) fault. It occupies, however, an area of many square miles.

The coal is bituminous, of good quality, and the veins of most unusual thickness.

Mines in it are extensively worked, and large exports from them are made to the United States. Iron ore is abundant.

This is an advantage in favour of the Whitehaven and direct route.

The next great coal district is the Cumberland field, and it is second only in importance to that of Pictou.

It is supposed to extend from the Macon River, west of Amherst, over to Tatmagouche, in the Straits of Northumberland.

Some mines in it have been recently opened, and promise to be very productive.

The line No. 2 passes over this field for miles, and may be considered, from that circumstance, as not being deprived altogether of an advantage possessed by the other route.

The great agricultural capabilities of the eastern counties of New Brunswick have been described in the reports of Mr. Perley, the Government Emigration Agent, which were presented to the New Brunswick Legislature in February, 1847, and ordered to be printed.

One most important object to be attained by the construction of the railroad is the settlement of the public lands, and the encouragement of emigration from the mother-country.

As bearing very strongly upon this point, in the choice of the best direction for the line, I subjoin the following extract taken from Bouchette's *Work on Canada*, vol. i., page 331. It is a quotation made by him from "The Commissioners' Report of 1821."

"The Bay of Gaspé, and particularly the *Bay des Chaleurs*, are susceptible of the most improved agriculture. For the establishment of emigrants no part in Canada offers such immediate resources of livelihood as may be derived from the fisheries. It is a fact worthy of notice, that in the year 1816, when the lower parts of the province were afflicted with a famine from the destruction of the harvest by frost, no such inconvenience was experienced at Paspébiac, nor at any other place within the level tract above mentioned."

The tract alluded to here is not clearly defined by the quotation, but it is supposed to mean the whole district along the south shore of the Bay Chaleurs.

This tends to show the effect produced by the vicinity of the sea, in moderating the temperature and saving the crops from untimely frosts. In this respect, therefore, the line No. 2 has an important advantage over the one through the central and more elevated land of New Brunswick.

As the interior is approached, and the distance from, as well as the elevation above, the sea increases, the danger to crops from cold nights and early frosts also increases.

In the Madawaska Settlement, and on the Upper St. John River, great failures of crops have occurred from this cause, and wheat and potatoes are very liable to be destroyed.

From the Bend of Petitcodiac to the St. Lawrence, a distance of upwards of 300 miles, the direct line would pass through a perfect wilderness, with not a single settler on the whole line, except a few at or near to Boistown.

Leaving engineering difficulties for the moment out of the question, the cost of construction would be materially increased by the extra difficulties attendant on the transport of necessary materials, and in supplying with food the labourers and others engaged on the line.

The disadvantage is not shared by the second route, which can be approached in numerous places along the Gulf shore by means of bays and navigable rivers.

The direct line No. 4 will not have such advantages to present to settlers as the second. On the contrary, if adopted, it might be found necessary to incur expenses, for the establishment of small communities along the line, to repair and keep it open.

The facilities for external as well as internal communication, and other advantages arising from commerce and the fisheries, which will be developed by the Eastern line (and entirely wanting along the direct route), will, it is fully expected, make its vicinity eagerly sought for by settlers, and that it will, in the course of no very great length of time, lead to the extension of that long-continued village which now exists with but little exception from Quebec to Metis (200 miles), from the shores of the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic Ocean.

An important item bearing upon the consideration of the best route is the present distribution of the population in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

In illustration of this part of the subject, and to afford a better idea of the nature of the country than can be given by a merely outline plan, a model map (No. 3) has been prepared, showing the whole course of the lines (routes Nos. 2 and 4) from Halifax to the St. Lawrence, and by the latter over the Trois Pistoles River, beyond which the line is continued through a level fertile and densely-peopled district to Quebec.

The red line shows the proposed route No. 2: the Halifax and Eastern or Bay Chaleurs line.

The black line shows the direct route, No. 4, from the Bend of Petitcodiac.

The yellow tint shows the present settlements.

The green is the wilderness of uncleared forest, unsettled, and the far larger portion of it still ungranted and waiting for occupation.