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THREE CHAPTERS

ON A TRIPLE PROJECT.

THE CANAL AND THE RAIL.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE ST. LAWRENCE AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

WE have to thank a writer who signs himself "A Subscriber," in the *Montreal Herald* of the 1st January, for the opportune reproduction of an article which appeared in *The Economist* of the 12th September, 1846, and which, in a tone of manly and cheerful self-reliance, demonstrates how little Canada has to fear under the operation of free trade, combined with a relaxation of the navigation laws, *quoad* the River St. Lawrence, from foreign rivalry, so long at least as "our merchants," and, let us add, our people at large, "stimulated by necessity and "convinced by reflection of the vast advantages they enjoy, "will turn attention to the fact, that the produce of Western "Canada, and of the northern parts of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, "and Michigan, must find an outlet, either by the way of the "Erie Canal, or by the St. Lawrence, to the Ocean."

So long, indeed, as the St. Lawrence flows to the sea, so long will the tide of commerce fall into and follow its natural declivity. All that is required of us, is to improve the blessings which Providence has bestowed; or, at the least, not to dam back and impede the current by perverse obstructions—by legislative restrictions which can only protect "our rivals"; or by an indolent indifference to the advantages we possess, and a neglect to profit by them.

We have already employed, once or twice, the words "rivalry" and "rivals". We do so in no obnoxious sense. A fair and generous rivalry is a healthful stimulant, whether applied to the individual man or to nations. It inspires determination, it infuses confidence, it invigorates exhausted efforts, it impels anew. It keeps the individual, or the people, in "tip top condition," ready for any thing, and up to any thing. We have much to thank our "rivals" for, and for nothing more than their "rivalry." Let us profit by it.

When DeWitt Clinton first devised his immortal project of the Erie Canal, his object was, not only to facilitate the intercourse of New York State with a rich, fertile, and inviting

country,—the western Land of Promise,—but to “tap” the waters of the upper St. Lawrence, as the long link of lakes may be justly called, and to divert the tide of commerce from a rival river and a foreign state, into a new channel, more safe, more convenient and more expeditious, and therefore more economical ; more unimpeded by climate and natural obstacles, and, therefore, more inviting.

Energy and industry and persevering science attempted much, and accomplished more. The over heaped and over crowded wharves of Buffalo, the serried canal, the teeming docks of Troy and Albany, do homage to the genius of DeWitt Clinton. But all human efforts have their limits. The traffic of the Erie Canal must be limited by its capacity. That capacity may be enlarged, but time will elapse, and money must be expended, while the trade of the west advances with such overwhelming rapidity as even now to embarrass and gorge the canal with a superfluity of business. It is admitted on all hands that the Erie Canal, however much enlarged or improved, can never do half the work required of it. Buffalo has, and ever will have, enough of trade, and to spare.

In sparing us some of its trade, it would be well if it would spare us some of its energy. While the Americans, aware of the incapacity of the Erie Canal to meet the demands of commerce, press forward with undertakings of the most arduous and costly character, involving enormous outlay and immense labour, not to compete with this canal, but to receive the overflowings of its trade, we stand supinely by, and, with the work already three parts done to our hand, with the power, at the cost of a trifling additional effort, of assuring to our waters for ever, the preference and the precedence in the carrying trade of this section of the American continent, permit the golden opportunity to escape us irrecoverably, and abandon that which nature and reason identify as our own, to the superior enterprise and intelligence of neighbours whom, in this instance, it would be the height of self-adulation to style “rivals.”

It may be instructive to enumerate here some of the public works completed, or actually in progress, in the State of New York alone, with a view to a participation in the profits of the immense trade of the West. We may take, as the most remote and first in order, the New York and Erie Railroad, extending from Dunkirk, a port on Lake Erie, to the River Hudson at Piermont, which, connected by steamboats, crosses the river at that point and descends the east bank to the city of New York. Then we have the great Erie Canal extending

from Buffalo to Albany, a distance of 363 miles, and side by side for a great part of the way the Erie and Hudson Railroad, which again is connected by various branches with Rochester and Oswego, on Lake Ontario. We have, moreover, a projected connection with the same main trunk from Cape Vincent to Rome; and, lower down on the St. Lawrence, a still more ominous undertaking, the Ogdensburg Railroad, which, departing from the river at the town of that name, will terminate at Plattsburg or some other, as yet undecided, point on the waters of Lake Champlain.

All these lines of communication, so far as they intercept any portion of the descending trade of the west, are competitors with the lines of the St. Lawrence, the rivals of our noble canals and of all railroads projected or in progress to connect the Province of Canada below Prescott with the States of the Union.

It would be monstrous to suppose that this state of things can be permitted to continue or that we, who have ventured so much to secure a fair proportion of this trade, should halt and hesitate at the most critical moment, when the object for which such and so many sacrifices have been made is on the point of attainment, and when it requires but one effort more, and that effort, with reference to the past, inconsiderable, to secure and retain it.

We must redress the balance in this matter. The inducements which have diverted our trade may be counteracted by other and still stronger inducements. Facilities of one description may be outweighed by facilities of another description. The readiness and rapidity and certainty of the railroad may be more than counterbalanced, in the matter of freight traffic, by the equal certainty, by the economy and security of the canal; and one canal, from situation, direction, or capacity, may hold out advantages superior to another. We possess at this moment a chain of canals unrivalled for size and for admirable adaptation, so far as they go, to their intended purposes. It requires but one link to complete the chain, but that link is the *golden* link, which will convert doubt into certainty, render assurance doubly sure, and transmute a project, magnificent in design, but of ambiguous augury, into an unfailing source of revenue to the province, and of prosperity to our population.

To complete the chain of the St. Lawrence Canals, and to realize all and even more than has hitherto been expected from

them, we have yet before us the one great master project, which, at this critical moment in our trade and progress, should be the first and the last object before the eyes of our Legislature and Government. We must connect the waters of the St. Lawrence with those of Lake Champlain by canal. Other and great projects may demand our attention, but we consider each and all subordinate to this. An uninterrupted communication by water, whether by river or canal, or both, offers at all times for the conveyance of masses of freight, advantages unequalled by any other mode of conveyance. In cheapness and convenience, in the protection of cargo from weather, in reduction of charges arising from transshipment, from handling and cartage, in diminution of damage and the expenses of cooerage, the safe hold of a tight craft must ever command the preference of the shipper and the merchant. Certainty is more than an equivalent for speed; except at particular times or seasons of rare occurrence, speed in the conveyance of produce is of secondary consequence, and, even then, what is gained in time may be lost in charges, for the tolls of a railroad must keep pace with the "wear and tear," and the real profits of railroads are derived from other sources than the conveyance of heavy freight. But it so occurs that even in the conveyance of the lighter and bulkier articles of commercial exchange, the canal boat and the schooner, from superior economy of management and consequent inferiority of charge, can afford to compete with the railroad at a rate so low as to more than counterbalance the advantages of speed.

In the excellent article from the *Economist*, referred to in the commencement of this chapter, it is enunciated as a fact "that the produce of Western Canada, and of the northern parts of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, must find an outlet either by the way of the Erie Canal or of the St. Lawrence to the Ocean," to which we have added, that, so long as the St. Lawrence flows to the sea, so long will the tide of commerce go with it; so long at least as we do not obstruct the channel by navigation laws which, under present circumstances, are unjust, or by protective restrictions, which are stupid.

That the position of the St. Lawrence must, during the season of navigation, command for it unrivalled advantages, cannot be doubted. Upon an equal footing, and inspired by a like energy, there is nothing to prevent the Canadas, from competing with the United States, and competing with advantage in "the market of the world". But this is not all. By improving without delay existing communications, by the instant excava-

tion of a canal connecting the waters of the St. Lawrence with the waters of Lake Champlain, and by a judicious system of railroads, sanctioned and supported by our legislature, not only shall we command the transport by sea, but we may compete successfully with the Erie Canal, and with ease retain a large share of the internal traffic of the American Continent.

So far as the trade of the West supplies the home consumption of the Atlantic sea-board, or contributes to the exportation of Portland and Boston and New York, or provides the whalers of Salem and Nantucket and New Bedford, or feeds the fisheries of our fellow colonists of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, so far may that trade be conveyed through our waters, to the benefit of our canals, to the profit of our people, to the gain of the consumer, and to the increase of the trade itself, upon terms even more advantageous to all parties than any that can be held out by the Erie Canal.

By connecting the waters of the St. Lawrence with the waters of Lake Champlain, we shall centralize that portion of the Western trade which is directed to Boston and New York in that magnificent lake. Instead of awaiting despatch in the replete docks of Buffalo, or dragging its slow length through 363 miles of canal and 83 locks, to Albany, the surplus commerce of the West, freighted in vessels of large size, conveying 3500 barrels of flour or equivalent to the same, will pour through the Welland Canal, traverse Lake Ontario, descend the St. Lawrence, and, through our canals, reach Burlington and Whitehall without delay or interruption, and without transshipment or "breaking of bulk".

To show the operation and effect of these advantages, suppose two schooners or propellers leave Chicago freighted each with with 3500 barrels of flour, destined for the "market of the world," *viâ* Boston or New York; the one to tranship its cargo at Buffalo, the other to deposit at Burlington or Whitehall. It is but fair to suppose that both depart and each arrives at or about Buffalo at the same time. We will not pause to inquire whether the one enters the Port of Buffalo without difficulty or damage, or whether the other reaches Port Colborne with perfect ease and safety. But we will discharge the cargo of the first as soon as space is found to receive it, or canal boats to transport it, or the over busied and over worked consignee can find time to give it despatch. The cargo of 3500 barrels has to be transhipped into five, or perhaps six, canal boats, exposed the while to the elements, to damage and cost, and when at length it takes up its line of march, or rather line of float, it hitches on

to the tail of an endless flotilla, which proceeds at a certain slow and measured rate, and which, if not unexpectedly retarded by a breach in the canal, or a lock in repair, or in disrepair, or a sunken predecessor in the line, or any other disagreeable accident, will reach Albany in the course of ten or twelve days, to be again transferred, subject to the same inconvenience and drawback, either to lighters for New York, or the rail-cars for Boston. Thus after having undergone three transshipments, the charges and depreciation resulting therefrom being somewhat arbitrary and difficult to estimate, each barrel of flour will arrive at its destination, costing, from Cleveland in Ohio, to New York, (we take the calculation of Mr. Galt, of St. Lawrence and Atlantic Rail-Road Company,) six shillings and one penny, (6s. 1d.) or to Boston, seven shillings and one penny, (7s. 1d.)

And now let us trace the course and the results of the other vessel. She proceeds at once through the Welland Canal, crosses Lake Ontario, with a flowing sail and a descending current, hurries down the contracted stream and still more rapid current of the St. Lawrence, passes through the canals, if the enterprising fellow who commands her does not give half the canals the "go by" by shooting the rapids, and gliding through the projected canal into Lake Champlain, with scarce a lock to detain her, finds herself at Burlington, the cars greedy for her cargo, or at Whitehall, ready to tranship for New York. Before long, however, the capacity of the Whitehall and Hudson Canal will be enlarged to that of those in Canada, and then the cargo from Chicago may proceed direct to New York, without "breaking bulk or transhipment". Taking Mr. Galt's data as a basis, we estimate the cost of a barrel of flour conveyed by this route, exclusive of transhipment, to equal 5s. 7½d. to Boston, and 4s. 7½d. to New York.

The most conclusive argument, after all, is that which is reducible to pounds shillings and pence. If we are correct in our estimate, it is unanswerable, and we do not think we can be far wrong. The consumer will always buy his food in the cheapest market, and convey it by the cheapest conveyances, provided always that, *ceteris paribus*, it is safest. Construct this canal and we shall attract the trade and receive the revenue thereof. We shall attract a trade to which this canal can alone hold out an inducement, which, without this canal, would never approach nearer than Buffalo, or perhaps Ogdensburgh, which must augment vastly the revenue of this Province, enrich the section of country through which it passes, make the great St. Lawrence the purveyor and provider of mankind,

and Montreal an emporium whence, at no remote period, by the introduction of a comprehensive and judicious system of railways, the merchant may choose his market and dispense his stores as best suited to the wants and wishes of his fellow-creatures.

Commanding, as we do, from the position we occupy, naturally and without an effort, the trade of the St. Lawrence, we have it equally in our power to share and more than share in all the advantages derived by our American "rivals" from their artificial communications. But to effect this we must, although *haud pari passu*, endeavour to keep pace with them. Public attention must be called energetically, and at once, to the improvement and completion of internal communications. The impending session of the Legislature must not be permitted to pass over without decisive action and some sufficient guaranties in this matter. What this action ought to be, and what the nature of the guarantee, will be referred to, at length, in the two following chapters. In the first we shall invite attention to the selection of a proper site for the proposed canal; in the second to a system of railways operating in connection with our canals, the interest on the cost of construction to be guaranteed by the Province. In concluding this chapter, we may be permitted to say, that it is with some hesitation we have entered upon the discussion of subjects with which we are not professionally familiar, but that we have assumed the responsibility partly from a conviction of the necessity of agitating without delay, partly from the belief that the public discussion of these matters, even to the refutation of our imperfect arguments, can not be other than beneficial at this particular moment, and partly from the hope that others equally interested in the result, but more conversant with details, and better cognizant of facts, may be led to assist in this labour, if only by correcting our errors and supplying our deficiencies.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

MONTREAL AND BURLINGTON.

ONE of the most important branches of the subject, relative to the proposed connexion between the waters of the St. Lawrence and the waters of Lake Champlain, is the trade of the Ottawa, and the new outlet, and as yet unknown markets which the construction of this canal must open up to that trade. It is hardly correct perhaps to say "unknown", as it is a well known fact that, during the last summer, rafts of timber, the produce of the Ottawa, have been purchased, and conveyed from the back of Isle Jesus, in the rear of Montreal, to Sorel, and then towed up the Richelieu by a slow and expensive process to St. Johns, and from thence transmitted to the market of New York at prices highly remunerative to the enterprising merchant.

It is unnecessary to dilate upon the immense amount of lumber and sawn timber required in the Atlantic States of the Union, both for home consumption and for exportation, or to the increased price of this article in those markets. It is almost equally unnecessary to advert to the importance of a choice of markets as enhancing the value of the commodity, as encouraging the increase of the trade, and as relieving it from the uncertainty and fluctuations which must always result from an exclusive dependance upon one. With the sure alternative of Quebec in view, the lumber merchant may, from the vicinity of Montreal, determine his selection, and according to the state of the market, either continue his route to the port of original destination, or transfer the whole or a portion of his valuable cargo to the markets of New York and Boston, by the way of the canal. And it may be as well to keep in mind that as the greater part of such exports, both from the demand of the trade and for the convenience of conveyance, will consist in deals and other sawn timber, this new outlet to our commerce will not only increase the consumption of the raw material, but still more that of the manufactured article.

We shall have occasion hereafter, with reference to another though congenial subject, to enlarge upon the importance of

the Ottawa trade and its resources, and to repeat what has been so often affirmed as to the interest the inhabitants of Montreal have in fostering and in developing those resources. Enough has been said here to show that in deciding upon the precise line and direction of the contemplated canal, its inlet and its outlet, and its facility of communication with the waters it unites, the decision should be based upon a thorough consideration of the exigencies and convenience of that trade, and that every reasonable sacrifice should be made to facilitate and promote it.

Her Majesty's Government has undertaken a survey of the line of country through which this projected canal is expected to pass. This survey is now in progress. The discussion, therefore, of possible or probable lines of direction, in anticipation of the report of survey, may appear to be premature, if not useless, were it not that in drawing up this statement, at this particular moment, our chief object has been, to call public attention to the matter before the meeting of the Legislature, and to make it a subject of public comment and enquiry with the least possible delay. We do not conceive that any thing that can be said here will influence or prejudice the practical decision of this subject, nor do we in the slightest degree wish it. We are in no way wedded to our present views of the matter. We have no prejudices to gratify, no personal interest to subserve. Our sole object is to promote the general good in the most comprehensive way. We are further impressed with the conviction that "now is the time"; that the postponement of a decision, even for one session of the Legislative, will give our active and better provided "rivals" a start which it may never be in our power to retrieve, and that delay will, at this critical conjuncture, be as irreparable as it is irrevocable.

In the discussion of a matter of great and general concernment, but dependent at the same time upon public favor, it is of importance to divest it of all appearance of local or minor consideration. We must regard the subject upon the broad and comprehensive basis of the most general public advantage. A proceeding evidently just, and liberal, and void of all exclusive pretension, entails public sympathy and commands public support. In looking to interests of a more local character, we must hold in mind, that every public good is a private advantage, and remain satisfied with those indirect and often more valuable results which a fortunate conjunction of circumstances frequently confers, with accidental partiality, on particular localities. As citizens of Montreal, and proprietors, we may naturally desire

that a canal, such as projected, should be so located as to confer the greatest possible advantage on the City of Montreal. If, with equal advantage to the public, if with equal and evident attraction to the trade, if with like expense, or even an increased expense, not incommensurate with the benefit to be derived, we can make Montreal the thoroughfare of a novel and increasing commerce, let it be done, make every possible effort to attain it. But at the same time, let us be careful lest an ill-judged predilection for particular interests does not indispose the public mind towards the project itself, or even divest the project of a part of its utility. It would be wretched policy in us to provoke hostility by selfish greed, or to prepare costly allurements for commerce, which may prove ultimately to be no allurements at all.

With these preliminary observations, we will proceed to the consideration of three lines which present themselves as offering facilities for the construction of the proposed canal. The first may be described as a line commencing at or near the Indian village of Caughnawaga, nearly opposite to Lachine and running in a southerly direction, to some point at or near the embouchure of the Lacolle River, on the Canadian side of Rouse's Point. The distance may be stated at from thirty to thirty-five miles. The country is level, and apparently practicable for excavation, while it is presumed that the waters of the Chateauguay and English River might be easily employed as feeders. The lockage would be small: it is supposed that two locks of about fifteen feet lift would be sufficient. The entrances might be rendered convenient and accessible at all seasons. These advantages, however, it is affirmed, are more than counterbalanced by physical obstacles, involving great labour and heavy expenses,—facts which remain to be confirmed by the report of a competent Engineer.

The second line, projected to obviate the engineering difficulties presumed to exist upon the first, is a line which, commencing at or about the same point, the village of Caughnawaga, and following the descending stream of the St. Lawrence for some distance, parallel or nearly parallel to the river, diverges at or near LaTortue, crosses the St. Johns Railroad, and intersecting the Peninsula of the Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers, falls into the former at a point where it forms part of the Chambly Canal, at or about Isle Ste. Thérèse, some six or seven miles below the town of St. Johns.

Of these two lines of direction, if equally practicable, the preference will without doubt be assigned to the first. It offers to

the peculiar trade of the Ottawa the greatest convenience and facility, while to the American trade of the West, it holds out the attraction of the most direct and shortest access to Lake Champlain.

But there is a third line, which, if equally practicable, if not more expensive, or likely to increase the charges of transit and thereby diminish the trade, is not unworthy of public consideration. This is a line of ship canal, starting from a point opposite to the City of Montreal, on the St. Lawrence, (say above or about Moffatt's Island,) and, striking through the level country of Longueuil, to unite with the Chambly Canal above the locks connecting the Chambly Canal with the Chambly Basin, and thence by enlarging the Chambly Canal to an equal capacity with the St. Lawrence Canals, to meet the waters of the Richelieu by way of Isle Ste. Thérèse and St. Johns.

It is believed that by constructing a dyke or pier into the St. Lawrence, in connection with Moffatt's Island, a well protected entrance to the canal may be secured with a sufficient depth of water, while this very dyke or pier, substantially built, might be employed as the point of departure for the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, or any other railroads or road which may at any future period radiate from that point towards the United States. One or more steamers, which might serve at once as tug or ferry boats, would easily connect this pier or dyke with the wharves of Montreal.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the advantages which the adoption of this project offers to the commerce and prosperity of Montreal. This city would become a great central entrepot of the food of mankind—a purveyor to the world—from whence, either by the outlet of its own noble river, or by the ports of the Atlantic sea-board, the stream of plenty would flow forth, a well graduated fountain of supply, and not a hurried or intermittent flood, ruinous to the merchant and uncertain to the consumer.

Having said thus much, we have said enough. Enough at least to call public attention to the matter, if the matter really is worthy of public consideration. But we have not yet done. We ask those whose interest in the subject has led them to follow us thus far, to extend to us the same indulgence in reference to a subject of equal interest and collateral character: namely, a system of railroad which, taken in conjunction with the proposed canal, can not fail to operate extensively to the benefit of the country at large, and to the aggrandizement of this city.

The first feature in this system should be a line of short and direct communication with the United States ; the second a line connecting Montreal with the waters of the St. Lawrence at or about Prescott. The first, by intersecting existing lines of road or of roads in active progress, would place Montreal in communication with the great sea-ports of Boston and New-York, at some central point from whence either would be equally accessible. The second, in combination with the projected canal, would render Montreal the thoroughfare both of the freight traffic and the passenger traffic of Western Canada, and, to a great extent, of the Western States.

The first is already reduced to a question of time. At no very remote period the connection with the Atlantic sea-board will be attained by the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, but a communication of a shorter and speedier description advances daily into more inviting proximity. Two great lines of railroad, originating each at Boston, converge at this moment upon Burlington in Vermont ; the one known as the Grand Central, the other as the Rutland line. The latter connects with the Saratoga and Whitehall Railroad and, by way of Albany, with New York. On reaching Burlington, it is contemplated that these two lines will unite in one grand trunk communication, extending to Swanton, within a short distance of the Province line, with the further intention of uniting with the Ogdensburg line of railroad, so soon as the right of bridging Lake Champlain can be obtained from the authorities who control that right. In the interim these parties look to Montreal and its capitalists for a connection which must prove of mutual and immediate benefit, by rendering this extension to Swanton a paying concern on its completion, without being altogether dependent on its connection with the Ogdensburg line, and by extending to the connecting lines of Montreal, and to our steam-boats on the St. Lawrence, or to any lines of railroad hereafter to be constructed westward through the Canadian territory, the conveyance of all traffic westward from the centre of Burlington.

It is to be hoped that the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain Railroad Company will not lose sight of a project, which, by an extension of about thirty miles through a country singularly practicable, will connect an existing and most remunerative line directly with the United States, with certain advantage to the company and to this community. If it be finally decided that the projected canal to Lake Champlain should commence opposite to Montreal, it will become the interest of this company

to transfer the present terminus at Laprairie to the same locality, and, perhaps, at no very distant period, realize the idea that the works necessary to form an artificial embouchure to the canal, may be employed as the point of departure for different railroads, and, as experience has established in England, enable canal and railroad to act and react upon each other to the reciprocal profit and advantage of both.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE ST. LAWRENCE AND THE OTTAWA.

HAVING, thus far, endeavoured to point out, as the first feature in a system or schemes of railroads, one that should connect the Province of Canada with the great American cities of the Atlantic sea-board, with the least circuit or delay, let us now turn to another feature in such a scheme, a feature of equal importance to the Province and of still greater importance to the metropolis of Canada. We allude to a line of railroad communication from Montreal upwards to Prescott on the St. Lawrence.

So far as this subject has elicited any expression of opinion, that opinion appears to indicate a preference of a line of route, following the course of and running almost parallel to the St. Lawrence, as the most feasible and desirable; laboring, however, under the evident disadvantage of competition both with the St. Lawrence and the canal. We would suggest another and a very different route, presenting, as we imagine, a combination of more extensive advantage, of greater facility, and of equal, if not lesser, expense. We would propose a line of railroad, to commence at the Lachine terminus of the Montreal and Lachine Railroad, to cross the Island of Montreal and the Isle Jesus to St. Eustache, then ascend the course of the Riviere du Chêne to St. Andrews, and from St. Andrews to Grenville Basin, a distance altogether, as a railroad would run, of about 55 miles. It may be as well to mention here, that a charter actually exists for the construction of a railroad from St. Andrews to Grenville, that a line has been run, and other preliminary proceedings taken. At Grenville, the Ottawa presents many and remarkable facilities for bridging. At this point the railroad might be conveyed across the river, at or about the Hawkesbury mills, striking through the Ottawa, Eastern, and Johnstown Districts of Canada West, through the Townships of Hawkesbury or Caledonia, through Roxborough and Finch and Winchester and Mountain, through Matilda or Edwardsburg to Prescott. This line of country, from the Ottawa to the St. Lawrence, is stated, upon very reliable information, to be singularly level, and pecu-

liarily adapted to railroad operations. The facilities which this line of country offers, suggested, many years since, the idea of a canal to connect the waters of the St. Lawrence with those of the Ottawa, from Prescott to below the Carillon Rapids. This line was surveyed and reported upon; it was invested not only with "a local habitation" but "a name". It was designated as the "Petite Nation" Canal, and the length is stated as fifty miles. The inference is, that a line of country adapted to a canal, can offer no great obstacles to the construction of a railroad.

From the imperfect statistics at our disposal, on a short notice, it is difficult to ascertain what amount of intermediate transport this section of country may be expected to furnish. We look for information and assistance in these important details to those resident and interested in the locality; but we know that many of the above enumerated townships, through most of which the road will most probably run, are rich, fertile, highly cultivated and productive. A railroad running through the heart of a country derives supplies from both sides; it is more beneficial and more likely to be benefitted than one which, flanked by a river, is restricted to unilateral operations. But at Prescott this railroad would arrest and bring down to Montreal so much of the traffic of the West, both passenger and freight, as might not already have been embarked on our canal, or have been attracted by the rival line of railroad at Ogdensburg. This Ogdensburg railroad, recollect, is not yet *un fait accompli*. It has been undertaken with an intelligent foresight, an energy and enterprise highly honorable to its projectors, but it has yet to be *constructed*. A railroad such as this is not to be built in a day. It involves immense labour, enormous expenses; it takes a tortuous and protracted course through a mountainous and most difficult country; it offers little or no intermediate transportation, and in length equals at least the whole of the present suggested line from Prescott to Grenville, and from Grenville to Montreal. And yet, with all the disadvantages on their side, and the advantages on ours, how little has been done by us and how much by them.

In contrasting the merits of the two lines of communication from Montreal to Prescott, by the St. Lawrence, or by the Ottawa, it may be as well to take into consideration first the question of distance. The distance from Montreal to Prescott by the St. Lawrence is 130 miles; the distance from Montreal to Prescott, *viâ* the Ottawa, is not more. This assertion is made in the absence of all exact survey, but with every wish to

approach exactitude, and will be better understood by referring to a good map, and by noting the course of the Ottawa in reference to that of the St. Lawrence. The "bridging" and expenses contingent on the same may be calculated at about equal.

Thus much for comparative distances. In facility of construction it is unrivalled. From Lachine to St. Eustache the country is a dead flat, and the passages of the Ottawa easy, and may be rendered still more so by the selection of points where the river is either narrowed in its course or intersected by rocks and islands. From St. Eustache to St. Andrews, by following the course of the Riviere du Chêne, the gradient will be one of very trifling inclination. This is affirmed from personal observation and from the best corroborative statements. From St. Andrews to Grenville it is a level, or nearly so. From Hawkesbury on the Ottawa to the St. Lawrence it is affirmed, as before stated, that the country is singularly level, and peculiarly adapted to railroad operations.

With regard to the amount or extent of intermediate transportation, it may be as well to observe that whereas fifty-five miles of railroad extending in the direction of Prescott by the St. Lawrence, would most probably terminate in an open field some twenty miles or so below Cornwall, and whereas it is very clear that the road must be completed throughout to Prescott before it could either compete or co-operate advantageously with river and canal, the same extent of railroad by way of the Ottawa would terminate at Grenville, from whence Bytown may be now reached by uninterrupted steam navigation in the space of from three to four hours. Commanding the route to Grenville we should for ever command the trade of an immense section of country, of unknown and inexhaustible resources, the progress and improvement of which has been thus far retarded by an indifference to its claims, and by a disregard of interests which are peculiarly those of Montreal. We owe reparation both to it and to ourselves, and trust that the opportunity of doing it justice and ourselves an inestimable benefit will not be lost for want of an effort. There is not on this Continent a line of road which offers greater opportunities of gradual completion by sections, of which each section, as completed, will not only promote the progress of a great and general design, but will possess within itself sufficient resources to repay the investment.

It is not at all necessary that parties engaged in this enterprise should prosecute it at once from Grenville to Lachine. The Grenville and Carillon section might be completed at once,

and would pay on completion. It would be as easy, and perhaps more expedient, to commence another section at Lachine, and extend from that point to the Riviere du Chêne, and at a subsequent and more convenient period, complete the connection by the intermediate link from St. Eustache to St. Andrews. The distance from Lachine to St. Eustache is not supposed to exceed 16 miles—it is called 20 from Montreal. At St. Eustache, the railroad would attract all the internal traffic, the natural route of which towards Montreal is through that village, and which between that village and Montreal has to encounter bad and, at this season of the year, impassable roads, the ascent of the Montreal mountain, two toll bridges or ferries, and one turnpike. The farmer could bring a heavy load from the North River or the Gore to St. Eustache, transfer it to the rail-cars, and proceed himself to Montreal, dispose of his produce, realize the proceeds, and be home again in less time than in the present state of the communication he could expect to reach Montreal.

The scarcity and the uncertainty of the supply of the Montreal markets at this particular season is always a cause of suffering and complaint. This year it has weighed grievously on the poor, and has been severely felt by every class of householders. The cost of food is doubled in Montreal, simultaneously with the cost of fuel, until "the river takes". During the interval that elapses between the close of the navigation and the freezing of the St. Lawrence, we are dependent for the necessaries of life either on the stores in hand, or on the imperfect and inadequate resources of the Island of Montreal. The state of the roads, impracticable or nearly so at this season, contracts still more the limits of this circle. Supplies are doled out to us with the deliberation or the indifference of the monopolist, who can command his times and his prices. We must remedy this defect, we must place ourselves beyond the vicissitudes of a scanty or arbitrary supply. If Montreal is to become a great and populous city, we must have cheap food at all seasons, and abundance of it.

By a railroad to St. Andrews, we shall receive equable and sufficient supplies to our market at any season of the year. Up to the present time of writing, the beginning of February, rail cars from that point might have reached Montreal daily without interruption. We believe that in this section of country a railroad could operate throughout the winter with but slight or very temporary hindrance, and no one will doubt what effect a daily intercourse with the substantial farmer of the Counties of Two

Mountains and Ottawa would have upon the inhabitants of Montreal. Nor is it essential to this result that such a railroad should actually reach St. Andrews. Every step in that direction will be an invitation and an encouragement. The supplies of that section will meet our advances more than half way. So soon as the railroad reaches St. Eustache, so soon will both the stockholders and the citizens of Montreal experience the benefits of its operation; benefits which will increase and multiply with the progress of the undertaking.

No thinking man with data such as these before him—data which, however imperfect or incomplete, are full of promise and reasonable hope,—will doubt of the expediency of this undertaking; an undertaking which, so far as the City of Montreal is concerned, should be looked upon not so much as a question of expediency, not so much in the light of a speculation, as a matter of positive necessity. But there is no man resident within this most populous section of Canada East to whom this project does not hold out the most evident, undeniable and immediate advantages. To the farmer it secures constant demand; to the citizen unfailing supply; to the capitalist prompt and undoubted returns. Let the matter be but fairly stated, without exaggeration or extenuation, let the attention of the public be, but once, thoroughly aroused to the real importance of the subject, and we may appeal with confidence to its support. It is not to the capitalist alone that we are to look for assistance. The monied man, practised and “wide awake” requires neither inducement nor suggestion. He understands his own interest, Let the investment be but profitable and we shall find him *there*, nothing loath. We look to the farmer, the sturdy “old country” settler, who has chopped and cleared his way to competence, whose earnings, small but steadily acquired, await secure investment. To this man we look with confidence; his shrewd sense will teach him that no more advantageous investment can be found than the employment of his money in the construction of a railroad almost to his own door, which, while it ensures him interest at the rate of seven or eight per cent, will double the value of his property, his produce and his labour. And we rely equally on the French Canadian farmer, the wealthy and intelligent *habitant*, to whom a want of enterprise and confidence has been imputed, with an equal lack of generosity and justice. Of confidence he has naturally only too much; in his particular line he lacks neither enterprise nor energy, but the ways of the rail are, as yet, not his ways; if we have preceded him in this matter, it

is our good fortune, not his blame; what experience has taught us, experience will impress upon him; he may look timidly at first upon a costly project disagreeably suggestive of other and still more specious failures, but he will see as we saw, and he will be convinced as we were convinced, not one whit more slowly or more cautiously, and once convinced he will embark in undertakings of this nature with as much alacrity and courage as any other constituent of the population of Canada.

But to inspire confidence among all classes of men, and every variety of race, requires something more than individual exertion. The motive of an individual may be misunderstood or misrepresented. The most disinterested zeal differs not in appearance from the eagerness of selfish interest. The man may mar the cause, "*non specie tantum sed opprobrio quoque.*" It is to the representatives of the people in their respective categories; it is to those who have acquired and who enjoy a legitimate influence, whose influence has been endorsed by the suffrages of their fellow citizens, that we must look for the most beneficial exercise of that influence,—in social intercourse, in conversation, by personal explanation and exhortation, the man who feels strongly, impresses deeply. We turn to the Members of the Legislative in their individual capacity, in their several spheres and localities, as the best and most efficient propagandists of improvement; we rely upon their exertions and upon their support, and feel assured that in this reliance we shall not be disappointed.

But it is upon the Legislature itself that all eyes turn at this juncture. Newly elected and full of promise, it cannot be for one moment doubted but that all projects of public improvement and advance, all measures of general and comprehensive utility, more especially railroads and canals, will receive earnest attention and warm encouragement. It is in the power of Parliament to give an impulse to Canadian enterprise and Canadian prosperity; to give it, at the same time, such a direction and tendency as will secure it alike from depression or change, or competition. It may place us, at once, not only above rivalry, but in a position inaccessible to rivalry; it may secure to the commerce of this country immense and permanent advantages, not by invidious and irritating legislation, not by pandering to the mean instincts of our nature, not by devising distinctions and differences and disabilities, but by asserting the superiority which nature has conferred upon us, and by employing that superiority for the benefit of mankind. It is in the

power of our Legislature, at this peculiar crisis, by the judicious encouragement of local undertakings, based upon a well designed and well matured system, to make this Province the highway to the West. Do but hold out to capital and enterprise every legitimate inducement, and we shall, ere long, see grow up a complete line of canal communication connecting the waters of the Ocean with the waters of the Lakes, we shall see grow up a continuous railroad communication, connecting the St. Lawrence with the Ottawa, the Ottawa with Montreal, and Montreal with the World. Canada will monopolize the travel and the traffic of the West upon the catholic basis of economy, convenience, and speed, and she will exercise that monopoly with universal acquiescence and approval.

What the nature and measure of the inducement ought to be may vary with circumstances. We have no lack of examples or precedents. Without going to the East or West Indies, to the Island of Trinidad, or Ceylon, or to the Colony of Demarara, we find in our sister Colonies of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick new and familiar instances of wise and fostering legislation. The great St. Andrews and Fredricton railway, the first skein in that web of communication, which will, at no remote period, connect the British Provinces with each other, and with Europe, has obtained the necessary capital, without difficulty or hesitation, on the guarantee of the Province of five per centum, per annum, on the amount of capital invested in the enterprise. The certainty of five per cent, the character of the security, and the contingency of six or eight per cent. have overcome all scruples and will surmount every obstacle. The application of like principles here will ensure like results. Let the Legislature of this Province but guarantee like interest on the capital invested in such enterprises as the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain Canal, the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Grand Junction Railway, the St. Lawrence and Atlantic, and the Great Western Railroad, all grand trunk lines of road, of general interest and benefit to the Province at large, and the means of prosecuting these great works will be forthcoming. We claim no assistance for the line connecting the St. Lawrence opposite to Montreal, with Swanton, in Vermont; first, because we do not view it as an enterprise of Provincial interest, and, secondly, because we look upon its construction inevitable on the completion of the canal and the Vermont Railroads, either by the existing company to St. Johns, or by others who watch and await their decision; but we claim the Provincial guarantee to the projects above named, with perfect confidence that the effects of that

guarantee will be such as to render the guarantee itself a mere work of supererogation.

But we demand something more from our Provincial Legislative. We demand the abandonment and repeal of those restrictive principles in railway legislation—principles equally unjust, impolitic, and fallacious—which have dictated the limitation of railway profits. We can hardly imagine a greater absurdity, a more glaring anomaly in the Legislation of a new country, deficient in means, rich in resources, and covetous of the means to develop those resources, than enactments, which blow hot and blow cold, which invite and repel, which court the assistance of the capitalist in the spirit of the hawker who puffs his wares, and, at the same time, drives a hard bargain. It has the effect too of all hard bargains; it deters custom, it provokes retaliation, it encourages cheater. It is a matter of notoriety, all the world over, that the attempted limitation of railway profits is of none effect. It is eluded openly, and the evasion, an act of public immorality, is greeted, on all hands, with the chuckle of public approbation. Why, therefore, this Legislative provocative to sin? Why persist in enactments unjust in principle, immoral in tendency, and impotent in purpose? If the St. Lawrence and Lake Champlain Railroad Company could legally declare a dividend of twenty per cent., or the Montreal and Lachine Railroad Company a dividend of fifteen, we should soon dispense with the necessity and the humiliation of running after capital. Capital would run after us. The “delicate attentions” would be all the other way. Canadian stocks would be at a high premium, and our money market pant under a plethora of ingots and doubloons. We do most earnestly hope that Provincial enterprise will be ridded forthwith of this hamper and encumbrance. We in no way object to a wholesome governmental supervision of railway tariffs, of tolls and charges. We object not to the reservation of right to the public to take possession of any railroad, on certain specified and equitable conditions; but we protest against restrictions. Let us have free trade and unlimited profits.

Thus much for our triple project. It consists of three designs, all conducive to the same object. The first, being a canal connecting the waters of the St. Lawrence with the waters of Lake Champlain; the second, a railroad connecting Montreal with Swanton and Burlington, Boston and New-York; the third, but second in importance and equal in public utility with the canal, a railroad connecting the upper waters of the Saint

Lawrence with the waters of the Ottawa, and the waters of the Ottawa with Montreal. We have called it a triple project, because although each feature in the triplet may be entertained and acted upon independently, the combination of the three will secure to this Province the following great and enduring advantages :—

It will give to our waters, to our canals, to our communications, the transport of a vast amount of the freight traffic of the west, an amount which has been aptly called “ the lion’s share;”

It will augment in proportion the tolls on our canals, and the revenues of the Province ;

It will cheapen the cost of descending freight, and enable those who bring down cheaply to take back cheaply. It will put economy in competition with speed, and will place the Canadian canal on a fair footing of advantageous rivalry with the American railroad ;

At all points of contact in the Canadian territory, it will give increased intercourse, and create increased wants, demands and consumption ;

It will transfer to our railroads a large proportion of the passage traffic from the United States to the west :

It will afford a new outlet to the trade of the Ottawa ;

It will impart fresh vigor to that trade by increasing its certainty, and giving to it a choice of markets ;

It will make Montreal a thoroughfare and an emporium ; a thoroughfare of commerce and commercial travel, and a depot capable of supplying all markets, at any notice and to any extent ;

It will secure to this metropolis cheap and well regulated supplies at all seasons ;

It will give a fresh and permanent impulse to the activity and energy, the progress and prosperity of Canada.

We expect all this from the newly convened Parliament ;— We repeat our conviction that the guarantee demanded, if applied with prudence and judgment, will ultimately prove to have been superfluous and unnecessary. It will have proved most valuable as a security and an incentive, as inspiring the capitalist, both indigenous and foreign, with confidence and courage. The Legislature may lend us its name without fear of dishonour. We shall not fail to meet these engagements. It will have indorsed our securities, it will have imparted cur-

rency to our credit without the risque or even the apprehension of real responsibility. But if from unforeseen or unimaginable obstacles, or from untoward or uncontrollable circumstances, the Legislature should withhold the guarantee, let us not lose heart or countenance. Let us not relax nor desist, nor rest satisfied with the indolent commentary "where is the money to come from". The money, assuredly, will not be found if it is not sought; let us endeavour to find it, or, at the least, put ourselves in a position to employ it if it is to be found. Let us get from the Legislature all that it is competent or inclined to give. Let us get intelligent legislation, based on broad and attractive principles. Hold out to the stockholder every inducement consistent with the public security. But while Parliament "gives all it can", it will never do for us to play the voluptuous sluggard and "dream the rest". The first railroad undertaken by the Bostonians encountered still greater difficulties and surmounted heavier discouragement. That same railroad now returns a steady income of eight per cent.

"Aide toi et Dieu t'aidera." Let us cease from calling upon Hercules, and grapple with the churlish god. To complete works of the contemplated magnitude would unquestionably require a large expenditure of capital. But the canal is a work which will most probably be assumed by the Province. The railroad between the St. Lawrence, the Ottawa, and Montreal, appeals strongly to the interest and common sense of the native capitalist. The return will be immediate, the expenditure will spread over a number of years. It holds out remarkable facilities for completion by sections, of which each section as completed, will pay. The calls upon the stockholders will be graduated by circumstances; they will of no necessity be heavy or hurried, and will in a great degree depend upon the apparent success of the undertaking, and the increasing confidence of the public.

From England we are taught to expect no assistance. We are told that her present engagements already exceed her means. Not so. For all rational and legitimate engagements she has the necessary means, and means to spare. She emerges from the fiery furnace, cleansed of the dross of mad speculation. Parties have suffered, but not the strength or the wealth of the nation. England has means even now, and will soon have more to employ in prudent investment. Capital will accumulate in despite of pressure or crisis or panic: it must find employment. It will ever be attracted by fair promise and adequate security, and amid the late monetary mishaps of mankind

we see no particular reason to question the credit or despair of the prospects of Canadian enterprise.

From Old England we turn, naturally enough, to New England. The abolition of differential restrictions, the equalization of duties in this colony, will give rise to new commercial relations with the manufacturing States of the Union. Distance and climate, freight and insurance, costs and charges considered, the manufactures and the machinery of Boston will compete extensively in Canada with those of England. A new market is opened to "Yankee notions", and American ingenuity. All that is wanted now is to render that market accessible by short, speedy, safe and cheap communications, ways of traffic and modes of conveyance which will at the same time, create and employ capital. Can we for one moment doubt that those who have invested millions in opening up devious communications with visionary markets in the remote West, who by slow but sure degrees have realized these visions, will neglect the field of enterprise presented to them almost at their own doors. Will those who have undertaken the Ogdensburg Railroad, a work of immense labour, immense expenditure, profitless in itself, and useful alone as a link of communication, be so blind to their own interests as to refuse assistance to projects which are emphatically their own, which will make the road to Boston not the mail route only, but the commercial highway to Europe, which will enable them to supply Montreal and its 60,000 inhabitants, and the dense population of Canada, with their manufactures and their imports; which will return to them, at the same time, the produce of the Ottawa and of the West; and which, in fact, to all the advantages contemplated by the Ogdensburg Railroad, will combine many more, with greater convenience, more concentration, and far less cost.

In conclusion, and in apology, we again repeat, that we have ventured upon the observations and suggestions contained in the foregoing pages in the earnest hope that our efforts, we will add even our inaccuracies, may have the effect of attracting public attention to these matters *at once*. If anything is to be done towards the promotion of these objects it is to be done *now*. This is the time and the opportunity; let it not escape us. Let us no longer palter with doubts and fears and misgivings. Let us meet and grapple with the difficulty, if any exist; determined to win the best or know the worst, Provident of the present, hopeful for the future, resolute to lose nothing by our own apathy, and mindful ever, that

In the disproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men.



