

IMPROVED BRIDGE
FROM
STARVATION TO PLENTY.

ANNEXATION
OF
GREAT BRITAIN TO HER COLONIES,
BY MEANS OF THE
HALIFAX & QUEBEC RAILWAY,
COMBINED WITH
OCEAN OMNIBUSES.

LONDON :

1850.

1850
(31)

11,108

CUTHBERT & SOUTHEY, Printers, 155, Fenchurch Street.

IMPROVED BRIDGE
FROM
STARVATION TO PLENTY.

ANNEXATION OF GREAT BRITAIN
TO HER COLONIES.

Whilst in Ireland able-bodied labourers (or rather labourers who would be able-bodied if they were fed) are expensively caged up in unproductive work-houses, the British provinces of North America, close at hand, contain millions of acres of fertile land without inhabitants !!!

Can anything be more senseless, if not criminal, than the neglect of this bountiful provision of Providence towards the cure of Irish distress ?

In order to avail of it, it is necessary to establish a good steam communication between the West of Ireland and the British Colonies. and, simultaneously with this, the Halifax and Quebec Railway must be commenced. A country will thus be tapped for the absorption of settlers, and profitable employment will be secured for successive arrivals of emigrants.

The present communication between the North American provinces and the Mother country is in every respect bad; and does nearly nothing towards fostering that degree of intimate intercourse which is essential to the development of those countries, by enabling people who might contemplate settling there, to visit and reconnoitre them with that facility both as to time and expense which would be calculated to make their resources more extensively explored and known.

The intercourse must be always restricted so long as a passage costs £35. ! and so long as it is impossible to calculate with any certainty on crossing the water in less than a fortnight. This may suit a limited number of people with positive business, or who may have come to the conclusion to transfer themselves, once for all, permanently to the New World, with no hope of revisiting their kindred in their native land; but the facilities of crossing and re-crossing ought to be such, both as regards time and expense, as would induce crowds, in comparison, to pass to and fro.

If a steam transport, colonization yacht, or ocean omnibus, suitable for the service, were constructed, the result would be astonishing, and the British provinces of North America would thereby become, practically, an enlargement of the United Kingdom.

The proposed steamer would carry 2,000 persons, and at a speed which should insure the passage between the West of Ireland and Halifax being accomplished within an average of six days.

The cost of a cabin passage should be fixed as low as £10., in order to promote such intercourse as would

vivify the Colonies.—Intermediate passengers should be taken at £5. or £6. each, and a lower class of of passengers much cheaper. A vessel could make a voyage every four weeks, and would produce the following result :

| | £. | s. | d. |
|--|---------|----|----|
| The cost of thirteen voyages would be for Coals, Captain, Engineers and Stokers, Crew, and all their Provisions, Oil, Tallow, &c. | 45,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Interest of money and Insurance, Tear and Wear of Ship and Engines and depreciation | 34,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Total cost of thirteen voyages | £79,000 | 0 | 0 |

In return for which there could be conveyed—

| | | | |
|---|----------|--------|-----|
| 100 Cabin Passengers, each Passage, at £10. each, net Passage-money, (the Feeding would be about 40s. extra) for twenty-six passages is | £26,000. | | |
| 200 Intermediate Passengers, each trip at £5. . | 26,000. | 52,000 | 0 0 |

| | | | |
|--|---------|---|---|
| Leaving excess of Expense beyond the Earnings from the above sources, and which Excess would remain to represent the cost of conveying 1,500 Emigrants each voyage outwards (thirteen voyages) | £27,000 | 0 | 0 |
|--|---------|---|---|

In thirteen outward passages this would be 19,500 emigrants, who would thus, it appears, be conveyed from the United Kingdom to British North America for under 28s each, exclusive of provisions, which may be considered 7s. extra ; and for this small expense of 28s. each, 19,500, or say nearly 20,000 emigrants would be landed at their destination in the Western Hemisphere in six days, instead of about

forty days as at present by inferior sail vessels.

The value of their labour in America at a low rate of wages, for the mere time saved on the voyage would thus be more than equivalent to the whole cost of their transport.

If it were desired to carry a greater number of emigrants than the services of one vessel would accomplish, a large increase of the number would certainly cost higher per head than the above rate, because the more remunerative cabin and intermediate passengers might not increase in proportion; but even if the whole expense were incurred for the emigrants, the cost would still be very moderate, and not materially exceed the cost of the bad passage now afforded to them by sail vessels, besides which, in the foregoing estimate, no credit is taken for mail service, or parcels, specie, &c.

This steam communication will be further adverted to presently; but in the meantime let us glance at the landing-place of the emigrants on the other side of the water.

It is absolutely essential that simultaneously with the production of the proposed steam transport, the Halifax and Quebec Railway should be commenced.

The merits of this project will be found set forth in Major Robinson's Report, presented to Parliament last year; and in Lord Elgin's recommendation of it, from which it will be observed that the proposed Railway will open up a fertile country capable of supporting many millions of industrious inhabitants, besides having collateral advantages too multitudinous here to enumerate. A few extracts from Major

Robinson's report will be found appended to these observations.

There is every reason to believe that, in the course of not many years, this work would, as a mere railway, become highly productive; but its prospects, in this paltry view, are a secondary consideration, and they may be too distant to make its construction feasible as a simple private undertaking, from which, without reference to any indirect benefit to be obtained, instantaneous income is the sole object.

It must be undertaken by Government, and the nation would derive so many benefits from its construction, that there can be no question as to the policy of Government commencing it at once. If it were called a "road" instead of a "railroad," it would never have been hinted that it should be anything else than a Government work.

The estimated cost of this Railway, which will pass 635 miles through British territory, is only £5,000,000; and it is satisfactorily shown by Major Robinson, and confirmed by the Railway Commissioners, that it can be opened for this sum.

The probability of its being productive is discussed in Major Robinson's report; but, from the nature of the case, this does not admit of calculation, because many of the resources for its traffic are to be looked for in a country which it is intended to be the means of calling into existence, and which, for want of the railway, is as yet a wilderness without inhabitants, and destined so to remain so long as this railway is withheld. Those countries, especially new countries, which now have no railways, are in a quite different relative position from what they were

when railways did not exist in any country ; and if British America be now denied that outfit by the Mother Country to put it on an equality with its neighbours, which is absolutely necessary for its progress, we must be reconciled to the prospect of its remaining a wilderness for an indefinite period, and to see the emigrants from this kingdom transferring themselves and their allegiance to a foreign nation, to the aggrandizement of the United States.

Doubts expressed by the Railway Commissioners as to the railway being immediately profitable as a commercial speculation, need be no discouragement to the nation undertaking it, even if this short-sighted view of the work were to be made the test of its merits.

If the parties who built the Lighthouse on the Skerry Island off Holyhead, as a private speculation, in the last century, in consideration of the right to a toll of a penny per ton on ships' passing, had applied for advice to the Railway Commissioners, they would, no doubt, have met with scepticism as to the growth of trade to be then expected in the Irish Channel, similar to what is now entertained as to the future destiny of British North America ; and it would then have been "judged necessary to ascertain," and "prudent to calculate," what did not, and does not, from the nature of things, admit of ascertainment and calculation. The undertakers of the lighthouse, however, acted with more sagacity and decision than the Railway Commissioners, with their calculating machinery, would have counselled, and built it, and the result has repaid them ; for, after the proprietors had enjoyed a good revenue

for many years, it was at last lately resolved by Parliament, that, with a view to a reduction of light dues, this and other such private lights should be purchased for the public, through the medium of the Trinity House ; and, when its value was assessed, the income from the small toll on vessels passing was found so large that a jury awarded £444,984. 11s. to the proprietors, as the purchase-money for the lighthouse ; the public thus retracing, in rather a costly way, the original error of having left it to "private enterprize" (as is now the fashion with railways) to make lighthouses.

It is not necessary to establish the probability of the Halifax and Quebec Railway increasing in value in so great a proportion as this and other lighthouses have done ; but the future value of the Railway, supposing it to be made a Government work, must be looked at in conjunction with the **enhancement of the Crown lands** of the provinces through which it will pass. These Crown lands amount to 14,427,000 acres. For the effect on their value to be anticipated from the Railway, the evidence of Messrs. Uniacke, Perley, Carter, Pemberton, and others, before a Committee of the House of Lords in 1847, can be consulted. **On the granted lands adjoining the Railway a rate ought probably to be levied ;** and when the **immense mineral resources of the provinces are also remembered,** a most sanguine expectation of their future career is anything but visionary.

Prince Edward Island also must not be overlooked.

The railway, although it will not go through Prince Edward Island, will go close to the point from whence

the ferry to it is only seven miles wide; and if the railway were to effect no other end than thus bringing Prince Edward Island into juxta-position with the United Kingdom, its cost would not be an unavailing investment.

Some interesting particulars of the capabilities of this Island will be found in the evidence of Mr. Cunard before the Committee of the House of Lords in 1847, where he corroborates Lord Durham's report about it, which says, that out of 1,400,000 acres there are only 10,000 supposed to be unfit for the plough and that "Had the natural advantages of Prince Edward Island been turned to proper account, it might at this time have been the granary of the British Colonies; and instead of barely supporting a poor and unenterprising population of 40,000, its mere agricultural resources would, according to Major Head, have maintained in abundance a population of at least ten times that number."—(677, 678.)

With regard to the productions, Mr. Cunard says "that the wheat is very good, more so than in the adjoining provinces, and the oats are beautiful—we have no such oats here."—(629.)

"* * * * there is no part of the world better calculated for fishing than Prince Edward Island."—(661.)

"The climate is healthy and the soil good, and the production is very good. It is a beautiful spot. Nobody can visit it without admiring it."—(696.)

But how are people to admire what they can't see?

Facility of visiting it is therefore the desideratum.

If, then, the future value of the Railway and of the public domain, to which it is to impart value, be looked at, as they ought to be, as a whole, the prospective value is immense, and the propriety of Government undertaking it evident.

Neither is the investment of £5,000,000 at all a formidable national exertion ; and it would be much better to have the overflow of British capital directed into such channels as this, than lent to Russia to make a road from Petersburg to Moscow. An investment of £5,000,000 would cost, with the funds at 96, only £156,250 per annum gross outlay, supposing (an absurdity) no return to be got from it ; and even this outlay would be incurred only gradually, during the years occupied in constructing the road. The public voice is happily loud against extravagance and waste of money, but no true economist could desire the means to be withheld from this essential work—essential equally for the prosperity of the Colonies and for the necessities of the United Kingdom.

For extensive particulars of the merits of this Railway, Major Robinson's Report can be consulted ; but without a suitable steam communication with the Mother Country, an indispensable link would be wanting, and Major Robinson has said little about this. The intercourse at present kept up does not at all meet the requirements of the case. The steamers having the course to themselves get unmerited credit for being fast, and they certainly are a contrast to the sail vessels which preceded them, from which the popular European notion of the

distance of America is formed. But the present steamers are, in fact, very slow; and when, under favourable circumstances, they make a passage in less time than usual, it simply proves that Halifax is not far away. It would be quite erroneous, from even the shortest passage hitherto performed, to infer that it was done at a high speed.

The modern improvements in Steam Navigation are not introduced in the Transatlantic vessels, either British or American, and it is merely their large scale which makes them passable. All large vessels excel small ones, *cæteris paribus*; but this is more particularly the case with steam vessels, from the principle that their ability to carry propelling power increases by an increase of tonnage in a much higher ratio than the resistance increases. Hence the self-satisfied parties who sway the Transatlantic steamers have been, from the tameness of the public, enabled to despise improvements, and will continue to do so while the public tolerate mediocrity; their vessels attaining their present speed, such as it is, from their mere size, whilst those vessels that have as yet been scientifically constructed, have not the same advantage of a large scale.

A steam vessel combining the advantages of scale and science does not yet exist. When such a one shall be produced, present ideas as to the expanse of the ocean will be revolutionized. The period seems now to have arrived when the construction of such a steamer ought not to be longer delayed.

The accommodation of steam to British America is also, at present, inaccessible, except to that limi-

ted number of cabin passengers who can afford to pay heavily, to whom the expense is treble, and the distance practically double what it ought to be.

All this can be remedied, and it must be done.

That eminent practical and scientific engineer, Mr. Penn, of Greenwich, having been consulted, gives the following as his opinion, viz.

" Having been consulted on the subject, I do not
 " hesitate to say, that an Ocean Steam Emigrant
 " Ship can be constructed capable of conveying two
 " thousand people, and maintaining an average speed
 " of at least sixteen nautical miles per hour, between
 " Ireland and Halifax* and under favorable circum-
 " stances the speed would be much greater. I would
 " stake my professional reputation on accomplishing
 " fully this performance. A naval architect who also
 " anticipates the above result from the power applied
 " as I propose, remarks in one of his communica-
 " tions in reference to it, that—'the advantages attend-
 " ' ing such a vessel as regards comfort over the finest
 " ' vessels now in existence, and the certainty with
 " ' which the voyage would be made with'in the
 " ' stated time, almost to an hour, together with the
 " ' almost total freedom from sea-sickness, would
 " ' render this conveyance as preferable to the pre-
 " ' sent class of vessels as the railway train is to a
 " ' waggon, with the additional advantage of a cheaper
 " ' fare.' The result would be splendid."

(Signed) " JOHN PENN, Engineer,
 " Greenwich."

" January 24th, 1850."

* A speed of 16 nautical miles per hour is $5\frac{1}{2}$ days for the passage from Ireland to Halifax.

This will be double the speed of the Royal Mail Fleet, and it will be an improvement to the extent of fifty per cent. on the speed of the best of the present transatlantic vessels. In bad and adverse weather, more particularly, will the contrast be *stunning*. Of course interested parties will sneer at this, but the truth cannot be suppressed.

An encouragement to the agitation of this subject at present is the consideration that the attainment of an approach to perfection in the transit to Halifax is reconcileable with economy. It clears the way at once for a saving of at least £150,000. per annum in the West India mail service, on the expiration on the 1st January, 1852, of the royal mail contract, which now costs £240,000. per annum.

The difference between this, and the assumed saving of £150,000 per annum is £90,000. per annum, which is more than ample to secure the efficiency of the West India mail service as an offshoot from Halifax, whatever should be the detail required. It would also include the cost of an efficient separate line of screw vessels between the United Kingdom and that part of the West Indies which may be thought to lie rather out of the Halifax direction; viz., Guiana and the Windward Islands, &c.

As regards Jamaica, and all places beyond it or to the north of it, it is very important to observe, that the route to it by way of Halifax is not circuitous, and it is hoped that the authorities will not permit themselves to be misled on this point by the representations of any advocates of the Royal Mail Company. The distorted position of places on Mercator's chart exaggerates the apparent detour of Halifax in some

people's minds, but on a great circle course, which is the shortest between two places, it will be found that Halifax is not at all out of the course to New York, and that it is so very little out of the shortest course to Jamaica as to be quite unimportant, the extra distance being no more than 180 miles, (as may be seen by stretching a thread on a globe), a distance far more than counterbalanced by the higher speed attainable by the class of vessels applicable to the shorter runs made practicable by the division of the voyage—besides which a communication between Halifax and Jamaica will, when the Quebec Railway shall have been undertaken, be secondary in importance only to the communication with the United Kingdom. With fair play, Halifax is destined to become one of the greatest places in the world. The concentration of the intercourse at one point has everything to recommend it. The ferry between the West of Ireland and Halifax will fulfil all the desiderata of a packet station. It is a shorter run between the two hemispheres than any other points afford; and hence a class of vessels of a speed higher than could by any possibility be attained on a longer voyage can be introduced. Then, the concentration of the communication at one point evidently indicates the admission of larger vessels than if the intercourse were dispersed; and this is of vast importance, from the numerous advantages of a large vessel over a small one; and further, on this station, but only on this station, large vessels can, by accommodating emigrants, have their capacity made profitably available without subversion of their speed, which would not be the case if goods instead

of emigrants were to be the cargo, the carriage of goods being an application of space which cannot possibly be reconcileable with packet duties

The improved steam communication to Halifax, and the railway thence to the interior, form one subject, than which none can well be of more importance to the United Kingdom at this present time.

Before concluding it may not be superfluous to allude to an untenable position taken by many people, who try to discourage the advocates for the colonization and settlement of British North America, by alleging that it is an inferior country. It is a mistake to say that New Brunswick is not an eligible country for settlers;* but even if it were so, it is no reason why Great Britain, *since it is her's*, should not make the most of it. But it is a most hopeful country for settlement. Other regions of the earth, in the United States and elsewhere, may have some advantages, but the apparent advantages have their drawbacks. The most sunny climes do not always support the most flourishing communities; as, for example, Great Britain contrasted with Italy can attest. And if the British provinces have severe winters, and some other drawbacks, to complain of, **they are not entirely without compensation. Witness the deposits of coal and iron.** The area of coal formation in the eastern provinces of British America is very great. The annexed diagrams show the relative area of bituminous coal in Great Britain and in the eastern provinces of British

* See Appendix.

America : the larger figure representing the British American and the smaller the British bituminous coal area ; viz., 18,000 square miles for the former, and 8,139 square miles for the latter.



The bulk of these coal fields will be traversed or approached by the Halifax and Quebec Railway.

Altogether the inducements for Great Britain taking the simple measures obviously calculated to annex these valuable colonies to herself are so palpable and overwhelming, that the prevailing apathy about it is unaccountable, but it is hoped that this apathy is about to terminate.

Further preliminary negotiations across the Atlantic ought not to be allowed to create delay ; for if parliament should at once proceed to the consideration of the subject, and authorize the outlay, the power can of course be reserved to government of dictating equitable conditions to the colonies before commencing operations.