

BRITISH
NORTH AMERICA.

No.1.

(No. 1.)

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COPY of a DESPATCH from Lieut.-Governor Sir EDMUND HEAD to
Earl GREY.Government House, Fredericton,
January 1, 1849.*(Received January 23, 1849.)*

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to enclose a copy of certain observations on the Reports of Major Robinson and Captain Henderson, with reference to the proposed railway through this province.

* See page 37 of
this Paper.

These observations have been placed in my hands by Mr. Wilkinson, the gentleman who is the author of the Report, No. 3, printed at page 46 of the Appendix to Major Robinson's Report.* He is employed in the Crown Land Office here, and is a person of great experience in surveying. He possesses, moreover, considerable knowledge of this country, and is, I believe, perfectly trustworthy.

At the same time I wish your Lordship to bear in mind that I did not call on Mr. Wilkinson for any observations on the report in question, nor do I now express or imply any opinion as to the justness of his views.

It is so material, however, that Her Majesty's Government should be in possession of all the information which can be obtained on this difficult and most important subject, that I should not feel justified in withholding from your Lordship remarks on Major Robinson's Report, thus placed in my hands in an official form, by a person like Mr. Wilkinson.

I have, &c.

The Right Hon. Earl Grey,
&c. &c. &c.

(Signed) EDMUND HEAD.

Encl. in No. 1.

Enclosure in No. 1.

Fredericton, December 18, 1848.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

The following observations appear to be invited by the Report submitted to Major-General Sir John F. Burgoyne on "the proposed trunk line of railway from an eastern port in Nova Scotia, through New Brunswick to Quebec," dated 31st August last.

It is with reluctance that they are offered in an official form, but the utility or propriety of any other course appears to be precluded.

The Report is peremptory in the recommendation of a particular route, and that the most circuitous one.

It is equally peremptory in the condemnation of any more direct or central route.

We of course look for reasons of adequate force and validity to command a concurrence in a decision so unqualified.

The proposed observations on the insufficiency of the reasons adduced, will be confined to the route as far as it falls within the limits of New Brunswick and part of Canada.

The Report affirms the superiority of the direct or central route, if practicable, in these words, "Unwilling to abandon the direct route through the centre of New Brunswick, by which, if a line could be successfully carried out, the distance would be so materially shortened, as is apparent by the mileage given in route No. 4, it was determined to use every effort to decide either the practicability or impracticability of such a line."

Report, p. 13.

The efforts made are then detailed. In these details I am unable to discover, even an approach to the adequacy of effort which could warrant an unqualified, much less a peremptory opinion.

To follow minutely the Report is unnecessary, one effort only to discover a favourable line between Boistown and the Restigouche, is detailed. This, it is incidentally mentioned, was a great improvement upon a previous one. Why then did this great improvement rather discourage than encourage further efforts? Was every effort already exhausted by the peculiar efficiency of this second attempt?

A simple inspection of the map of the country, as previously known, will show that there was only a faint probability of the success of either of these attempts, which were by way of the extreme sources of the south-west branch of the Miramichi. There the land was already well known to be very high, and it is obvious that the descent into the valley of the Tobique from