

THE CHIGNECTO SHIP RAILWAY.

Thomas Telford, C. E.,
Founder of the Institution
of Civil Engineers.

Civil Engineer, to report on the construction of a canal on the line of Mr. Minnette's survey.

In 1826 Mr. Thomas Telford, the most eminent English engineer of the day, was consulted as to the feasibility of Mr. Hall's plans. He reported that "if this canal were completed, "ready access would thereby be opened, not only with Quebec and Montreal, but also with "the upper lakes to a boundless extent."

Capt. Crawley, R. E.

In 1843, Capt. H. O. Crawley, of the Royal Engineers, was employed at the joint expense of Canada, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island to report on previous schemes. He said: "It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the importance of an undertaking which seems "to be generally admitted."

Brief Review of Railway.

After this date public attention was directed to Railways and it was proposed to utilize the Steamship Lines now established on either side of the Isthmus by transshipping freight over a Line of Railway to be built between the Bend of Petitcodiac on the Bay of Fundy, and Shediac on the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

First Railway over the
Isthmus.

In 1853, a Company was formed and a contract made with Messrs. Peto, Brassey, Betts and Jackson, and work commenced on this Line of Railway from Moncton to Point du Chene, a distance of 18 miles. It was, however, taken out of the hands of that firm in 1856 and completed by the Government of New Brunswick in 1858. This was the first line constructed by the Government of that Province. Cargoes from the Gulf ports were transhipped at Point du Chene, carried over the Isthmus and again put into steamers on the Bay of Fundy. In 1860, this line was extended to St. John, New Brunswick, a total distance of 108 miles, and freight from the Gulf Ports and Prince Edward Island was then transhipped from steamers to the railway and from the railway to the steamship lines plying between St. John, N. B., and Portland and Boston.

Moncton to Shediac.

St. John to Shediac.

Pictou to Truro.

A line from Pictou to Truro, a distance of 55 miles, was afterwards completed across another part of the Isthmus by the Government of Nova Scotia.

Other Lines between Gulf
and Bay.

Subsequently a Line of Railway from Sackville to Cape Tormentine, and branches from the Intercolonial Railway to Buctouche, Richibucto, Chatham, Caraquet, Dalhousie, N. B., have all been completed, showing the great importance attached to the trade flowing from the Gulf of St. Lawrence towards St. John and the United States.

Extract from the St. John
Telegraph.

"The business done on these lines affords evidence of the large volume of traffic seeking "transit between the Gulf and Bay, or between the Gulf and the Eastern States of the "Republic."

"Where there is so large a railway traffic it needs no argument to show that there must "be an enormous water borne traffic when once the Short Cut across the Isthmus of Chignecto "is possible."

Bulky articles not carried
by rail with economy.

Notwithstanding these railway facilities there are many bulky articles of commerce which cannot, with economy and convenience, be carried any great distance by rail, and when there is a necessity and expense of transshipment and rehandling, the railway carriage becomes sometimes too expensive to leave any profit. Such is the case with lumber, coal, gypsum, plaster, building stone, potatoes, deals, fish, &c., &c.

Canal History resumed.

In 1869 a Company was incorporated by the Legislature of Nova Scotia to build the canal, as a private work, and the interest in it was accordingly revived.

John Page, C. E.

In 1869 the late John Page, C. E., Chief Engineer Public Works, was called upon to report upon all previous surveys of the Baie Verte Canal, which at this date had again become a live question, and further surveys were ordered by the Dominion Government. In 1871 a