

There remains to be noticed the exploration for a line of railway from Whitehaven on the eastern coast of Nova Scotia towards Pictou and Bay Verte.

This was rendered necessary in consequence of the suggestion made by Captain Owen, R. N., to make Whitehaven the Atlantic terminus of the railway.

The details of this exploration are given in the accompanying report, Appendix No. 1, and exploratory sheets Nos. 20, 21, 22, and 24.

Engineering difficulties and expensive cuttings occur on this route.

From the commencement in the Harbour of Whitehaven the line *must* pass along a barren and rocky coast for upwards of thirty miles to Country Harbour, before it can turn off towards the interior. And it cannot do this and get clear of the sea-shore without the necessity of making a tunnel of about a mile in length through a ridge of whinstone.

Again, at the falls of the St. Mary River there will be required a tunnel of a quarter of a mile, and a viaduct across a valley, of about 500 feet in length.

The summit level occurs between Lake Eden and Beaver Lake, and is 400 feet above the sea.

At Grant's Bridge, on the East River, for nearly three miles in length, there would necessarily be several expensive cuttings through rocks of sandstone and limestone.

The length of this line from Whitehaven to Bay Verte is estimated at 181 miles.—From Halifax to the same point is 124. Leaving a difference of fifty-seven miles.

If the Direct route No. 3 could be established, it would add seventeen miles to the trunk line.

But as it is not to be supposed that Halifax, the capital and greater commercial city of the province, would in such a case allow itself to be excluded from the benefits of the proposed railway, then it would involve, in addition to this seventeen miles of trunk railway, a branch line of probably 90 miles.

Or if the Eastern Bay Chaleurs line through New Brunswick be added on to it, as in Route No. 5, then it will involve no less than fifty-seven miles extra of trunk line, and the same necessity for the branch line of ninety miles mentioned.

To compensate for such disadvantages it must be shown that Whitehaven has *the most paramount claims* to be selected as the Atlantic terminus in preference to Halifax.

The harbour of Whitehaven is 120 miles nearer to England by sea than Halifax.—Equivalent to, in ocean navigation by the steamers, ten hours.

This, it is readily conceded, is a very great advantage, and were there no drawbacks, or other considerations in the way, it would be quite sufficient to give that port the preference.

It is a well known fact however, that there is a time and season in the year when the Cunard steamers cannot keep their direct course to Halifax even, but are compelled by fields of ice, to keep to the southward, and sometimes pass to the south of Sable Island.

During this time, which occurs in the spring of the year, and may last for two or three months, there would be some risk in their making direct for the more northern port of Whitehaven. And if for these three months the steamers were obliged to make Halifax their port, then for that time the Whitehaven line would be useless.

In respect to the advantages which it is said to possess, of remaining open all the year round, it is not quite clear that it does so.

From enquiries made on the spot in the summer of 1847, Captain Henderson learnt that the preceding winter the harbour had been frozen over entirely, five to six inches thick,\* and that it was sometimes blockaded up and much incommoded by ice.

Subsequently, however, and during this winter when the objects of the enquiries made there in the summer became known, and the advantage of the Railway spoken of, a

\*Vide Appendix No 5.