

The scope of the coast line project.

35. It was soon after this that the project for the "Coast" line took shape, by the formation of a Company, and the prosecution of an Instrumental Survey. It was somewhat extensive, for, besides making Cariboo Cove one Terminus, it was to be extended to the North as far as Cheticamp, a total distance of about 100 miles. Though both these Termini could be reached just as easily by utilizing about 26 miles of the Cape Breton Railway, it would appear that it was designed to make the railway independent of, if not a competing one to, the Government line. The only advantage it might be said to have over the other route, was that it reached the Port Hood Coal Mine, a very unpromising enterprise, and supplied the accommodation of a railway, along 35 miles of coast to a narrow strip of country. On the other hand unless the Company built its so-called "Whycocomagh Branch," which has been put entirely in the back-ground, no outlet to the east of the Island was provided. The Charter requires that a connection shall be made with the Cape Breton Railway at Hawkesbury. Owing to the costly nature of this part of the line as far as Port Hastings, the Company which has begun construction evidently does not intend to undertake it. The two trestle-bridges here are estimated to cost \$10 a foot run. To be built of steel they would probably cost five times as much. Should this connection not be made, *the Charter would be forfeited*. For the "branch" the Charter does not appear to provide for a connection with the Cape Breton Railway south of Whycocomagh.

The proper railway system for the Island.

36. The Island of Cape Breton, though rich in mineral resources, and possessing a large area of excellent soil is, owing to its hilly nature, not capable of very rapid development. From its insular position and deeply indented coast, whatever railways are built must necessarily be local. The exception to this is the line of the Cape Breton Railway, which, from its position through the centre of the Island, will form not only its Main Line, but become part of the great trunk system of the Dominion. In view of these conditions, and the costly nature of the work, the Dominion Government alone, could properly undertake its construction. The traffic is not likely to be very remunerative for some years. Therefore, when the remainder of the Island can be fairly reached by railways which will form branch lines and feeders to the main line, these are the first that should be undertaken, *especially if they are easy to construct, and will best supply the wants of the country as well*.

Comparative mileages on both lines.

37. The "Orangedale" line will reach the Broad Cove Coal Mines in 33 or 34 miles. The length required to be built by the "Coast" line to the same point will be from 57 to 60 miles. The cost of the former, per mile, is likely to be far below that of the latter. The distance from Port Hawkesbury to Cheticamp via the "Coast" line has been variously stated at 100, and at 94 miles. Taking the latter figure, and adding three miles for a branch to the Broad Cove Mines,