

MONTREAL AND KINGSTON RAILROAD COMPANY.

MONTREAL, 11th October, 1852.

SIR ALLAN N. MACNAB,
Chairman, Committee on Railroads.

SIR,—On behalf of the Montreal and Kingston Railroad Company, we beg to lay before the Committee on Railroads a statement of the position in which we stand in relation to the Bill now under the consideration of the Committee for the granting of a Charter for the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway, from Toronto to Kingston, with a right to extend the same to Montreal. And we do so in the full assurance that we shall obtain from the Committee that full and equal justice to which we are entitled, in common with every inhabitant of this Province, while we shall ask nothing more than a free opportunity of having our claims weighed against those of the applicants for the Bill, not desiring, unless so compelled, to assert that the intended Bill is a most flagrant violation of vested rights, attempted without our having had the opportunity in any way of shewing our ability or otherwise to carry out the great public object of securing a Railway Communication between Montreal and the Great Lakes.

We therefore now appear before your Committee and the Honorable House, not as claiming protection in rights legally acquired, and of which no misuse is chargeable, but simply and solely on the ground that as Canadians we are entitled to a fair investigation of our ability to carry out the Charter we hold, that our means of doing so are such as will in fact be the most advantageous to the Province, and that, if there be any question of doubt, we are entitled to the preference as having been the promoters of the undertaking—as having invested our means and incurred expenditure thereon,—as having subscribed the Stock after the public had had ample time and access to the books, and lastly, as having since that subscription, proceeded without the slightest delay to place the Company in a sound position by the deposit of a large sum of money, by its complete organization, and by our declared readiness to proceed with the work immediately on being so authorized by the Railroad Commission.

Our connection with the Montreal and Kingston Railroad dates from the very initiative of this enterprise, and in connection with our present memorial, it becomes necessary to recapitulate some facts that are already before you.

The project of a Railroad from Montreal to Prescott was originated in Montreal, shortly after the opening of the Ogdensburgh Road. At a public meeting held at that time, a Committee was appointed to report on the subject, and funds raised to a considerable amount; the views of that Committee, on investigating the whole subject, led them to the conclusion that the project should not be limited to Prescott, but extended to Kingston, as a branch of a scheme which was then for the first time brought before the public, for a Trunk Railroad through the Province. Preliminary surveys were made, and the Committee reported fully to another public meeting, at which another Committee were appointed to apply for a Charter to Kingston, and to obtain a detailed survey on which tenders for construction could be made—this was done; and the Charter under which the Company now exists was obtained, and received the Royal Assent on 31st August 1851.

Simultaneously with the passing of the above Charter, the Legislature passed a Bill for the construction of the Trunk Railroad, based upon the expectation then entertained, that the credit of the Imperial Government would be obtained, in connection with the Quebec and Halifax Railroad. By this Bill, the powers given under our Charter were suspended, until, by Proclamation, the Governor in Council, should give them existence, and in consequence, the friends of the project were entirely debarred from acting, notwithstanding their anxiety to meet the general wish of the Country, by proceeding to get the stock subscribed, and the work in progress. At that time, there were passed pledges by every Municipality, but one, on the entire line to subscribe stock. The City of Montreal was willing to lend its aid, and the strongest conviction existed, that no delay need occur in proceeding with this most necessary work. The project of the Railroad from Quebec to Halifax then intervened, and we feel quite justified in saying, that it was found expedient by the Government to diminish the apparent heavy pressure of that work on Canada, by connecting with its construction, the Western Road also. To secure the assent of the public to the Eastern Line, the fate of the Western Road was linked with it, and the local support that could have been then applied, was suspended, and to a certain degree paralysed by the hope held out of the whole being done by the Imperial aid, as a Provincial Work.