

In 1839 an Appropriation was voted by the Imperial Parliament for a military road through New Brunswick, leading to Quebec.

In 1843 the Imperial Government directed further surveys for a military road, having in view the same object.

In 1846 the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Gladstone, issued instructions to the Royal Engineers to make a survey for a railway from Halifax to Quebec. At this date the Imperial Government was strongly impressed with the importance of this work, in a political point of view, as being essential for the military defence of the British American possessions.

Sir John Hervey, in opening the Legislature of Nova Scotia in 1847, spoke of the Halifax and Quebec Railway as being not second to any project which had ever engaged the notice of any Colonial Legislature in any part of the British Dominions, and which would "constitute the most important link in that great line of communication which may be destined at no remote period to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans." I quote the exact prophetic words used by the Queen's representative forty years ago.

A letter from the Colonial Secretary (10th March, 1851) made mention of the strong sense entertained by the British Government of the extreme importance, not only to the Colonies directly interested, but to the Empire at large, of providing for the construction of a railway by which a line of communication might be established on British territory.

The Home Government despatched in 1857 a scientific expedition to examine the interior of British North America, extending from the settled portions on the St. Lawrence westerly