

OTTAWA, 2nd February, 1897.

DEAR MR. BLAIR.—In compliance with your request for information as to the general character of the road constructed by the Drummond County Railway Company from Ste. Rosalie Junction on the Grand Trunk Railway via Drummondville and St. Leonard to Moose Park, a distance of 73 miles, together with a branch of 17 miles in length from St. Leonard to Nicolet, and also my views as to the standard on which the balance of the road from Moose Park to its Junction with the Grand Trunk Railway near Chaudiere Bridge should be built, assuming that the line was to form a section of the Intercolonial Railway, I have to report:—

That 73 miles of the road are built and in operation, that the gradients and alignments are favourable, there being only one grade exceeding 53 feet per mile, and that one is 64 feet to the mile; that with one exception there is no curve of a less radius than 1,433 feet, and that the one exception is a curve of 953 feet radius.

That the roadbed is well and substantially built, the cuttings being 20 feet and the embankments 15 feet wide at sub-grade. Ample drainage is provided by substantial steel structures resting on massive masonry spanning the larger rivers, and steel plate girders resting on strong well built masonry spanning the streams of a lesser magnitude, whereas, the general drainage throughout the smaller rivulets has been passed through culverts constructed of sound cedar timber 10 x 10 inches square. The larger portion of the line through the cleared land is enclosed by a substantial post and board fence, whereas, on a small portion of the line, a wire fence has been erected. The permanent way is laid with 2,600 ties to the mile, the steel rails weighing 56 pounds to the yard connected with steel fish plates.

The road is well ballasted with a very fine quality of gravel, the station buildings are neat buildings of what I consider sufficient capacity for the requirements of the road, and the water service is good.

I think you will agree with me from the description I have given of the works that a really good road has been secured, fully up to the general standard of railways in Canada. At the same time, I think, you should insist on the 64 feet per mile grade being reduced to 53 feet, in making an arrangement for the acquisition of the road, if such be your intention, which I assume to be the case.

As you desire me to state the standard on which I would recommend the completion of the road to Chaudiere Bridge, supposing it to be a section of the Intercolonial Railway, upon that part of the subject, I would say, that the standard should be equal to that of the Intercolonial Railway as it now exists, and that the steel rails should not be less than 70 lbs. to the yard, with passenger, freight and other buildings of approved number, dimensions, and design.

If these suggestions be carried out, the company will have a good, substantial road throughout, the main line being 115 miles in length from Ste. Rosalie to Chaudiere Bridge with a Branch to Nicolet, 17 miles in length.

Should you finally decide to acquire the road, before the matter is absolutely closed I suggest it would be prudent to have an examination made into its condition. Of course, this season of the year is not favourable for making such an inspection, nor do I think it desirable that it should be made during the spring freshet or when the frost is coming out of the ground, but later on in the season when the roadbed is settled down into place, and any damage, which may have arisen from the spring freshets may be seen, is to my view the proper time to have the road looked over.