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With the compliments of
J. Scott

The Romance of a Railway

9
History of the Gosford Wooden Road

An Illustration of the

Marvellous Results of Small Beginnings.

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**QUEBEC & GOSFORD RY.
1870**

SIR H. G. JOLY de LOTBINIERE - - - - President.

**QUEBEC & LAKE ST. JOHN RY.
1907.**

GASPARD Le MOINE - - - - - President.
JOHN THEODORE ROSS)
WILLIAM HANSON) - - - - - Vice-Presidents.

THE ROMANCE OF A RAILWAY.

HISTORY OF THE GOSFORD WOODEN ROAD.

MARVELLOUS RESULTS OF SMALL BEGINNINGS.

In the year 1869, an American railway Contractor, Mr. J. B. Hulbert, who had built a wooden railway in the forests of the northern section of the state of New York, came to Quebec and induced a number of Quebec people who had obtained a charter for a railway, the Quebec & Gosford, to develop certain timber lands in the township of Gosford, twenty-five miles North of Quebec, to adopt his plan of a wooden railway, and to give him the contract to build it. The road was similar to railways of the ordinary type, except that steeper grades were used and the rails were of maple instead of steel. Mr. H. G. Joly, afterwards Sir Henri Joly de Lotbiniere, was President of the Company, Mr. M. W. Baby, Vice-President, and Messrs. John Ross, Eug. Chinie, W. Withall, J. S. Budden, J. B. Renaud and others, directors. Mr. C. L. J. Fitzgerald was Secretary, Mr. J. J. Rickon, of the Royal Engineers, Chief Engineer, Mr. Henry O'Sullivan, F.R.G.S., of Lorette, assistant-engineer, and Messrs. Cyrille Tessier, and Jacques Auger, its Notaries; and associated with the contractor were Mr. C. A. Scott as superintendent of construction, and Mr. R. M. Stocking as pay-master. All these gentlemen who, with the exception of Messrs Budden, Tessier and Auger, have passed away, worked enthusiastically, and canvassed the city of Quebec for stock subscriptions, with the result that nearly every family in the town took one or more of the ten dollar shares of the company.

A small Government subsidy of \$1,748 per mile was obtained from the Province, work was started, and in 1871 the road was finished to Gosford. Being the first railway on the North side of the St. Lawrence, and therefore the first into the city of Quebec, the arrival of the first locomotive in the town was looked upon as an event of great importance. In fact, so great was the excitement that when this locomotive was landed at the Palais Harbor and

brought along the tracks of the street railway to St-Malo, where the railway had established its terminus, on the ground where the workshops of the Transcontinental Railway are now being built, the city streets were so packed with people that it became impossible to move the engine until after midnight.

The construction of the railway differed from other railways only in the matter of the track. This was composed of maple rails, free from defects and carefully sawn, six inches by four inches, laid in the notches of round sleepers, and held in position by hardwood wedges. The gauge was the standard gauge of 4 feet 8 1-2 inches, and the locomotive of the ordinary type, but lighter than the average then used.

The Quebec & Gosford worked very well for about three years, bringing to the city large quantities of maple and birch cordwood and sawn lumber of pine and spruce, but owing to the distance of its terminus from the centre of the city and the impossibility of bringing the deals and sawn lumber to deepwater, it was not profitable, was allowed to wear out and was finally abandoned. But it lived long enough to inoculate the people of Quebec with the railway fever, which is, at intervals, so prevalent on this continent: the population demanded railways, the Quebec Central was built, then the North Shore Railway to Montreal—now part of the Canadian Pacific—then the Montreal and Ottawa, by Sir Hugh Allan, and in 1873 the agitation culminated in Sir George Cartier's speech in the House of Commons which terminated in those memorable words: "All aboard for the Pacific," with the result that every one knows. And in all this progress the development of Quebec's back country, which had started the fire, was not overlooked. Two men—M. W. Baby and J. G. Scott—worked like tigers for six years to resuscitate the Quebec & Gosford and extend it to Lake St. John. They succeeded, after a hard struggle, in inducing the Dominion Government to accede to the principle of help to local railways, which they had always refused, and to initiate the subsidy act of \$3,200 per mile, which small aid has since been the means of doubling the railway system of Canada and of bringing in many millions of foreign capital. And they also succeeded in obtaining help from the Province and from the city of Quebec. In 1883, their efforts were

finally crowned with success, and another American contractor—H. J. Beemer, who has built so many public works in this vicinity—undertook to finish the railway to Roberval and Chicoutimi, and he, generously helped financially by the late Hon. J.G. Ross and by Mr. Frank Ross, carried it through. This, in its turn, brought about western extensions to La Tuque on the St. Maurice, and to Hawkesbury, Ont., where a connection was made with the Canada-Atlantic for Parry Sound, with the view of getting a share of the western grain trade. This was carried out by the same people, aided by some American capital, under a separate charter, the Great Northern Railway, whose President was the late Hon. Pierre Garneau, and its Vice-President, Mr. Victor Chateauvert. A million bushel grain elevator was built at Quebec, a weekly line of large ocean freight steamers was established, and for several years a large trade in the export of grain—so long dreamed of by Quebec people—was carried on, as much as three million bushels being handled in one season. But, unfortunately, Quebec people did not control a majority of the stock, and the Great Northern passed into the hands of MacKenzie & Mann who, a few weeks later, had the misfortune to lose by fire the largest bridge on the railway, thereby upsetting all the arrangements that had been made, and putting a stop to the export of grain at Quebec.

Subsequently, the Quebec & Lake St. John Railway, the majority of whose stock was controlled by London financiers, was also bought by the Canadian Northern, attracted, no doubt, by its excellent terminals, and both railways thus passed out of the hands of Quebec people. But although the control had passed away, the railways remain and their benefits cannot be taken away. Their construction had meant the expenditure, largely in this city, of fifteen millions of dollars, expended most opportunely at a time when Quebec had lost the timber and ship-building trades and was passing through a period of great depression. It meant the opening up of our back country, in a manner so marvellous that there are now 63000 people in the agricultural district of Lake St. John, where there were only 10,000 when the railway was commenced. It meant the development of the great spruce forests North of Quebec, until then dormant, and the expenditure of millions and millions of dollars in the building of pulp and paper mills at the great water powers, with the result

that Northern Quebec is no longer a silent wilderness, and there are now flourishing manufacturing towns at Grand'Mère, Shawinigan, La Tuque, Jonquières and Chicoutimi. And finally it meant the bringing to Quebec, as its eastern terminus, of another great transcontinental railway—The Canadian Northern.

But even this was not all. Because, a few years ago, Quebec men who then controlled the Quebec & Lake St. John, conceived the bold project of the Trans-Canada Railway, intended to cross the continent far north of the other transcontinental roads, and to have its western terminus at Port Simpson on the Pacific coast, and its eastern at Quebec. Enlisting the help of some of the leading commercial men of Quebec, the vast country along the proposed route was soon alive with engineering parties, and it looked for a time as if the Grand Trunk, who were then advocating a rival route, would not succeed. Finally the Grand Trunk were forced to modify their route and make Quebec their eastern terminus, instead of Gravenhurst, near Toronto, as they had intended. The result was that the Quebec men effaced themselves and lost their money, but the Grand Trunk Pacific, or National Transcontinental, as it is also called, is now completed, except its terminals, from Quebec to Prince Rupert, near Port Simpson, and our city has become the eastern terminus of the third transcontinental railway in Canada.

And in accomplishing all this, the Quebec people were fortunate enough to have operated these 500 miles of railway for many years without killing or wounding a single passenger, and without being involved in any litigation.

It may seem extravagant to attribute all this marvellous panorama of public works and their wonderful results to the humble beginnings of the Quebec & Gosford Railway. But it is true nevertheless, and if Sir Henri de Lotbinière had not made his house to house visits in 1870, soliciting ten dollar subscriptions, and if his dogged perseverance had not been copied by the men who succeeded him years afterwards, in connection with the Lake St. John and Great Northern roads, it is very doubtful if Quebec would today be enjoying the benefits herein described.

Nor were the efforts of these pioneers of 1870 forgotten, and

herein lies the romantic and picturesque part of the story. Very many years after he had ceased to have any connection with the enterprise, Sir Henri de Lotbinière, then newly knighted, was called one day to the work-shops of the Lake St. John Railway and confronted with a magnificent modern locomotive, bearing his name, and new title, which was acclaimed by the ringing cheers of the shop mechanics led by their General Manager, Mr. J. G. Scott, whilst in a few choice words Mr. E. Beaudet, the Vice-President of the Company assured the new knight that his work and sacrifices of many years ago had not been forgotten, and added to the picturesque of the situation by saying that two hundred years ago, a ship from France had moored close to the spot where they now stood, and upon its deck were the Seigneur de Lotbinière and his humble censitaire, Beaudet, their respective ancestors. Like his forefather on that occasion, he took this opportunity to tender his homage to his seigneur, whose good services to his country, in connection with this enterprise, and in every other way, had made him so worthy of it.

There were many moist eyes in the crowd of hardy mechanics, when it was discovered that Sir Henri was too much overcome to say more than: "Vous me touchez au coeur." And again, when, a few years ago, the stock of the Quebec & Lake St. John was bought by the Canadian Northern, the Quebec sellers insisted that the shareholders of the Quebec & Gosford should be treated in the same way as themselves. So that the subscribers of forty years ago, or their heirs, who had long since thought their money lost, were surprised to find that they were getting something back, an illustration of the truth of the scriptural promise as to "casting your bread upon the waters, and getting it back after many days."

All of which goes to show that there is a romantic side even to prosaic business matters, and that we never know what great results may follow from small beginnings.

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QUEBEC & LAKE ST. JOHN RY.



OPERATING STAFF
1907.

J. G. SCOTT	General Manager.
A. E. DOUCET, R. M. C.	Chief Engineer.
ALEX. HARDY	Gen. Frt. & Pass. Agent.
S. S. OLIVER	Auditor.
JAS. BAIN	Superintendent.