

The first estimate, as above shewn, was for a preliminary line, and it was claimed for it that, when completed, the communication would be "in a measure" open, and that any number of workmen could be employed on further works.

In the same report an estimate is also given of more extensive works, the cost of which is set at \$5,800,000.

The line as at present existing, is far more comprehensive than the preliminary line proposed, and far short of the ultimate works suggested.

I still believe that, if the conditions had continued the same as at the time when the first estimates for a preliminary line to facilitate further works were submitted, it might have been carried out for \$250,000, the sum stated.

Question 2.—What are the causes which have made the present line much more costly than the one first estimated for?

1st.—That a great deal more work has been done than was anticipated, in making an estimate for the preliminary line in 1869. As will be seen, on reference to the foregoing extracts, the first line was intended merely as a preliminary one to render the North-West Territories accessible and facilitate further works. And no practical man, familiar with the character of the country, would for a moment suppose that anything more could have been obtained, with a contemplated outlay of \$550 per mile, through 451 miles of a wilderness far separated from all sources of supply.

2nd. In carrying out the preliminary line, the unforeseen exigency of having to provide means of transportation for troops and emigrants made it necessary to deviate from and extend the scheme first adopted. The roads, instead of being carried through on the plan of the ordinary colonisation lines, as intended, had to be well graded, and rendered equal to the constant passage of heavily loaded wagons, in weather of all kinds. The navigable sections had to be extended and improved by means of dams and excavation, buildings put up and plant obtained in great quantity and at great cost, none of which had been included in the original estimate.

As an instance of the manner in which the first scheme has been extended, I may state that in the first estimate a sum of \$2,500 is set down for a crib, at which the one steamer then plying to Thunder Bay could be unloaded. Instead of such a crib, a handsome wharf has been constructed, at a cost of \$30,000; and, in like manner, with other portions of the work, so that the route as now in operation, is very different from the preliminary line estimated for.

3rd. Among the causes which have added to the expense, were the transportation of troops under circumstances of difficulty, and sometimes at inclement seasons.

The route should not have been saddled with any part of the cost of the great military expedition of 1870; and allowance should be made for pushing through the troops sent out to meet the Fenian invasion at the commencement of winter in 1871, seeing that the working force of the route had to be withdrawn under circumstances which added enormously to the cost, many of the voyageurs and engineers of the tugs having had to be sent home by way of the prairies and St. Paul. Practical men will readily understand how it interferes with work, when the men are liable to be withdrawn at any moment for other service.

There has not been traffic enough to maintain a line of transportation in constant operation, and something at least has been gained by keeping the force necessary for transport at work on the improvements when practicable. In fine, the chief cause which has rendered the outlay so large on the Red River Route, is that the exigencies of the country, in relation to matters in the North West, rendered it necessary to use the route as a line of transportation before it was completed.

I claim, however, that there is full value to shew for the amount expended on construction, plant and buildings.

The present cost of the line, including works now in hand, is equal to \$1,771.20 per mile, and this covers wharves, plant, steamers, buildings, and all outlay whatever, apart from the cost of the transportation service.

It may be of interest to know that the distance to be travelled in going from Lake