

this situation, would be the shortest and most sudden that could be selected. A direct and equable descent, proved, as was very likely, to be impossible, and any other must necessarily be very bad. The details in Appendix No. 2, of the Report confirm this.

The Report says that "the lowest point of the ridge overlooking the Tobique River, at which any line of railway must pass, is 1216 feet above the sea." That this great summit level "must be surmounted."

Now this unqualified affirmation implies that the elevation of every gap or depression in a dividing ridge, extending in a straight line north-east and south-west, about 70 miles, and probably 100 miles by its circuitous course, has been accurately ascertained. Yet no details are furnished in the Report to show that any knowledge of this kind exists beyond the vicinity of the single point at which the ridge was intersected as described by Captain Henderson, in Appendix No. 2. He says, "The highlands bounding it, (the valley of the Tobique,) on the south side, are very lofty. The lowest point at which they can be passed, as ascertained by our explorations, being at a point about 19 miles south of the river, is 1216 feet above the sea, or 894 feet above the river." This statement is satisfactory. It is all that could be said with safety. But it does not carry us either way along the ridge beyond the vicinity of the point examined.

An examination of the whole ridge, however, does not even receive advancement in the Report. Yet without such examination, and a conclusive result derived from the same, how can the Report plead an unwillingness to abandon the direct route, or affirm that the lowest point in the ridge in question, is 1216 feet above the sea.

An exploration by way of the right hand branch of the Tobique, towards Boistown, was suggested at the commencement of the season of 1847. It might not have proved successful, but it offered the greatest probability of success. It is obvious, at least, that the suggestion could proceed only from the anticipated failure of the route adopted. The proposed is adverted to in Appendix 3, at page 49, 50, of the Report, but not noticed in the Report itself.

My remarks would extend to tediousness in minutely following the Report. Their tendency would be of the same kind, with regard to the rest of the line of country from the Tobique onwards to the St. Lawrence. I could not conscientiously concur in the opinion that the country is barely within the limits of practicability, much less that it is impracticable, and that further attempts to discover a favourable route are useless. My personal knowledge of the face of the country, and my views of the importance of the central line, equally compel me to say, that no sufficient efforts have yet been made to warrant a peremptory opinion, or any safe opinion.

I must also add that no admissible data whatever are supplied by the Report for a satisfactory comparison of the circuitous and central routes.

In seeking for such means of comparison, we are foiled at the first attempt.

The Report says, at page 14, that the section of country between Shediak, (more properly perhaps the Bend of Petitcodiac) and Boistown, was proved in 1846 to be generally low and flat, with occasional undulations. This of course is part of the direct or central line.

In order, however, to make the corresponding division of the circuitous line, running 20 or 30 miles further to the eastward, pass review, it is put forward, not upon its own but upon the borrowed merits of the central line. The sections as submitted are acknowledged to be inadmissible. They "are not grades for the railway." What then? "With the exception," says the Report, "of the immediate banks of the St. Lawrence, this is expected to prove one of the easiest portions of the line." Why is it so expected? No reason is given, except that "the whole of this portion of the country is believed to be generally low and flat," like that between Shediak and Boistown. Why is it so believed, whilst the sections submitted show that the whole of the country is not so, and that restricting our judgment to what is known by these sections "they are not grades for the railway."

Thus nearly 100 miles of the circuitous line, so confidently and peremptorily recommended for its superiority, is not, as far as known, entitled to be recommended at all, and the fact of its eligibility yet remains to be discovered, whilst the easy practicability of the corresponding portion of the central line has been proved.

This criticism would not have been submitted, if an exact local knowledge recently obtained of a portion of the ground in question did not forbid the least concurrence in the gratuitous expectation held out in the Report, that "with the exception of the immediate banks of the St. Lawrence this is expected to prove one of the easiest portions of the line."

By inspection of the map of the country as already known, it will be seen that there will be at least about eight principal summits or watersheds to cross at right angles by this portion of the circuitous line, and that at every interval the level of the tide must be quite or nearly regained. It will be fortunate if these summits can be easily surmounted at a less average elevation than 200 feet. Assume that by deep cuttings and high bridging they may be reduced to an equivalent of 150 feet, we have at once by this favourable supposition an aggregate elevation of 1200 feet to cross, or as high as the trial summit of the Tobique ridge; but this is without making allowance for all the subordinate or secondary summits, which will be numerous. The difficulties, therefore, cannot be even guessed at without a careful survey.

The Report places much reliance upon the greater security which the mere remoteness of the circuitous line from the frontier of the United States will afford in case of war.

"Passing," it is said, "at the greatest possible distance from the United States, it possesses in the highest degree the advantage to be derived from that circumstance of security from attack in case of hostilities." Report, p. 13.

In one ignorant of military matters, it may be presumptuous to be incredulous on this point; but in seeking to run wide of one danger it would appear that the line recommended runs side