

The handbook gives the proposal :—

“For carrying a railway from the head of Lake Superior through the Red River Settlement (about to be formed into a colony) and along the Valley of the Saskatchewan, and through British Columbia to the mouth of the Fraser River, opposite Vancouver's Island”; also from Halifax to Quebec.

A small map is appended to this handbook showing the projected line, much the same as the line surveyed by Mr. Fleming in 1871, and now under construction. From Ottawa it is drawn to Red River, to the south of Lake Manitoba, and then by the Valley of the Saskatchewan to the mouth of the Fraser River. There is a branch drawn from this main line from Red River to Fort William on Lake Superior, and another from Mattawa to the Georgian Bay.

The main line crosses the Columbia River twice about on a line with the Howse Pass. With the exception of the Rocky Mountain Pass the line proposed looks very much like the reality.

In 1858 the Provincial Legislature of Canada incorporated “The North-West Transportation, Navigation and Railway Company,” with extensive and multifarious powers, but for reasons not apparent on the surface it never accomplished anything worthy of record.

In the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the Canadian Parliament, on the 14th of August, 1863, there occurs the following passage :—

“I have received a despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, enclosing copies of a correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Agent of the ‘Atlantic and Pacific Transit and Telegraphic Company,’ in reference to a proposal made by that Company for the establishment of a Telegraph and Postal communication between Lake Superior and New Westminster, in British Columbia. The importance of such an undertaking to the British North American Provinces, both in a commercial and in a military point of view, induces me to commend the subject to your consideration. Copies of the correspondence shall be laid before you, and I feel assured that, should any proposal, calculated to effect the establishment of such communication, on terms advantageous to the Province, be submitted to you, it will receive encouragement at your hands.”

In 1868, Mr. Alfred Waddington, a distinguished engineer, and a man deeply interested in British Columbia, brought his views on the subject of the building a Canadian Pacific Railway before the British public. On the 9th of March, 1868, he read a paper before the Royal Geographical Society, in which he ably stated the whole case, and with a knowledge of the country so accurate and authoritative as might well excite admiration and surprise. In this paper, and in a pamphlet published shortly afterwards, like a practical man he with facts disposes of the difficulties in the way of