

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1836.

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1836.

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 1.

HOUSE.

Accompanying the Governor's Message.

To the Honorable Robert P. Dunlap,

Governor of the State of Maine.

IN pursuance of our appointment under a Resolve of the Legislature, passed March 10th, 1835, authorizing the appointment of "two persons to visit the City of Quebec and such other places in the Canadas, as they may think necessary in order to consult with the civil authorities, merchants and others residing therein, for the purpose of procuring a survey on their part, or any other aid towards the beginning and completion of a Rail Road from the City of Quebec to some point on our Atlantic sea-board," the undersigned in the month of July last, proceeded to the Cities of Quebec, Montreal, and several other parts of Lower Canada, for the purposes above specified.

Upon our arrival at Quebec, we presented our credentials to his Excellency the Right Honorable Lord Aylmer, at that time Governor of the Province, who received us with every mark of attention and respect; entering most cordially into the business of our mission, and manifesting a deep interest in its success. In the several interviews with which we were favored, his Excellency repeatedly

assured us of the high sense entertained by him, of the manifold advantages, the great and abiding benefits, which would obviously result to both countries, from the execution of the work contemplated by the Legislature of Maine; and would most cheerfully do all that was legitimately within his power, as Governor of the Province, to promote it. In compliance with an address from a Committee of the citizens of Quebec, his Excellency very promptly directed Captain Yule of the Royal Engineers, an officer of science and sound judgment, to make a reconnoissance of a route for the proposed Rail Road. Capt. Yule in whose opinions and judgment, the undersigned beg leave most respectfully to say, much reliance may safely be placed, proceeded with Col. Long, the American Engineer, to the high lands, and returned by a different route, to Quebec. A report of the reconnoissance made by him has been politely forwarded to the undersigned by the Secretary of the aforesaid Committee, with a request that it may be communicated to the Governor and Legislature of Maine. We take pleasure in complying with this request of a committee of a very numerous and highly respectable meeting of the citizens of Quebec, and herewith annex a copy of said report. While at Quebec the undersigned had frequent opportunities of consulting with gentlemen of the first respectability in that City, as well as in other parts of the Province, in regard to the object of our visit, with whom there seemed to be but one feeling, and one sentiment—that the work is of the first importance to Canada, as well as to Maine, and ought to be carried into execution. We had also, a formal interview with the “Board of Trade,” an association composed of the principal merchants of that City, by whom the value and importance of such a communication with the Atlantic seemed to be duly appreciated. At their suggestion a

public meeting was called at the Exchange, which was said to be one of the most numerous and respectable assemblages of citizens, which had been witnessed in Quebec. It was composed of merchants and citizens of both political parties, by whom decided and spirited resolutions were unanimously adopted. Indeed such, at that time, appeared to be the spirit of feeling of the citizens of Quebec, that we do not hesitate to say, that, at any public meeting, a vote which had in view the promotion of this undertaking, would have been unanimously adopted. Our stay at Montreal was necessarily shorter than at Quebec, and consequently, we cannot speak so decidedly, of the unanimity of feeling which prevails there, upon the subject of this communication. But from conversations with some of the most influential and respectable citizens of that large and thriving city, we entertain the belief, that a communication by Rail Road, from the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic, would be hailed with great joy, not only by the people of Montreal and Quebec, but of both the Canadas. Indeed we can hardly conceive how any rational mind could come to any other conclusion. Here are two cities, each composed of about thirty thousand inhabitants, situated upon navigable waters, which have, not improperly, been termed "inland oceans," extending fifteen hundred miles, through some of the richest, and most fertile and valuable lands on the globe. Does it require any deep research, or minute calculation, to come to the result, that *any* communication from either or both of these cities, to the broad Atlantic, which would be accessible at all seasons, would be a matter of incalculable interest to them both? We are not aware of any other place in the world, where a Rail Road of the length of the one proposed, would open a navigable internal water communication, of the same magnitude and extent. At the

the city of Quebec more than one thousand ships, many of them of the largest class, are annually loaded for foreign ports—a fact, which will not, it is hoped, be disregarded by the enterprising citizens of our own State. Another fact will not be lost sight of, when contemplating the immense benefits, consequent upon the completion of this great work.—It is, that this communication would extend into the very heart of our State,—developing in a much greater degree, our internal riches and resources, than any communication possibly could do, along the seaboard; and, although it might not, at first, be so lucrative a speculation to the stockholders, it would be vastly more interesting to the people at large, and tend manifestly, in a much greater degree to enrich the State.

The undersigned are aware, and notice the fact with some regret, that much diversity of opinion exists, both in Maine and in Canada, founded, it is feared, too much upon private interest, in regard to the termini of the proposed Rail Road. Upon this topic, we have most scrupulously forbore to give the least intimation of any wish, or opinion we may have entertained;—considering ourselves as Commissioners of the State, and not of any section or portion of it, we have deemed it our duty to avoid any thing, which could give occasion for the charge of an attempt to favor any particular point, as the terminus of the Road upon the waters of the Atlantic.

Should the Legislature of Maine, in furtherance of this great and interesting work, deem it advisable to cause a survey of any route, across this State, from the Atlantic, to the Canada line, we have no reason to doubt that said survey would be extended, by the authorities of Lower Canada, to the St. Lawrence River; and we have also every reason to believe, should a Rail Road be constructed up-

on the route so surveyed, upon our side of the line, the people of Canada would find the means of extending it to the St. Lawrence.

We have the honor to be

Most respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

ALBERT SMITH.

P. H. GREEN.

(Printed by order of the Chairman of the Committee of Citizens appointed to promote a communication by a Rail Road, between the City of Quebec and the Atlantic Ocean, through the State of Maine.)

R E P O R T

Of a Reconnoissance of the vallies of the Etchemin and Chaudiere made in August, 1835, by order of his Excellency Lord Aylmer, in compliance with an address from a committee of citizens of Quebec, appointed to promote a communication by a Railway between Quebec and the Atlantic Ocean, through the State of Maine.

The most favorable route for a Railway to the frontier, from Quebec, appears from the above reconnoissance, to pass by or near the following places: Point Levi, Saint Mary, western bank of the Chaudiere to the forks of that river; thence along the western bank of the river du Loup, to near its junction with the Portage River, then crossing to the eastern bank, and ascending to the height of land on the frontier, near the Kennebec road.—Distance about ninety three miles.

Before entering on a more detailed description of this route, it will be proper to explain a few of the terms used in the general rules by which Railways are constructed.

A single locomotive power is calculated to draw twenty times its own weight, on a plain not exceeding the height of thirty feet in one mile; other declivities are in use requiring a double or treble power. When the elevation exceeds about ninety feet in one mile, a stationary steam engine is required. In the horizontal distances no turning can be more sudden than that which is obtained from a ra-

dus of one thousand feet, without causing a deviation from the degree of velocity which it is the object of the locomotive power to preserve.

In proceeding from Point Levi the first object is the ascent to the high ground above it, being about 200 feet above the St. Lawrence.

If on any portion of the route to Maine, the application of the stationary power can be advantageous, it is here; but it appears desirable to propose as a question to persons who have had opportunities of examining Railways, whether in most cases it is not better to follow a circuitous route by the level* line, than to apply the stationary power, which causes a loss of time.

The first cost is probably the only objection to the circuitous line, but supposing the other conditions equal, such as expense of construction and time in passing the obstacle, it has this advantage, that it imparts benefit to a greater extent of country, a quality, however, scarcely applicable in the present case of Point Levi.

There appear two routes for attaining, by means of the single power, the high ground forming the general elevation of the country beyond Point Levi. One, which arising from St. Mary would come in view of the St. Lawrence, a little higher up the river than Point Levi, would keep near the top of the cliff, and passing the English church, continue its descent on the steep bank above Point Levi church, prolonging the distance in this direction, until it should become necessary to return towards the place to be fixed on for landing. The other line coming from St. Mary, should be carried to the eastward of the first, so as to avoid the deep ravines formed by the

* The absolute level, and the declivity not exceeding thirty feet in one mile, nor requiring more than the single locomotive power, are used synonymously in this Report.

river a la Soie and other water courses, which would require viaducts to cross them. It would pass probably to the eastward of Joseph Grey's house at Arlaca, towards Trompe Souris,* descending as far as the natural slope would admit, and then proceed towards the landing place, at Point Levi.

In order to compose these two routes, draw one line from St. Mary to the ferry at Point Levi, and another in the direction of the upper end of the Island of Orleans, and it will be seen that there is not more than half a mile of difference in the distance; but the latter has the advantage of reaching ground sloping towards the St. Lawrence *in the direction it has to go*, while the former makes no descent until it reaches the banks of the St. Lawrence.

The road from St. Henry to St. Mary is now carried below the termination of a ridge of nearly continuous high ground, intervening between the Etchemin and the Chaudiere, and extending the whole way from the mountains on the frontier. From the base of this ridge to Point Levi, a straight line should be surveyed, from which there need be only such slight deviations for a Railway, as will be required by the undulating nature of the country. It is right to bear in mind that as the greatest expense of surveying such a line of country, compared with the least expense of constructing a Railway, is only about one to five hundred, no pains should be spared to multiply surveys and sections, so as to render the estimates as complete as possible.

In proceeding along the Chaudiere, it is observable that the western bank is less interrupted by deep hollows or abrupt ridges than the eastern bank, and as the slope of

* The small scale of the map consulted, does not admit of the route being minutely traced, by the places designated.

the bed of the river itself is very gentle, the Railway may be made to descend occasionally, as well as rise, in order to suit the ground and save expense in excavation.

It will be necessary in marking out the route along the Chaudiere, either to avoid the lands exposed to be flooded, or to calculate the expense of embankment in places where it may be made more advantageous to raise the Railway above the level of the flood.

In order partly to control the floods of this river, a dam might be thrown across it where it leaves lake Megantic, with a sluice by which the lake could be lowered in winter, and as soon as the flood commences the sluice to be shut, so that the lower streams might be exhausted before the water in lake Megantic could rise to the height of the dam.

The *proportion* of water contributed by lake Megantic and the river du Loup should be observed in order to determine the degree of advantage to be obtained by the structure proposed. The western bank of the river du Loup offers no obstacles of consequence with the exception of about three quarters of a mile above its junction with the Chaudiere. A ridge of high ground skirts this bank, at so short a distance that it is not broken by streams of considerable size.

With respect to the lower part of this river it will have to be determined by survey, whether it will be preferable to keep the route on high ground, which would render it necessary to have a high viaduct, for crossing the Chaudiere, or by continuing near the surface of the river, incur the expense of greater excavation on the steep bank, to be compensated by a lower viaduct. On the eastern bank of the river du Loup, there are several streams of considerable size, forming deep ravines, to cross which would add more to the expense, than to cross the river du Loup.

In levelling for the Railway, it would be easier, at this stage of it, to proceed to that point on the frontier where the American route will terminate. This will be found in a low pass between the Kennebec road and Sandy Hill. It is not probable that any lower level exists in the frontier range of mountains for many miles; even if it were much higher it would not form an obstacle, because the side of the mountain forming the pass, and extending as far as the Portage river, slopes gradually towards the river du Loup, and has several long ridges running into the valley, along which the route could be continued without exceeding the prescribed curvature, and the elevation for the single power.

It now remains to be considered whether the route proposed above is the best for Lower Canada; it certainly appears so, in point of expense of executing it, but the occasion is favorable for taking a more extensive view of the subject than merely opening a road to the frontier. There can be no doubt that, whatever may be the route now adopted, there will be branches to other portions of the country, not only in the State of Maine, but in Canada, and it should not be lost sight of, that a more easterly course would lead near the adjoining Province of New Brunswick and Halifax, whence, as is well known, it has been projected to establish a communication by steam with Valentia in Ireland. In examining the country between the Etchemin and the Chaudiere, it was observed that several high ridges extend across; but between Etchemin Lake, and the source of the Famine river, there is said to be no elevation.

The distance to Point Levi from the Kennebec road by the Etchemin lake and the Etchemin, is nearly the same, as by the forks of the Chaudiere, and below the mountain Crapaudiere as far as St. Henry, the Etchemin offers as

few obstacles to a Railway as the Chaudiere; in one respect it is preferable, not being liable to be flooded.

From the Etchemin lake there is said to be little difficulty in reaching the source of the St. John River.

Should this suggestion be attended to, further information will be required respecting the country between the upper portion of the Famine river, and the height of land near the Kennebec road, and if a route for a Railway in this direction should cost more than by the river du Loup, the assistance of the Imperial Government might justly be claimed for adopting it as an object of national importance.

The route by the Chaudiere and lake Megantic, should that through Maine be traced to the source of Arnold's river, has not yet been fully examined. It is about *forty miles* longer than by the Etchemin or the river du Loup, without any known advantage to counterbalance so great an additional distance.

P. YULE,

Captain Royal Engineers.

Montreal, 22d August, 1835.

Certified — T. A. YOUNG,

Secretary to the Committee.

Quebec, 28th August, 1835.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
January 7, 1836. }

Read, and on motion of Mr SOULE of Freeport, ordered to lie on the table, and that two thousand copies be printed for the use of the members.

(Extract from Journal.)

JAMES L. CHILD, CLERK.