

BRITISH
NORTH AMERICA.

The railway established, the passage may be shortened, and the time of emigration may be selected at choice.

Troops are annually moved to and from Canada. About the close of the navigation in 1843, a transport, having the 1st Royal Regiment on board, was wrecked in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The men got safely on shore, but there were no roads or means of getting away from the place. By the personal exertions of one of the officers, who made his way through the woods on snow-shoes to the nearest settlements, and thence to Quebec, information was given of the wreck, and a steamer sent down to take them off. But for this, the consequences must have been that the regiment would have had to winter there in the best manner they could.

Embarking and disembarking at Halifax, all danger and inconvenience from the Gulf navigation would be avoided. Time and expense would be saved, and the season might be disregarded.

The mails to and from Canada could pass over British territory exclusively, and they would be received at Quebec before the steamer reached Boston, and at Montreal about the same time as it arrived at that port.

In a political and military point of view, the proposed railway must be regarded as becoming a work of necessity.

The increasing population and wealth of the United States, and the diffusion of railways over their territory, especially in the direction of the Canadian frontier, renders it absolutely necessary to counterbalance, by some corresponding means, their otherwise preponderating power.

Their railway communications will enable them to select their own time and their own points of attack, and will impose upon the British the necessity of being prepared at all points to meet them.

It is most essential, therefore, that the mother country should be able to keep up her communications with the Canadas at all times and seasons. However powerful England may be at sea, no navy could save Canada from a land force.

Its conquest and annexation are freely spoken of in the United States, even on the floors of Congress.

Weakness invites aggression, and as the railway would be a lever of power by which Great Britain could bring her strength to bear in the contest, it is not improbable that its construction would be the means of preventing a war at some no distant period.

The expenses of one year's war would pay for a railway two or three times over.

The following extract from the Report of Lord Durham, Her Majesty's High Commissioner and Governor-General of British North America in 1839, is so apposite and just, and bears so strongly upon the subject under consideration, that it is conceived no better conclusion can be made to this Report than to insert it:—

“These interests are, indeed, of great magnitude; and on the course which your Majesty and your Parliament may adopt with respect to the North American colonies, will depend the future destinies, not only of the million and a half of your Majesty's subjects who at present inhabit those provinces, but of that vast population which those ample and fertile territories are fit and destined hereafter to support. No portion of the American continent possesses greater natural resources for the maintenance of large and flourishing communities. An almost boundless range of the richest soil still remains unsettled, and may be rendered available for the purposes of agriculture. The wealth of inexhaustible forests of the best timber in America, and of extensive regions of the most valuable minerals, have as yet been scarcely touched. Along the whole line of sea-coast, around each island, and in every river, are to be found the greatest and richest fisheries in the world. The best fuel and the most abundant water-power are available for the coarser manufactures, for which an easy and certain market will be found. Trade with other continents is favoured by the possession of a large number of safe and spacious harbours; long, deep, and numerous rivers, and vast inland seas, supply the means of easy intercourse, and the structure of the country generally affords the utmost facility for every species of communication by land. Unbounded materials of agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industry are there. It depends upon the present decision of the Imperial Legislature to determine for whose benefit they are to be rendered available. The country which has founded and maintained these colonies at a vast expense of blood and treasure, may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful patrimony of the English people—the ample appanage which God and nature have set aside in the new world for those whose lot has assigned them but insufficient portions in the old.”

And if for great political objects it ever become necessary or advisable to unite all the British provinces under one Legislative Government, then there will be formed on this side of the Atlantic one powerful British state, which, supported by the imperial power of the mother-country, may bid defiance to all the United States of America.

The means to the end, the first great step to its accomplishment, is the construction of the Halifax and Quebec Railway.

(Signed) WM. ROBINSON,
Captain Royal Engineers, Brevet-Major.

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Major-General Sir John F. Burgoyne, K.C.B.,
Inspector-General of Fortifications,
&c. &c. &c.