

(1) From Lake Superior to Red River, a distance of 400 miles, in nine years from the present time.

(2) From the mouth of Fraser's River to the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 400 miles, in eleven years from the present time.

(3) From the settlements of Canada to Lake Superior, a distance of 650 miles, within fourteen years from the present time.

(4) From Red River to the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 800 miles, within seventeen years from the present time.

And thus by the comparatively trifling annual outlay of one dollar per head of the assumed gradually increasing population, we could secure in less than four years a line of telegraph, and in thirteen years more a substantially constructed Macadamized road throughout the whole length of the line. The next and final stage of progress would be, the completion of the Railway on the line thus, in a great measure, prepared for it; and in view of the traffic then created, as well as the comparative economy in construction, it might be undertaken in sections by private enterprise, or in such other way as might then appear most expedient.

I am not prepared to say that the foregoing is the best order of sequence in which the several sections and stages of the work should be constructed; it is simply presented for the purpose of showing what might be accomplished by a small annual expenditure. It is not at all unlikely that the peculiar nature of the traffic might warrant the conversion of some section of the route into a railway at an early period,—possibly that section between Lake Superior and Red River would be the first to require the change, which of course could be made without difficulty at any time, so soon as it appeared that the trade of the country was sufficient to maintain it. The order of sequence is not important, but it is an essential part of the system proposed for opening up this vast and roadless country, that every portion of the work done should form a component part of a perfect whole, and that whatever expenditure is made, whether it be one thousand or one hundred thousand dollars, should be laid out in the right place in accordance with a thoroughly digested and well matured plan; the great object in view being to obtain the maximum result of good from the minimum amount of outlay.

I can scarcely hope that the plan of gradual development herein advocated will satisfy the precipitate or the impatient,—those, in fact, who would urge the immediate construction of the road, regardless or ignorant of the cost and the burdens it might in consequence entail on the country—yet there are many who, remembering the tortoise in the fable, will perceive that a slow yet certain movement will accomplish the desired end with as much certainty and perhaps more satisfactorily than if the work was undertaken with the most sanguine hopes of speedy achievement. It is very doubtful, however, if any one will, on reflection, assert that there is really a choice of methods, that is to say, a fast and a slow one—the line of artificial highway proposed to be constructed extends over not less than forty-five degrees of longitude, equal to one eighth of the length of a circle of latitude passing entirely around the globe; the undertaking, therefore, becomes one of no ordinary magnitude, and when in connection with it, half a continent has to be redeemed in part at least, from a state of wild nature, some considerable length of time must necessarily be occupied in the process. Even if it should take a quarter of a century, it would be equal to an average construction of 100 miles of railway a year, as well as the annual introduction of 100,000 emigrants. And, after all, a quarter of a century is but a brief period in the history of a country—half that length of time has already elapsed since the railways of Canada were first commenced, and yet many are of opinion that it would have been better, in some respects, had only one-half the extent of existing lines been yet constructed.

As the character of the work is so colossal and the condition of the country such as to debar the idea of undertaking the construction of a Railway through it in the usual way and as an ordinary commercial enterprise, I am emboldened to think that such a scheme as I have endeavored to sketch, might form the basis of a system possessing many recommendations, and which it is confidently believed might be advantageously adopted in any attempt to establish a great leading highway through the vast unoccupied Territory between the settlements of Canada and British Columbia.