

THE HONOURABLE ALEXANDER MACKENZIE,

MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PREMIER OF CANADA.

SIR,

As the Intercolonial Railway is now in a position to be opened for traffic, it is my duty, as Chief Engineer, to submit a final Report on its condition.

A Report such as the usual course prescribes, would necessarily be professional and technical, and would be confined to a description of the results which have been effected, and a statement of the cost at which these have been attained.

But the Intercolonial Railway is national in its objects and character, and to my mind it calls for more extended consideration. As the head of the Department of Public Works, and as the Minister who has directed the concluding operations on the Railway, you have been good enough to acquiesce in the view, that a barren relation of figures and detail would be insufficient and unsatisfactory.

I have therefore felt it incumbent upon me to depart from the course generally followed on such occasions.

I have endeavoured, in the following pages, to give the early history of Railway, and to trace the causes which prevented the adoption of a direct route, and in this connection I have been led to review the negotiations which ended in the establishment of the Maine Boundary. I have endeavoured to describe the frequent fruitless attempts which were subsequently made to obtain the means of constructing the line, and the considerations which led to the adoption of the present route. In cases where the location is open to criticism, I have given a narrative of the events which enforced its determination, I have stated, the principles which governed the construction of the Railway, and I have described several of the most important structures; at the same time I have briefly set forth the character of the country through which the Railway passes.

Although it may be said that the present volume includes much beyond the sphere of my official duties, I venture to hope that the course pursued by me will meet with your approval, and I trust that you will believe that I have striven honestly, to place on record what has passed under my own notice, and what I have gathered from official documents and from public records.

Thirteen years have passed since my first appointment as Chief Engineer, — a duty assigned to me by the Imperial and Provincial Governments at the commencement of the Survey.

At that period a long tract of wilderness separated the Maritime from the Inland Provinces. The Railway, which now connects them, I may venture to assert, will rank second to none on this Continent. In the embellishment of its structures it may be surpassed by the lines of the old world, but in the essentials of a Railway, it will, when entirely completed, have no superior.

Some further expenditure is still necessary, but the Railway is in a condition to be opened for traffic throughout its entire length, therefore my official relations with the work may now terminate.

In placing this volume before you, I feel that I am performing the last act of duty, in the office I have long held, and that I am separating myself from a work, to the prosecution of which, with many friends and fellow-labourers, I have devoted for many years the best energies of my life. A connection of this kind is not broken without an effort; but any personal considerations must disappear in view of the completion of the completion of a work, which realises the national aspirations of half a century, by bringing within a few hours, the old fortress of Halifax and the older Citadel of Quebec, and which must form an important section of the Railway, destined, ere long, to extend from East to West through the entire Dominion.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

SANDFORD FLEMING.

OTTAWA, 1st July, 1876.