

I entirely approve of the communication which your Lordship opened upon this subject with the Governor of Canada and the Lieut. Governor of New Brunswick, as reported in your Despatch, No. 355, of the 2nd December.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. E. GLADSTONE.

The Right Honble VISCOUNT FALKLAND,
&c., &c., Nova Scotia.

No 4.

(COPY.)

Downing Street, 2nd February, 1846.

SIR,—

I have received your Despatches of the numbers and dates enumerated in the margin, relative to the construction of a Railroad which shall connect Halifax and other points in Nova Scotia, as well as the chief Towns of New Brunswick with Canada by Quebec, and thus facilitate the intercourse between Great Britain and all those Provinces.

You will learn from my Circular Despatch addressed to you by this mail, that my attention has been already directed to the important subject of Railway Communications in the British Colonies, and you will readily conceive that considering the magnitude of such undertakings, I find it necessary to use great caution previously to sanctioning the adoption of any positive measures, so as to avoid the risk of exciting expectations which may not be realized. This remark, which applies to proposed Railways in all Her Majesty's possessions abroad, is peculiarly appropriate to a project of the kind now under my notice, which is an enterprise of great importance and possessing a Commercial as well as a Military character. Her Majesty's Government are certainly disposed to view with great favor the present scheme, if it be undertaken with an earnest intention on the part of the Provinces concerned to provide adequate means for the purpose of carrying it into execution. But I must distinctly observe to you that a very strong and also a very peculiar case must be made out to justify these Provinces in the expectation that Her Majesty's Government would take upon themselves the responsibility of recommending the promotion of any such undertaking, whether in whole, or in part, to Parliament, for assistance from the funds of this Country. Reliance must be placed in a great degree on private enterprise and capital, but up to the present I have very little knowledge as to what is really to be expected from those sources towards the formation of any Railway Communication of the nature I have described. I am disposed to hope much may be ascertained from the proceedings of the Legislatures now in Session as to the strength or weakness of the disposition which prevails in the respective Provinces to present Railway projects to the Assemblies. The form of the Bills and the actual shape which such projects may assume will necessarily improve my means of estimating their solidity.

In considering specially your Despatch, No. 100, of the 13th November, and the valuable information which it contains from yourself and Captain Owen, for which I request you will accept my thanks, I must acknowledge that I am disposed to agree with you in thinking that a line from the North Eastern point of Nova Scotia, keeping far from the frontier of the United States, would be the most advantageous with reference to Imperial interests, and consequently would be the line which would have the best claim upon the countenance and aid of the Imperial Government.

If you should find that there is any disposition to entertain that route as a main line into which collateral lines from Halifax, St. John, or other points might run, I apprehend that it would be prudent to encourage the adoption of such a route in preference