

6 FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE

NEW
BRUNSWICK.
No. 1.

(No. 15.)

No. 1.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lieut.-Governor Sir EDMUND HEAD to Earl GREY.

Government House, Fredericton, New Brunswick,
April 6, 1851.

MY LORD,

(Received May 13, 1851.)

(Answered No. 259, May 22, 1851, page 28.)

I HAD the honour of receiving your Lordship's Despatch of the 14th March, No. 248,* with its enclosures, relating to the Halifax and Quebec Railway.

I lost no time in laying these important papers before the Legislature with a message, of which a copy is enclosed.

1st Enclosure,

March 31, 1851.

2nd Enclosure,

April 3, 1851.

The result has been the consideration of the subject by the Assembly, and the adoption of certain resolutions, of which a copy is annexed to this Despatch.

I deeply regret to say, that the House of Assembly altogether reject the offer of Her Majesty's Government, and refuse to undertake, on the proposed terms, the construction of that portion of the line which runs through this colony. At the same time, they distinctly reaffirm the offers of land and money made by the Legislatures of 1849 and 1850. Whether this offer may, at any time hereafter, be sufficient to induce capitalists to undertake such a work, it is not for me to conjecture.

I regret this decision, inasmuch as the proposition of Her Majesty's Government would have insured the outlay in this province of a very large sum raised at a rate of interest utterly unknown on this side of the Atlantic. Reckoning ten miles on each side of the road, it promised, moreover, to open for sale and settlement upwards of 2,000,000 acres of ungranted land belonging to the Government of this colony, the value of which would necessarily be greatly enhanced by the construction of such a railroad.

I do not in any way undervalue the importance of the proposed line to Portland, but its successful prosecution must, like that of the Quebec line, depend in part on the government of Nova Scotia, and the completion of that part would be secured at the cheapest rate by the Halifax and Quebec line.

For these reasons then, my own opinion (irrespective of my Executive Council) decidedly is, that the Legislature of New Brunswick would have acted wisely in accepting the general terms offered by Her Majesty's Government. I trust sincerely that the course of events may be such as not to expose us hereafter to the reproach of having impeded our own progress, and retarded the general prosperity of the whole British North America.

I shall communicate a copy of the resolutions of the House of Assembly to his Excellency the Governor General of Canada, and his Excellency the Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia. It is obvious that no further step can at present be taken with advantage on my part in negotiating with the governments of these two colonies.

I have, &c.,

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

(Signed) EDMUND HEAD.

Encl. 1 in No. 1.

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NEW BRUNSWICK.

MESSAGE to the HOUSE of ASSEMBLY, March 31, 1851.

(Signed) EDMUND HEAD.

THE Lieut.-Governor lays before the House of Assembly a copy of a Despatch with its Enclosures, which he received on the 29th instant from Her Majesty's Secretary of State

His Excellency is anxious that these papers should receive the earnest and immediate consideration of the House, as he feels satisfied that no communication involving consequences more important to the province can be submitted to its Legislature.

(Signed) E. H.

* Page 96 of Papers relative to "The Civil List and Military Expenditure in Canada, and to the projected Railway from Halifax to Quebec;" presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command, April 8, 1851.