

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1850

23/02/1850 Bytown Packet Union Forwarding Chats Falls

Below Portage du Fort a very considerable expenditure has been invested in building two costly iron steam boats and making three miles of railway by the Union Forwarding Company. Talks about the lack of a road to Pembroke.

30/04/1850 Bytown Packet Union Forwarding Chats Falls

The superior facilities now offered by the railway on the portage on the north side have drawn traffic to that side. Formerly the village was on this (Fitzroy) side.

24/05/1850 Bytown Packet Ottawa and Prescott

First annual general meeting of the Bytown and Prescott Railroad.

28/09/1850 Bytown Packet Ogdensburgh and Rouses Point

It is announced that the Ogdensburgh and Rouses Point Road will be finished and ready for the passenger train from Rouse's Point to Ogdensburgh, before the first day of next month. Only thirteen miles of the whole road remain unfinished and the rail is being laid with despatch. For strength, workmanship, durability, and easy grade - for directness of road, superiority of construction, and economical outlay, says the Ogdensburgh Beacon, perhaps there is no road in the United States surpasses it - Transcript.

05/10/1850 Bytown Packet Ogdensburgh and Rouses Point

Detailed description of the opening of the Ogdensburgh and Rouses Point Rail Road.

Prospectus of the Bytown and Prescott Railroad.

The Committee of the Bytown and Prescott Railway Company think it right to state concisely the nature of the undertaking in which they propose to engage, and the grounds upon which they rest their claims to public encouragement and support.

The absolute necessity of establishing cheap and speedy communication between distant parts of the country, in order to develop its resources, to stimulate manufacturing, Commercial and Agricultural enterprise, and to afford to the numerous and increasing population of the country, the necessary means of transit cannot be questioned. The prosperity of any country depends mainly upon its means of communication, and in a new country, Manufactures, Commerce and improved Agriculture, commence and end with the facilities thus created. Upon these principles the proposed undertaking is based. The Railroad is not only desirable, but highly necessary, as a most efficient means of rapidly advancing the improvement of the country, of affording the requisite facilities for a growing commerce, and of encouraging and fostering Manufactures, by furnishing a cheap safe and expedient mode of conveyance, which will in all respects be capable of meeting the wants of the country.

The Bytown and Prescott Railway is to commence at Bytown, on the Ottawa River,- thence through the Townships of Gloucester, Osgoode, Mountain, South Gore, Oxford and Edwardsburgh, to Prescott on the St. Lawrence,- in all a distance of nearly fifty miles.

At present the communication between Bytown and Prescott is either by the land Road direct, which is inferior, or by navigation, passing down the Ottawa River and then ascending the St. Lawrence. - Both routes are tedious and expensive, and Commerce and Manufactures being thus without requisite facilities, cannot be expected to flourish; and such hindrances, on the other hand, in a reciprocal way, serve to perpetuate existing inconveniences, preventing those engaged in the navigation from receiving the encouragement which they otherwise would, and which is most essential to induce improvement. It is clearly evident that in view of its general advantages, the construction of this Railroad is highly desirable, not only as a medium of transport to meet existing wants, but as a channel through which the products and Commerce of an extensive country, whose resources are locked up, and comparatively valueless without it, will find a passage to the markets of the world.

The line of the proposed Railroad is universally admitted by Surveyors and Engineers who know the country to be the most favourable one known of the same extent, being through remarkably level country, having a firm dry soil, affording the best description of materials, and in every respect, uncommonly well adapted for constructing and maintaining a Railway at the least possible cost. The surface of the country as it stands would afford easier grades than are found on some Roads that are now in operation. From a series of levels, extended from the water level of the Rideau Canal, it is known that the highest land the line will cross between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers, - about thirty miles from the Ottawa, - is not over one hundred and thirty feet higher than Bytown, and as Prescott is higher than Bytown, the inclination either way from the highest point is only between four and five feet in the mile, and is over a country which presents a remarkably even uniform surface. It is believed that thirty miles of the line will involve no greater expense in preparing the Road for superstructure than merely ditching and forming the bed for the track; for which four hundred pounds per mile will be sufficient,- that ten miles more will require only a small amount of cutting, and exceeding a cost of eight hundred pounds per mile; and that the other ten miles or less will be graded for twelve hundred pounds per mile,- making in all thirty-two thousand pounds.

There is every reason to believe that the land damages will be extremely moderate,- not exceeding four thousand pounds,- as the proprietors along the line are desirous of assisting the undertaking and are interested in it. The most of the way the line can be kept free of the most thickly settled pieces, so as to avoid doing any material injury to farms, and without seriously deviating from the straight line between the extreme points.

The Committee are aware of the great disproportion between this and the usual cost of grading Railroads, but this estimate will appear perfectly reasonable when it is known the sources of expense, which above all others, swell the cost of Railroads, in this case do not exist, owing to the extreme favorableness of the Line; there being no rock cutting nor embankments, nor expensive Bridges, nor even any very considerable earth cuttings. They are prepared to say that the sum of twelve hundred and fifty pounds is ample for the Bridges on the Rideau and Nation Rivers. Materials of the best description, particularly wood, can be had at the lowest rates.

The items enumerated above are those which vary according as circumstances are more or less favourable, and mainly affect the difference of cost. The other items being nearly equal in all cases it is unnecessary to refer to them here. But putting these at the highest rate, and estimating the cost of iron rail of 60 lbs. per yard, at eight pounds per ton, less than one hundred thousand pounds will make the railroad ready for the Engines and Carriages - fifty thousand pounds more will be ample to put on these, and have a large margin for contingencies.

The Act of Incorporation authorizes the raising of that amount in fifteen thousand shares of ten pounds each, and it also authorizes the Company to raise by loan any further amount that may be necessary for its completion not exceeding one hundred thousand pounds in addition to the above named one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The Company may loan money at eight per cent interest. According to the terms of the Act, no person who subscribes for stock will be in any degree liable for anything connected with the undertaking beyond the payment of the amount of stock subscribed for. The affairs of the Company will be managed by thirteen Directors who will be elected annually by the Shareholders.

The Committee would mention that the Act of Parliament for the Incorporation of the Company having been already obtained the usual expense and delay incurred for that purpose, is in this case, wholly avoided. In that respect they are in a position to proceed with the undertaking without hindrance, and the Provisions of their Charter are unusually favourable.

The Committee would next draw attention to the amount of Traffic which may reasonably be expected on the proposed Railroad. In order to arrive at a correct conclusion on this point they would refer to the important fact, that this Railroad will be, both now and hereafter, the only direct outlet at all seasons of the year, from the Northern Section of Upper Canada and the Western Section of Lower Canada to the Eastern Seaboard. These Sections embrace an extent of country exceeding thirty-five thousand square miles,- the whole of which is in a commercial way, dependent upon this Railroad, and as regards materials and facilities for extensive and numerous manufactures, and capability of sustaining population, it is seldom equalled; beside an area of equal extent not included in the Counties now laid out. The population at present exceeds 125,000,- the increase during the last six years being nearly forty thousand,- and it is increasing much more rapidly. In 1848 nearly two millions of acres were occupied, and about 329,000 acres were under cultivation. In that year, which is the latest of which there are statistical returns, the quantity of wheat ground in this section amounted to 689,548 bushels, and the quality of butter produced was over 823,000 lbs. The quantity of ashes exported is not given but is known to be very great.

Under similar circumstances in the United States it is usual to estimate the prospective traffic by the population at two and a half dollars per head. In this case, at two dollars per head, which is twenty per cent less, the traffic would be sixty-two thousand five hundred pounds. But that a very great and remunerative traffic may safely be depended upon, can be clearly shown on other grounds. The great timber district of the Ottawa, which is perhaps scarcely equalled in the known world, is from its position connected with this section of country, and its Timber is included in the products. The amount of this item in one year equalled one million of pounds, and the average may be put at two thirds of that amount. Where a single item of the products will average two-thirds of a million of pounds, there is reason to believe that the traffic for a Railroad on the proposed line will be very large. Already the trade of the Ottawa has become of great importance. The supplies of the Lumber Trade alone are very considerable. The quantity consumed by the Lumberers in the manufacture of Timber does, on a very moderate computation, reach as high as twenty-nine thousand barrels of Flour, and nearly as many of Pork, besides Grain, Clothing, Tea and many other articles. The Ottawa drains between seventy and eighty thousand square miles, and its produce supplies four-fifths of the Pine timber, and two-thirds of the Deals, received in the Quebec market.

The article of Sawed Lumber has become a very important item in the products of the Country, and is perhaps the one of most consequence as regards Railway Traffic. The quantity manufactured yearly within Bytown may safely be put at ninety millions feet board measure and there are facilities for increasing the manufacture to any extent. A large portion of it now finds its way to the Hudson River Market, and there brings a higher price, and finds a better demand than in Quebec. This branch, though only lately begun, is rapidly increasing, and from the nature of all the circumstances by which it is influenced, it must become of great extent and importance. Estimating that only the same quantity would continue to be manufactured and that only one third of it - thirty millions feet - found its way to the American Market, it would either go by the present water conveyance or by this Railroad. The cost of shipping Sawed Lumber from Bytown to Rouses Point, is two and a half dollars per thousand feet board measures and on the average sixteen days are spent on the passage. This article could be conveyed from Bytown to Rouses Point by Rail at less than by water and in two weeks less time. The difference in time alone will amount to one quarter percent. - Estimating the quantity for the American and St. Lawrence markets at only one third of what is now made, - say thirty millions yearly, and putting this

at eighty cents per thousand from Bytown to the Northern Railroad the Revenue from it to this Road would be £5.625.

Assuming that the Railroad would cost £150,000 and putting the cost of working at fifty percent of the Revenue, a traffic of twenty-one thousand pounds will meet expenses, including two percent on the Stock for depreciation, and pay six percent on the capital Stock. And even if the Road cost two hundred thousand pounds, which is not at all probable, and putting the cost of working at fifty-five per cent of the revenue, a traffic of thirty thousand pounds would do the same. It is thus quite clear, even viewing the matter in the least favourable way that can be assumed, that there is the best possible reason to believe that the traffic will in all probability be found most satisfactory as regards to returns. This general traffic of the country, independent of the items named in connexion with the Lumber Trade, must, when the population is so extensive, be very considerable, but it is quite impossible here to enumerate the many items of traffic which will go to make up the business of the proposed Railroad. In a new country where such a channel is opened, it creates trade, rendering available innumerable sources of traffic, which though insignificant individually, are in the aggregate very considerable, particularly in all manufactures of which wood is the basis. Even in Great Britain, where long established channels of traffic existed, Railroads have created traffic far beyond all apparently reasonable calculations.- The business which may safely be depended upon is that of an extent of country larger than the whole of Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts together, which is rich in mineral resources, possessing a fertile soil and capable of sustaining a large population, and which has no direct outlet to the Eastern seaboard but by this line and the Northern New York Railroad. This Line will be the only one joining the two great Rivers of Canada, and it connects them at the most eligible point on both.

The Committee would also refer to the probability of this line being extended from Bytown eastward to connect with the Railroad between Lachine and Montreal. In the event of such an extension the Traffic of the St. Lawrence with the Eastern Traffic of the Ottawa would be secured to the same Line which by any other could not be done, and the cost of construction mile for mile would be the least, thus securing the largest Traffic and involving the least outlay. It is scarcely necessary to add that by such an extension the business on this line would be greatly increased. It is quite certain too that the connection of this line with the Northern New York Railroad would be a most material advantage to both these lines.

Such is a brief view of the undertaking in which the Committee of the Bytown and Prescott Railway Company propose to embark, and which, while it promises such manifold and widely diffused advantages to the public, the Committee feel confident will afford a liberal return for the capital invested by the proprietors.

John McKinnon
Chairman.

19/10/1850 Bytown Packet Ottawa and Prescott

The Foundation Stone Laid

Great Public Meeting

£15,000 voted to the Bytown and Prescott Railway!!!

A meeting was held in the Town Hall in Bytown on Saturday the 12th instant, pursuant to a resolution of the Municipality of the town of Bytown and public notice calling a "Public meeting of the Assessed inhabitants of the Town of Bytown", "for the purpose of obtaining the assent of the majority of the Assessed Inhabitants to the subscription by the said Municipality of the sum of fifteen pounds in the capital stock of the Bytown and Prescott Railway".

The Meeting comprised a majority of the whole of the Assessed Inhabitants of Bytown, there being about five hundred present.

Moved by Capt. G.W. Baker, seconded by J.W. Turgeon, Esq. and carried unanimously - that the Mayor do take the Chair.

Moved by Hammett Hill, Esq. seconded by C. Armstrong Esq. - that Mr. W. Purcell be requested to act as Secretary. - Carried.

The mayor, in a speech of some length, explained the object of the meeting, and the ground upon which the proceedings was based, and concluded by reading the prospectus.

John McKinnon Esq., moved the following resolution which was seconded by Charles Sparrow Esq.

Resolved - that a majority of the assessed inhabitants of the Municipality of the Town of Bytown, at a meeting this day assembled in pursuance of a resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Bytown, and of the Act "for the incorporation of a company to construct a rail road between Bytown and Prescott;" due notice of which meeting has been given by the Head of the said Municipal Corporation of Bytown in a manner directed by the said Corporation, do assent to subscription by the said Municipality of the Town of Bytown of Fifteen Thousand Pounds to the Capital Stock of the Bytown and Prescott Railway Company.

Mr. McKinnon supported the resolution with a long speech, urging the necessity of exertion in order to accomplish the objective in view, and referred to the examples of many other places. He particularly exhorted all present to aim at causing the ground of population to be that of useful enterprise and superior skill.

Lyman Perkins moved the following amendment, seconded by Daniel O'Connor Esq.

Resolved - that this meeting do now adjourn to meet again on Saturday the twenty-sixth instant and a poll be opened in each of the wards of Bytown on Friday next, and continue open for polling of votes during two days from ten o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the evening, in order that the true sense and wishes of the assessed inhabitants of the Town be obtained, that they may be prepared at the next meeting whether it is their wish to allow the Municipal ?? of the town council to subscribe the fifteen thousand pounds stock in the Bytown and Prescott Railroad or not.

Mr. Perkins spoke in support of the Amendment and several Speakers were heard against it - The Mayor, after reading the Resolution and Amendment twice, and asking if anything further was to be heard, put the amendment. Out of the five hundred present, six only voted for the amendment which was lost. The resolution was then put and carried.

The fullest opportunity was afforded to all to express their approbation or disapprobation as they desired.

John McKinnon, Esq. was then called to the Chair, and thanks given to the Mayor, after which the meeting dispersed.

09/11/1850 Bytown Packet Ottawa and Prescott

Bytown and Prescott Rail Road.

The ball is now rolling and gathers strength as it goes. The stock books in Bytown already show a large list of subscriptions for stock, and it is now almost certain the people of Bytown will take about ten thousand pounds, which with the fifteen thousand pounds taken by the Municipality will make twenty-five thousand pounds taken for the Town of Bytown. Not so slow that, by any means, and the Committee are determined to leave no stone unturned to carry through the undertaking.

The Prescott Telegraph announces a meeting of the tax payers of Prescott to be held this day at 7 o'clock p.m. "for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of the Prescott Corporation following that of Bytown by taking stock" in this railroad. We have no doubt the people of Prescott will do their duty handsomely - it is really pleasing to see the willingness with which all parties have come forward to assist in this most important enterprise. "Where there is a will there is a way" is an adage that in this instance we believe will be fully verified. "Now's the day and now's the hour" for an effort, on the success of which, the "future prospects of this country are dependent." Who will hold back?

Bytown and Prescott Rail Road Meeting

(From the Prescott Telegraph)

At a public meeting of the inhabitants of Prescott, convened by the Mayor, and held in Mr. Ready's new and spacious hall, on the evening of the 9th inst., to consider the important subject of a Rail Road between Prescott and Bytown - the Hon. Samuel Crane was called to preside, and W.D. Dickenson to act as secretary.

The meeting included all classes and was probably one of the largest ever held at Prescott.

The meeting was addressed by the Mayor, R. Burritt Esq. MPP., W.B. Wells Esq., and Mr. Wm. Patrick in favor of the corporation taking stock in the proposed Rail Road, the last mentioned gentleman moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Dr. H.D. Jessup.

Resolved - That this meeting recommend the Town Council of Prescott to subscribe £7,500 Stock in the Rail Road between Prescott and Bytown, lately authorized by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. Alex McMillan spoke against the motion, James West Esq., Deputy Provincial Surveyor, in its favor and Mr. Jeremiah O'Sullivan in opposition; when the chairman put the question, which was carried, only two or three voting against it.

On motion of W.B. Wells Esq., seconded by Jas. West, the chairman was requested to leave the chair and Alfred Hocker Esq., called thereto, when the thanks of the meeting were voted to the Chairman and secretary for their services on the occasion.

Samuel Crane, Chairman.

W.D. Dickenson, Secretary.

Prescott 9th Nov. 1850.

Hurrah for Kemptville. Keep the Ball Rolling.

Account of a meeting at Kemptville.