

RAILWAY COMMUNICATION WITH THE NOR' WEST.

RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

All schemes for the advancement of this country and for supplying the want most universally felt out here, i. e., rapid and direct communication with Canada are read with the greatest interest.

The outline of a prospectus of the Canada Pacific Railway having appeared, published in the *Trade Review*, ranks among the first of enterprises, which has taken the initiative in devising ways and means to open up this magnificent Territory of the Nor' West, its principles are generally discussed out here, notwithstanding it appears at a time when the immediate future of this Territory is extremely problematical, owing to the recent action of a portion of the French Half-Breeds, but the Loyal people have such confidence in the power and determination of England and Canada to maintain their rights and dignity that even the precarious state in which we can only be said to be existing this winter, does not prevent a free discussion of the glorious future of this new province.

A more intimate knowledge of the general requirements of this country, and its resources is desired before the public is committed to any enterprise, having for its object railway communication and which it must be subscribed to for many years to come, until trade has reached such dimensions as to warrant opposition. The Canada Pacific Railway prospectus is sound in principle, but it will have to undergo great alterations and modifications before it meets the approval of the inhabitants of this country, who have a sincere desire for its welfare, and who, as a matter of course, are most interested. The promoters of the enterprise take credit for great wisdom and foresight, in commencing their operations at the right end, and make their calculations for one section to build up another, till the whole is completed, but on that principle it would be many years before the great desideratum is obtained of direct and immediate connection for the purposes of trade through our own Territory, as the most important, (but what they apparently look more to) the most expensive section is left till the last, and consequent upon the paying qualities of the other two. The country can never be settled up rapidly or advantageously, dependant upon the assistance of American Railways at the outset, one of the drawbacks to the passage of our emigrants over American soil, being the pertinacity of the American land agents, whose number is legion, and who waylay those in search of new homes and tempt them with offers of land, as they pass through the undeniably fine unsettled states of Minnesota and Dakota, and frighten them with details of the miseries of a home in the frozen north, whereby 40 per cent at least of our intending settlers would be lost to us for ever. Another drawback is the great difficulty and annoyance experienced by our Canadian Farmers, who wish to commence farming here on a large scale at once, they have to bring their farming implements and stock through the custom houses and over the long railways of the States. When the opportunity offers itself to the possessor of a 50 acre farm in Canada to transport the whole of his farming stock to this country by means of a steamboat from Port Huron, Collingwood, or the eastern lakes to Thunder Bay, thence here by choice of either gravel or railroad to a farm of 200 acres fit for immediate cultivation, it will do more to entice capital, industry and enterprise than anything else, the same argument applies of course to the merchandise, manufactured articles, etc., hitherto supplied by England and the States, but which Canada will have the privilege of supplying the inhabitants with in future. And by the time the railroad is completed, even at the most rapid rate, a fair return cargo of cereals, wool, flax, etc. (articles which are destined to become the staples of this country) will be available. Then again there is the transport of all the railway material, labor, iron, etc., to build up the international railway system required consequent upon the prospects of a large immigration. All of these would contribute to the profits of the main enterprise, instead of allowing them to be absorbed by foreign lines. From the above sufficient proof can be adduced that the Canada Pacific Company's idea of the first point pivoting on Fort Garry, thence south and west, is not the most advantageous or most paying. A few more lines will always connect the frontier with the Settlement, with very little more cutting than the iron and ties, but it would be worth nothing in there was an American railway to meet it there. No railway company whose directorship commands the confidence of the

public, should be cramped for the want of funds, with a charter which would amount almost to a monopoly, and a bonus of every other section of land for 10 miles on either side of the line from Ottawa to the Pacific, the eastern portion of which is renowned for its hidden wealth of minerals and its timber, and the western portion passing through a region unequalled for its fertility and healthiness, to say nothing of the advantages to be obtained by a British railway connection with the Pacific, and the head of Lake Superior, which is destined to become in time a portion of the sea-board of Canada. As there is 5,000,000 acres of unoccupied arable land within 100 miles of Red River, it will be some time before a railway west is absolutely necessary, but the Superior section is required at once.

Turning to the next material point as laid down in the prospectus, that is establishing Fort Garry as the point d'appui of railway communication. A more intimate knowledge of the interior economy of the country will show that the Hudson's Bay head quarters is not the most acceptable as the centre of trade for this Territory. Fort Garry is simply the centre of the Selkirk or Red River Settlement, and the most advantageous centre, perhaps, for the H. B. Co.'s trade with the outside world, as heretofore carried on, with the primitive facilities then in use by means of boats and canoes, all of which going north and west, however, are obliged to start from the Lower Fort 20 miles nearer Lake Winnipeg. Fort Garry is situated at the junction of the Red and Assinaboine rivers neither of which will ever be useful for a large carrying trade, the Red river being so tortuous, that its navigation is nearly 4 times the length of its air line, and its bends are so short and numerous that towage is impossible to any advantage. The Assinaboine is very shallow, and at present not navigable. The site of Fort Garry is very low and has twice been overflowed (in 1853 and 1861) to the depth of several feet, for miles around by the flood of the Red River which is likely to occur again at any time. The country along the banks of the Red and Assinaboine rivers for 50 miles is settled by the French and English Half Breeds, upon small farms averaging 6 chains wide and 2 miles deep, a system of survey, upon which agriculture could not be carried on successfully in those districts. Another practical reason why Fort Garry is not the point d'appui is on the principle upon which the American Railway Company's choose their routes, viz. through that part of the state where 10 miles of unoccupied land on each side of their line can be obtained. Now a line connecting Fort Abercrombie in Minnesota, and Fort Garry would have to skirt Red River, and thus get land only on one side of their line, instead of branching out into the heart of the state, and attaining their object.

A glance at the maps published by Professor Hind or Mr. Dawson will give a general idea of the outline of the prominent features in this district, though in detail they are wanting in correctness. It will be seen that the gate or outlet for all the productions of the vast fertile tract to the west and north, is that neck of land near Portage du Prairie, where the Assinaboine runs within about 10 miles of Lake Manitoba, and through which as a necessary consequence, all produce, travel, etc must pass, to find an eastern market. In addition to its being the gate, it has many advantages not possessed by Fort Garry. It has elevation, which is of great importance in this level country. It is near the largest timber district on the Assinaboine and 80 miles from the Riding mountains, which are also well timbered, and it is also as yet unsettled, the emigration is all tending that way, and it is close to Lake Manitoba where the cutting of two short canals will bring the whole of the water trade of the Saskatchewan to that point. As an additional inducement for the construction of those canals, I am informed by the settlers that the Lakes Manitoban and Winnipegosis are open one month earlier than Lake Winnipeg. The Stone Fort, or as it is sometime called the Lower Fort Garry 15 or 20 miles from Lake Winnipeg, is the commencement of the navigation on the Red River, and it has no navigable communication with Upper Fort Garry. Now with the imperfect knowledge as yet obtained of the country to the east of Red River, it does not do to hazard an opinion, where a railroad would come out running from Lake Superior, but it seems that the Stone Fort (where the population is double that of Fort Garry) would be the best crossing on Red River, and in the most direct line for the key or gate of the North West, instead of running south to Fort Garry 20 miles and then north again to the Portage to seek an exit along the banks of the Assinaboine to the western country. Lake Winnipeg we find thus the quickest market for its Pine Forest in the treeless prairies that the railroad would pass through. The line would pass within one mile of the Stony mountain, 30 miles north of the Assinaboine, where stone may be quarried to supply the inhabitants of this district with stone houses for the next century, and it would pass through an unoccupied tract of prairie where the grant of land could be given. Turning our eyes south now to look for the most advantageous connection with the American system of railways, we find the Settlement of St. Joe on the American Frontier bearing the same relation to the Portage that Pembina does to Fort Garry and a line from Abercrombie to that point will pass more through the heart of the State of Dakota, and the much desired bonus would thus be obtained. Connecting the Portage with St. Joe, the whole of the magnificent prairie to the south of the Assinaboine, east to Red River, and west to Pembina Mountain, would be much more rapidly settled, than by a road through a district along the Red River already settled by the French Half-Breeds, and the sixty miles freight between the Portage and Fort Garry would thus be saved to the western producer. All of these data seem to transfer the centre of commerce from Fort Garry to some point near Portage la Prairie where the railway traffic from the west to the east to the south and the water trade of the Saskatchewan from the north, through Lake Manitoba, would communicate, and go in their various directions. In the hopes of throwing a little more light upon the features of this country I take up my pen thus to address the public on a matter of vital importance to the interests of this country and Canada. But one thing I would impress upon the mind, & of the utmost importance of the first section of any line, having for its object, oceanic connection or otherwise, being built between Lake Superior and Red River to gain direct communication thro' our own Territory, and that as rapidly as possible. It is an absolute necessity for its safety, welfare and progress. I believe myself the Company that gets the bonus of land between Ottawa and the Pacific ocean will be one of the wealthiest companies on the continent, and the section from which the quickest and largest returns will be obtained is that which would connect us with Lake Superior. It would be no hardship to a Pacific Railway Company to be obliged as a sine qua non to the charter to complete the Lake Superior section in 3 years and the whole in 8 years, and I believe the Government that deals liberally with any sound Company in the matter of land grants, by giving clear patent rights of every other section of land along the route, for the rapid construction of a railway, will be well rewarded for their liberality by the filling of their coffers to repletion, consequent upon a large immigration of an industrious people, for in a country where the production of grain averages at the least 30 bushels per acre as it has done this year, and that on land cultivated for many years without being enriched, large numbers must be attracted with such results in prospect, and especially when the land may be had for the asking. And when the emigration may be looked for from England, whose Government is beginning to cast about among her colonies upon which to pour her poor but industrious surplus population, a great effort should be made to attract such bone and sinew to our new Dominion, by opening up safe and rapid communication and by giving every facility to intending settlers.

PROGRESS.

PETROLIA.

(From our own Correspondent.)

REPORT FOR THE WEEK TO APRIL 11.

WE have had three fires here this week—1st, the Perkins engine-house and derrick, burnt owing to gas being struck whilst drilling, 2nd, the Standard Refinery, owing to a defect in one of the stills—(this fire was confined to the stills, and about \$4,000 worth of property was consumed;) 3rd, Mr. Penton's Well, owned by Mr. Case, of Sarala, was consumed, owing to the carelessness of the engineer in the removal of the ashes. There is a marked decrease in the production of some of the old wells, and I cannot report more than 2,000 to 2,500 barrels as produced for the last eight days. The production now does not much more than meet the demand for home consumption. The shipments are about the same. Since my last Messrs Clement & Davis have commenced pumping the old Keith Well, situated on the King Territory, and the report is that she is doing some 50 bbls. per