

rial on the spot will probably equalize the price. Having been over the country, I can with confidence now state the entire cost of the work from Aylmer to the Georgian Bay *via* the Matawan, will not exceed \$30,000 per mile, for a line with iron rails, fully equipped, and at the same time leave a margin of profit in the pockets of the contractors, of not far from \$1,000,000.

So much, in relation to cost of your line. With reference to that recommended by the honorable Premier, from Renfrew or Pembroke, to the mouth of French River, we have absolutely not the slightest clue to arrive at any conclusion as to the probable cost. It is true the country, or a portion of it, to be traversed by the lines in the direction of Pembroke and Renfrew, was explored by Mr Hazlewood during last summer, and extracts from several of his letters are given by Mr Fleming, for the information of the honorable Premier, and of intending contractors, but nothing of a definite character as to cost, elevations, &c.

This document, accompanied by a specification for the construction of the railway both drawn up by Mr Fleming, are herewith submitted.

It certainly appears a little strange, after an expenditure of so many hundreds of thousands of dollars by the Dominion Government in making surveys for the Pacific Railway, that on the first section of some 217 miles in length, from Renfrew to mouth of French River, the first instalment advertised to be let, and on which tenders are to be received for its construction, not a single brass instrument has been used in the way of making surveys; to ascertain the cost. That the Government, engineers, intending contractors, and the public generally are as profoundly ignorant of the geographical, geological and engineering features of the country to be traversed as they were of the interior of Africa before the great Livingstone's explorations; and under those circumstances any person or company seeking to tender for the work, between the limited time, 16th of November last, the date of general conditions and of specifications supplied by the Government, and the end of December last, the date of receiving tenders, must, in framing their haphazard estimates, have had no sufficient time allowed to pass over the country even in the most cursory manner.

A tender of \$40,000 per mile, might under those circumstances, have been looked on as being more within the margin of safety, than our comparatively moderate sum of \$30,000 for the Matawan route; however, time and the opening of the tenders will reveal.

In the course of the Honourable Premier's remarks, he dwelt largely on the fact that as measured on the map, the route from the mouth of French River, *via* Renfrew, to Montreal, was a more direct one than that *via* the Matawan.

This fact has never been denied or concealed by us. On the contrary, it has been acknowledged, as will be seen by consulting page 4 of printed letter addressed to you, under date of 24th September last. As this will be found one of the most important points urged by the first Minister, and on which his decision will probably hinge, the following copious extract will be given:—

"Why then should the Honourable Premier, who, it is understood, has no personal knowledge of the locality, insist on ignoring that solemn compact, an Act of Parliament, and move the eastern terminus of the Pacific Railway about twenty five miles directly south, to a point on the air line from mouth of French River to Renfrew, the nearest place for rail connection on the east? An answer to this question no doubt will be because this route is the shortest distance between present rail connection with the Ottawa Valley at Renfrew, and a good harbor on Lake Huron, at the same time heading in the proper direction for Sault Ste. Marie, a locality ultimately to be reached with our Canadian railway system.

"To this it may be rejoined: yes, on the map such appears to be the case.

"The distance from mouth of French River to Renfrew, in a direct line, is about 205 miles.
"To this add, say 5 per cent, for curvatures..... 10½ "

"Total distance to construct..... 215½ "
"Add distance from Renfrew to Ottawa via Canada Central..... 70 "

"Total distance from mouth of French River to Ottawa ... 285½ "

"The estimated approximate distance from Ottawa, via M. N. C. R., to Matawan, thence via Lake Nipissing to mouth of French River 297 "

"Showing only a saving in running distance, as measured on the map, of 11½ miles in favor of the Honourable Premier's more favorable line, as claimed. This difference is more apparent than real, as will be seen when the question is examined from another and pre-eminently governing point of view.

"On page 16 of the Report, addressed to you, under date of the 31st March last, while referring to the summit level to be surmounted by the Parry Sound line, in passing from the waters of the Ottawa to