

HALIFAX RAILWAY, AND PUBLIC WORKS IN CANADA. 13

BRITISH
NORTH AMERICA.

uncertain, and generally depend upon the wind, though the prevailing current is to the westward.

"I experienced this current in a boat when I visited the outer break; it was then setting to the westward, at the rate of one mile and a half per hour at least. I also perceived vessels in the offing setting rapidly in the same direction, the breeze was from the eastward and light, though it had previously blown hard from the same point.

"We also on our passage from Halifax to Canseau, during a fog, with the wind from the south-west, experienced an easterly current; but the land once made, the harbour is easily attained, especially by a steamer."

This can scarcely be considered a favourable report of its advantages as a harbour intended for the great Atlantic terminus.

Accommodation and safety for a fleet of merchantmen could be expected there, as is to be found at Halifax.

To make it a safe approach, Lieutenant Shortland continues thus:—

"A judicious arrangement of fog-signals and lighthouses with buoys, on the principal dangers, and a good survey with the sea soundings well laid down, would make the approach in the night, or during fogs, attended with small danger to a careful seaman."

One of the undoubted results of the railway will be to make Halifax, if it be made as it ought to be, the Atlantic terminus, the great emporium of trade for the British provinces and the Far West.

Whitehaven has not the capacity for this, and in winter it is evidently dangerous for sailing-vessels; and the selection of it as a terminus would be to exclude Halifax altogether, or to compel the formation of a branch railway of 90 miles in length, in addition to 57 miles of trunk railway.

It involves also the necessity of making expensive arrangements; lighthouses must be built, depôts for the supply of the steamers must be made, fortifications must be erected, and accommodation for a garrison provided. For the terminus of a great line of railway would need protection in time of war.

At present there are only a few fishermen's huts.

The probable saving of 10 hours of time in an ocean voyage which varies even with the Cunard steamers from 9 to 18 days, is not of such all-absorbing magnitude as to entail, by the choice of the terminus, such a fearful amount of extra expense and inconvenience to a whole province.

At a more advanced period, perhaps, when the provinces have attained all the prosperity they have a right to expect from this and other great works which would follow as surely as effect follows cause, then it may be time to consider the propriety of making a branch to Whitehaven.

Its selection now as the terminus would most materially affect the receipts to be expected from the traffic.

Whitehaven, therefore, with its longer and more expensive line of railway, full of engineering difficulties, passing for miles through a district of country, rocky, barren, and unfavourable for agriculture, benefiting a comparatively small proportion of the inhabitants, to the exclusion of the capital and the greatest amount of the province; or else involving the necessity of making a branch line of 90 miles in length, is decidedly recommended to be rejected.

And the city and harbour of Halifax (one of the finest in the world) is recommended to be selected as the Atlantic terminus for the proposed line of railway.

That part of the direct route (Nos. 3 and 4), viz., the line from the Bend of Petitcodiac by Boistown to the Restigouche and the St. Lawrence, crossing the range of New Brunswick mountains, having to surmount two summit levels of 1216 and 920 feet, causing heavy grades, and increasing materially the cost of transport; passing through a totally unsettled and wilderness country; involving greater difficulties in the transport of the materials necessary for its construction, and supplying food to the labourers engaged in its formation; excluding the towns and settlements on the Gulf shore, and so preventing the development of the vast resources of the country to be derived from the fisheries; and also inflicting a serious loss to the interests of the main line, and to the intended branch from the city of St. John in New Brunswick, is, notwithstanding its one great advantage of diminished distance, recommended most strongly to be rejected.

And the route No. 2, from Halifax to Truro, at the head of the Bay of Fundy, passing over the Cobequid Hills, and on or near to Amherst and Bay Verte, crossing from thence over to the rivers Richibucto and Miramichi above the flow of the tide, so as not to interfere with their navigation; then by the valley of the north-west Miramichi and Nipisiguit River to Bathurst; then along the shore of the Bay Chaleurs to the Restigouche River; then by the valley of the Metapediac over to or near to the River St. Lawrence; then by the route as shown in the General Plan No. 1, along the banks of the St. Lawrence to Rivière du Loup, and from thence continued through either the second or third concessions along the river until it approaches Point Levi, is recommended as the best direction for the proposed trunk line of railway from an eastern port in Nova Scotia through New Brunswick to Quebec.

It combines in the greatest degree the following important points:—

1st. The immediate prospect of direct, as well as the greatest amount of remuneration for the expenditure to be incurred; the opening up a large field for provincial improvements for the settlement of emigrants, and by affording the opportunity in addition to internal, of external communication, by means of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay Chaleurs, it will tend to develop in the highest degree the commerce and the fisheries of the Province of New Brunswick.