

CHAPTER III.

EARLY HISTORY CONTINUED

1842 TO 1852

Military Road Surveyed. - Railway Mania of 1846 brings out the Halifax and Quebec scheme. - Sir Richard Broun advocates it. - The various routes. - Government of New Brunswick favours the route by Annapolis. - St. Andrews and Quebec Railway revived. - Lord Ashburton takes stock in it. - Ashburton treaty killed the scheme. - Halifax and Quebec routes to be surveyed. - Captain Pipon and Mr. Henderson appointed. - Major Robinson's report recommending Bay Chaleur route. - Mr. Wilkinson objects. - Construction of railway urged as a relief for the famine in Ireland. - Major Carmichael-Smyth's views. - Railway conference at Portland. - Nova Scotia sends Mr. Howe to England. - British Government objects to scheme. - Imperial proposals. - Negotiations upset. - Deputation to England.

The settlement of the Boundary question did not lessen the necessity for a military road; indeed some line of communication for military purposes was the more necessary, as the new Boundary interposed a wedge of foreign territory which threatened to sever all connection between the Maritime Provinces and Quebec.

Accordingly, not long after the conclusion of the Treaty, the Imperial Government directed a survey of a military road to be undertaken, having in view the connection of the Provinces, at a distance as remote as practicable from the frontier. This survey was made by Colonel Holloway of the Royal Engineers, aided by Sir James Alexander, then a Captain in the 14th Regiment. The latter was well and favourably known, acquainted with Canadian life, and strongly sympathizing with Canadian interests.

The route explored crossed the interior of New Brunswick from the bend of the river Petitcodiac, by Boiestown, Grand Falls, the north of Lake Temiscouata and Rivière du Loup to Quebec. It was reported that lines of fortification were to be constructed to protect the road, and that a military post was to be established at the Grand Falls.

The survey was made in 1844. The reports set forth that in traversing the highlands, the most difficult grade would not exceed 1 in 15; that these could be reduced by oblique and prolonged circuits; that the bridging of streams would be attended with but little difficulty as the rivers, St. John and Miramichi, were avoided; that the projected road would traverse a fertile, uncleared country, where there were abundant materials of wood and stone; and that the engineers estimated the cost at £2500 per mile for a macadamized road, and £450 per mile for a plank road subject to repairs in 5 years and renewal in 10 years. The total length of the road was estimated at 500 miles.

The year 1845 will be long memorable as that of the great railway mania in the United Kingdom. During this period many old projects were revived and many new ones started. Among the former was that of the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway, apparently recalled to life by the proposal of a new scheme, the Halifax and Quebec Railway, the prospectus of which had been issued in England.

At that time Sir Richard Broun was engaged in taking steps for the formation of a Colonisation Company, under unusually favourable circumstances. The design was to combine the influence of all parties, on both sides of the Atlantic, who were interested in, or otherwise

favourable to the revival of the rights of the Baronetage of Scotland and Nova Scotia. He was also engaged in schemes for connecting Great Britain with Japan, China and the East Indies, by means of a continuous line of steam navigation and railways through British North America. At this juncture he received a letter from a Mr. William Bridges, suggesting that a railway to unite the waters of the Atlantic and the St. Lawrence would be beneficial to the North American Provinces, and requesting his aid. It was readily promised, as the project so entirely agreed with his own theories.

Sir Richard Broun accordingly took an active part in the advancement of the scheme of the Halifax and Quebec Railway, and advocated it for years. In July, 1845, he forwarded to the Governors of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia a memorial from the Provisional Board praying for certain facilities and advantages on the plea that the proposed railway would supersede the necessity for the projected military road, and that it would furnish facilities for the systematic plantation and settlement of the whole frontier territory of British North America. The memorial was accompanied by a letter from Mr. Bridges, asking that the prayer of the memorialists should be recommended to the Home Government; and the memorial was forwarded.

Several routes were projected. One followed the line of the proposed military road from Halifax, by Truro, the Bend of the Petitcodiac, Boiestown, Grand Falls and Temiscouata Lake. Another, joining the above line at Truro and starting from Canso. Another, starting from Halifax, crossing the Bay of Fundy between Annapolis and St. John, and then proceeding to Fredericton and Boiestown; and another, taking the last mentioned route to Fredericton, and proceeding up along the west side of the river St. John to Grand Falls.

The Governor of New Brunswick, in a dispatch to the Home Government, stated, that having conferred with the Executive Council and several influential persons in Fredericton and St. John, there appeared to him a general disposition to cooperate the Railway Association, particularly if the Association would declare its intention of adopting the route from Halifax, by Annapolis, St. John and Fredericton.

These proposals and negotiations revived the project of the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway, dormant since 1837. A meeting was held on the 8th October, 1845, at which a delegate was appointed to wait upon the Colonial Secretary and present a communication from the Association, in furtherance of the general interests of the undertaking. On the 24th of the same month, a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Saint John was held, when two delegates from St. Andrews were heard on behalf of the St. Andrews Railway, and resolutions were passed, thanking the deputation for the information they had given, assuring them that the most eligible lines for the general good would necessarily command the most attention and consideration, regardless of local interests.

In November following, the Chamber of Commerce of Saint John held another meeting and presented a report to the Governor, considering only the two routes from Halifax and giving their decided preference to that passing by Annapolis, Saint John and Fredericton.

On the other hand, the people of St. Andrews continued their exertions in behalf of their own project. Subscription lists were opened, the capital asked for being £750,000 in shares of £25 each.

On the 25th November, 1846, a general meeting of the Stockholders was held, when a board of local directors was elected. Several shares were taken in England, and a London board was appointed, of which Mr. William Bridges, formerly of the Halifax and Quebec Railway, became Secretary. Lord Ashburton was a member of this board, and he courteously expressed his sympathy with the project.*

*

Piccadilly, 25th June, 1847

"Sir,

"In reply to your note, I beg to say that I will take with pleasure a small interest of (£500) five hundred pounds in the St. Andrews and Woodstock Railway Company. I am getting too old for any extensive ventures of this or any other kind, but I feel so strongly interested in the settling of your fine Colony, that I am tempted to take this trifling investment in a useful undertaking connected with it."

"I congratulate you on having Lord Fitzwilliam to place his name at the head of your London subscribers. You could not possibly appear before the public more advantageously than you are."

To Captain Robinson, R.N.

The settlement of the boundary question had placed St. Andrews at a great disadvantage. It could no longer obtain a direct connection with Quebec, without crossing territory which now formed part of the State of Maine. Thus the confident hope which people of St. Andrews had formed with respect to their town becoming the ocean terminus of a great Intercolonial Railway, had passed away. It is true that a joint stock company, under the name of the St. Andrews and Canada Railway Company after many struggles and difficulties succeeded in constructing a railway as far as Woodstock, a distance of 94 miles; but the Company has not been able to extend its works beyond that point.

In the mean time, the Halifax and Quebec scheme was experiencing many difficulties. The prospectus published in England had given the names of several men of standing and influence in Nova Scotia as connected with it. Several of these gentlemen repudiated the connection, stating that they never had been consulted and that their names had been used without their sanction. This proceeding destroyed confidence in the association. Nevertheless Lord Falkland, the Governor, looked upon the scheme as both practicable and desirable, and declared that he should deeply lament its being abandoned, either for want of effort to determine its feasibility, or from its having been undertaken by individuals without the influence to effect its completion. In view of the importance of the project, alike to the Mother Country and to the Colonies, he applied to the Home Government to send out competent Military or Civil Engineers to make an accurate survey, by which the practicability of the scheme could be determined and the best route established. He also set before the Home authorities that, as the mother country would obtain direct Railway communication with Quebec, the object proposed by the military road, it was hoped that the British Government would contribute towards the railway, some portion of the money which would otherwise have been expended on the military road.

Mr. Gladstone, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, replied to this dispatch and approached with caution the question of granting any aid to the undertaking; but in April, 1846, instructions were issued to the Royal Engineers to make the survey asked for.

Public attention was much turned to the project by the speeches and writing of many prominent men who discussed it. The points generally considered were, the effect that the railway would have on the commerce of the country, on the settlement of wild lands, and on the

union of the provinces into one community, the more intimate connection which could be established with the mother country and the greater general security in case of war. On the last point, Colonel Holloway, who had conducted the survey for the military road expressed himself strongly in favour of the Railway.*

*

4th. May, 1836.

"I know that the British Government is strongly inclined for a military road, and if I see no objection on further inquiry I would gladly recommend a railway instead of the ordinary turnpike road. I believe the Government is impressed with the importance of a railway from Quebec to Halifax in a political point of view; and I am of opinion that it is highly desirable, if not absolutely essential, for the military defence of the British American Provinces."

Sir John Harvey in his opening address to the House of Legislature of Nova Scotia in January, 1847, recommended to their continued attention this railway, which he said was 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 with the Pacific Ocean, and to conduct to a British seaport, from those into which it is now forced, that vast stream of trade, not of our own Western possessions alone, but of the rich and extensive wheat and grain growing districts of all Central America."

Resolutions were passed by the Parliaments of the three Provinces, in Nova Scotia on 4th. March, New Brunswick on the 2nd. April and Canada on the 26th. setting forth the necessity for the survey, and binding the several Provinces to make good the expense, each within its own limits.

Accordingly instructions for the survey were issued on the 11th. June, 1846, by Mr. Gladstone, to Captain Pipon and Lieutenant Henderson of the Royal Engineers.

These instructions gave general directions for the line of survey:— viz. From Halifax to some port in the Bay of Fundy, whence by steamer connection would be made with Saint John; starting again from Saint John the line would proceed to Fredericton and along the valley the river St. John to the Grand Falls; thence by the East side of Lake Temiscouata to the mouth of the river du Loup, and thence by the south bank of the river St. Lawrence to Quebec.

A second line was projected from Halifax to the bend of the Petitcodiac, thence as straight to the Grand Falls as would be consistent with the best mechanical selection of the line, and from thence as before described to the St. Lawrence.

A third line was projected from Halifax to the bend of the Petitcodiac, and thence keeping to the northwest by Newcastle and the Bay Chaleur, or its vicinity, to the St. Lawrence.

The survey was carried on by Captain Pipon and Mr. Henderson* until 28th. October, 1846, when Captain Pipon, in an attempt to Save the life of a boy in his party, was drowned in the river Restigouche. The whole duty then devolved upon Mr. Henderson, until the summer of 1847, when Major Robinson of the Royal Engineers was appointed to take the place of Captain Pipon. * Now Colonel Henderson

On the 1st. May, 1847, Mr. Henderson made a preliminary report as far as the survey had then proceeded. He objected to the first route on four grounds. 1st., on account of the break in

through communication, owing to the necessity of crossing the Bay of Fundy, 40 miles wide; 2nd, from the probability that private enterprise would open up that section of the province; 3rd, because in his opinion it was "evidently the object of the trunk line to benefit as much as possible the mass of the Provinces," and 4th, because of very steep grades and heavy works to be found on that route.

On the second route he gave the preference to a line starting from Dartmouth, on the east side of Halifax harbour, because from that place as a terminus, the railway would be five miles shorter than from Halifax.

The Cobequid Mountains were well explored, and the pass by Folly Lake pointed out. The survey by that time had reached the head waters of the river Restigouche, and showed that there would be difficulty and expense in crossing the river Tobique, a branch of the St. John, and that the construction of a railway by the line which had previously been selected for a military road was impracticable.

On the third route he endeavoured to find a line that would prevent the necessity of following the sea-shore along the Bay Chaleur, but it was not possible to find one. By the valley of the Nepissiguit, a practicable line was "out of the question," the hills becoming mountains separated by deep ravines, and at last "the mountains at the heads of the Tobique, Miramichi, etc., rise in wild confusion." He himself explored the greater portion of the wilderness, in which lie the heads of the Tobique, Nepissiguit and Upsalquitch. On the whole he was forced to give his preference to the coast line by the Bay Chaleur.

Major Robinson made the final report of the survey under date of 31st. August, 1848.

The route recommended was from Halifax to Truro, passing over the Cobequid Mountains, thence by the Gulf shore to the river Miramichi which would be crossed at the head of tide, thence proceeding by the Nepissiguit River to the Bay Chaleur, and along the coast to the mouth of the Metapedia, proceeding up the valley of the Metapedia to the vicinity of the St. Lawrence, thence along the St. Lawrence to the Rivière du Loup and Point Levis.

The estimate for this line, for 635 miles, from Halifax to Quebec, was set down by Major Robinson at £7000 sterling per mile, or in round numbers £5,000,000 sterling, and it was strongly recommended that the railway, at whatever time it might be commenced, should be properly and efficiently constructed.

The route recommended would, in Major Robinson's opinion; secure the greatest immediate amount of remuneration for the expenditure, and the development in the highest degree of the commerce and fisheries of New Brunswick. The greatest facilities for construction were afforded, at many points, by its proximity to the sea, and, from the same cause, the least apprehension of interruption of traffic by climatic influences. Its remoteness from the United States frontier secured it from attack in case of hostilities with the United States, and the grades would be easy on account of its passing through the least elevated country.

Major Robinson also urged, as additional reasons for the adoption of his route, and the speedy construction of the road: —

That by embarking and disembarking at Halifax, the danger and inconvenience from the navigation of the Gulf of St. Lawrence would be avoided.

That the mails to and from Canada would pass over territory exclusively British, and yet

be received at Montreal as soon as they could be received at Boston.

That from a political and military point of view the proposed railway had become a work of necessity.

And that, if it should ever become necessary or advisable to unite all the British North American Provinces under one Legislative Government, the means to the end, the first step to its accomplishment, would be the construction of the Halifax and Quebec Railway.

In a letter of an earlier date he made mention of the difficulties attending the survey, and he spoke of the dangers and hardships which those engaged in the survey had experienced.*

* He writes that one of his chief surveyors and draughtsmen, Mr. Grant, "in some burnt land, having left the line for a short time to make a sketch from some rising ground, could not again find the track, and after being lost for five days without a morsel of food, was found on the morning of the sixth day lying exhausted, and at the last extremity, by some lumbermen passing most providentially up the stream to which he had wandered, and when unable to move further he had laid down on the top of the bank for two days. This solitary boat was, in all probability, the only one passing that way for a twelve month together. Mr. Grant's hands and feet were frost-bitten, and though this happened early in November, he has not yet (17th December, 1847) fully regained the use of them."

Soon after the appearance of Major Robinson's report, Mr. Wilkinson, of the Crown Lands Office in Fredericton, who had been in charge of one of the surveying parties, published a pamphlet objecting to Major Robinson's recommendation of the Bay Chaleur route and his condemnation of the shorter and direct route through the centre of New Brunswick. Mr. Wilkinson contended that sufficient examination had not been made to establish the best line through the central district of New Brunswick, and that more explorations were desirable.

Major Robinson replied that large parties had been employed for two seasons on the central route, that officers of the Royal Engineers had explored the district for the military road, that he had made use of their reports, and that all information showed the improbability of discovering in that direction a practicable route for a railway. This discussion was continued until 1852.

In the mean time, a problem of more than usual difficulty occupied public attention:—colonization from Ireland, in consequence of the famine of 1847. It was contended that the Imperial Government should direct a systematised emigration to the British Colonies, with the certainty of obtaining employment for the emigrant on his arrival. The arguments mainly took the form of the scheme advocated by Sir Richard Broun, that colonisation should be considered in connection with Railway construction. One gentleman, Mr. Buchanan, in a letter dated 12th February, 1847, to Lord Elgin, advocated the employment of 25,000 men on the Halifax and Quebec railway; to each of whom should be given 50 acres of land along the line of the railway, besides certain wages.*

* Such a road he said, "as a great and national work, is admitted by every one connected with the colony, to be of the first and most vital importance, not only to the Colony, but to the Mother Country."

Lord Grey, himself, favoured the grant of money to railways, instead of paying any direct subsidy to emigration, on the principle that emigration would follow the commencement of the railway. He considered that the hardships and difficulties, attendant on the new life of the emigrant, were to no small extent caused by want of combination, and by the absence of division

of employment;— and in order that colonisation might be best promoted, Parliamentary appropriations were required for carrying out desirable improvements, such as railways and canals, or other public works.

On the part of the local Governments, no effort was spared to induce the Home Government to intervene.

On the 31st March, 1849, an act was passed by the Legislature of Nova Scotia, authorising the transfer to the Imperial authorities of Crown Lands, ten miles wide, on each side of the line of the proposed railway, pledging the House to the payment of £20,000 sterling, for interest on capital to carry on the work.

The Home Government, however, replied that the demands on the Imperial Treasury were, at that time, too manifold and too pressing to admit of any measure being submitted to Parliament for the aid required.

The project accordingly remained stationary; as the united resources of the three Provinces, unaided, were inadequate to carry on the work. But the question in no way passed out of view. It was discussed in the press. Several pamphlets appeared in its advocacy, among the latter a *brochure* by Major Carmichael-Smyth, appeared in the winter of 1849, earnestly setting forth the advantages of employing the people and capital of Great Britain in her own Colonies. This writer advocated the application of the surplus labour of the United Kingdom, to the construction, not only of an Intercolonial communication, but of an Imperial line of railway from Halifax to the Pacific coast.

The importance of a railway connection between Halifax and the United States system of Railways, was fully recognized in the United States, and an effort was early made to effect it. In July, 1850, a convention was called to meet at Portland, for the purpose of considering a series of propositions for the construction of a railway from Portland, through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to Halifax. Representatives from the several British Provinces were invited to attend. At the meeting of this convention, the representatives of United States interests pledged themselves construct their part of the railway through the State of Maine. Further, capitalists who were present professed their readiness to complete the whole railway through the British Provinces, provided Acts of Incorporation, with liberal grants of money and land, were given.

The representatives of the British Provinces, however, determined that they would construct the railway through their own territory with their own resources. But as the rate of interest on loans would be reduced by an Imperial guarantee, another appeal was made to the Home Government to guarantee the interest on the cost of its construction; the revenue of the Provinces being pledged to the British Government as security.

The people of Nova Scotia were especially interested in the completion of this railway connection with Halifax, their capital. Mr. Howe, then premier, accordingly proceeded, as a delegate to England, to press their cause on the Home Government. He so far successful, that he received a letter, 10th March, 1851, from the Colonial Secretary, to the effect that the Government had determined to recommend to Parliament that the guarantee should be granted, or that the money should be advanced from the British Treasury, on certain conditions.

This letter 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 may be

established, on British territory, between the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Canada."

Mr. Howe's mission was to advocate the claims of Nova Scotia, in regard to the railway projected from Halifax to Saint John, to meet a railway through the State of Maine from Portland. But the letter of the Colonial Secretary stated that the British Government would not feel justified in asking Parliament to pledge the credit of England for any object which was not of importance to the Empire as a whole. As they did not consider that the railway advocated by Mr. Howe answered this description, in order to obtain the Imperial guarantee it was essential that satisfactory arrangements should be made with Canada and New Brunswick, by which the construction of a railway, passing wholly through British territory from Halifax to Quebec or Montreal, should be provided for.

Moreover, in order that arrangements might be effected, the Imperial Government proposed to recommend to Parliament that Canada and New Brunswick should receive equal assistance. It was also determined, that the cost should be provided for by loans raised by the Provinces, with the Imperial guarantee; that the line recommended by Major Robinson, need not be followed, if a shorter and better line should be found, but that any deviation should be subject to the approval of the Imperial Government; that the loans to be raised in the several provinces should be a first charge upon, the Provincial revenue, after payments on account of the civil lists; and also, that taxes should be imposed sufficient to provide for the payment of interest and sinking fund.

It was also stated, that the British Government would "by no means object to its forming part of the plan which may be determined upon, that it should include a provision for establishing a communication between the projected Railway and the Railways of the United States."

At the same time (14th March, 1851), Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to the Earl of Elgin, Governor General of Canada, that Her Majesty's Government had long earnestly desired to see the Railway constructed, as they considered it calculated greatly to advance the commercial and political interests both of the British Provinces in North America and of the Mother Country; and that they regarded the work as of so much importance to the whole Empire as to justify them in recommending to Parliament that Imperial assistance should be given. Earl Grey concluded by suggesting that a deputation from the Executive Councils of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, should meet Lord Elgin and his Council, for the purpose of coming to some agreement on the different matters to be considered in connection with the Railway; which agreement, after being approved by the Legislatures of the several Provinces, might be submitted for the sanction of the Imperial Parliament.

The suggested conference was held at Toronto, and a satisfactory arrangement attained. The Parliament of Canada, being then in session, proceeded without delay to the required legislation. The Assemblies of the Maritime Provinces were called expressly for the purpose, but before the Legislature of New Brunswick could meet, a dispatch was received from London conveying the intelligence that, although the British Government had no objection to the project including a proviso for establishing a communication with the Railways of the United States, the cost of such a communication could not be included in the guarantee.

Mr. Howe had understood that the guarantee would cover the cost of the Railway advocated by him in London, namely, from Halifax, by Truro and Saint John, to join the

Railways from Portland in the United States, as well as of the main line to Quebec and Montreal. As this Railway (the European and North American Railway) was considered to be of very great importance to New Brunswick, and as the Legislature of that Province had already pledged the public credit to the extent of £300,000 sterling for that line and the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway, it was not considered expedient to accept the terms offered if that line was not included in the guarantee.

The conference therefore came to an end; but the delegates before separating expressed their determination not to abandon the hope of obtaining the desired aid from the Imperial Government. Accordingly Sir Francis Hincks, Mr. E. B. Chandler and Mr. Howe proceeded to London and pressed their views on the Government of which Lord Derby was then the head.

Although the various dispatches show that the Imperial Government, under different administrations, always held that the proposed Railway from Halifax to Quebec would be of benefit to the Mother Country, the terms conceded to Mr. Howe by the letter of the 10th March, 1851, required that the Railway should be constructed at the cost of the Provinces; and that the Provinces should tax themselves sufficiently to secure the Mother Country from loss by the guarantee of interest. The assistance offered by the Imperial Government was limited to the guarantee of a loan, by which the yearly interest would be reduced. It therefore followed, that the deputation should consider what would be most advantageous to the Provinces. They urged that Major Robinson recommended this route principally on military considerations, treating revenue as of secondary importance, as his line avoided the populous districts of New Brunswick; that, on account of the settlement of recent difficulties with the United States, military considerations need no longer assume such prominence, and no special necessity continued for keeping the railway far oft from the frontier of the United States; consequently, that the proposed line should pass by Saint John and up the valley of the river St. John, as that route promised the greatest commercial advantages. It was further argued, that as the whole cost of construction would be borne by the Provinces, the Colonial Legislatures could scarcely be expected to sanction a line with the primary view of consulting military or Imperial interests.

Lord Derby acknowledged the force of the arguments, and admitted the importance of a Railway through British territory, connecting the Provinces. He however declined to extend aid on the terms proposed.