

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - Gosford Pole Railway

25/11/1871 *Ottawa Citizen*

Gosford Pole Railway

Pole Railway

A wooden railway (a letter from Quebec)

Thinking over these matters we reached the Gosford terminus about eleven o'clock on the day in question, and there found six cars discharging their loads of firewood over three feet in length, and composed of maple and beech. There were from 500 to 600 cords piled about, and we saw some giants three feet in diameter. One peculiarity of the construction of the track was that the ties were round, being simply undressed spruce logs, 8 feet long, embedded in the earth. The rails of maple are 14 feet long by 4 inches notched into the sleepers and wedged, with iron fastenings. The gauge is four feet eight and a half inches. Our train soon gave symptoms of starting, the little compact engine (built at the Rhode Island Engine Works) sharply whistling now and then. There were six platform cars and one for passengers which for elegance or accommodation could hardly be likened to "Pullman" It was about 15 feet long and would hold say a dozen passengers comfortably.

While thus reflecting we were rattling along, and quickly passed Charlesbourg Church on our right. Here the valley of the St. Charles is as flat as a table, and we went at about fifteen miles an hour. Then we reached St. Augustin, near which is the beautiful Lake Calvert, celebrated for fine trout and perch fishing. On nearing the outskirts of Lorette we saw ahead of us an incline that it seems hardly possible to surmount. It was steep enough to have made not a bad slide for toboggans, and when a schoolboy, the writer has often been fain to content himself with one less promising. We wondered as we approached it how it would be possible for a train to travel up such a grade, but very much after the fashion of a driver touching up his horses he rushed him up hill, the engineer put on steam - puff - puff went the engine, and nobly she dragged us up the grade, the steepness of which is 230 feet to the mile. I may say here that the steepest curve has 600 feet radius. Crossing the Jacques Cartier bridge we had a glimpse of pretty scenery, that a fellow excursionist with artistic proclivities quickly availed himself of. The river is about 200 feet wide and the top of the bridge is 66 feet above the water. The trestle work is 1,250 feet long and while crossing we felt as if we were doing some "airy" travelling.

On our return we went up and down all sorts of impossible inclines in the most reckless sort of way, but by this time we were getting used to it, and as our engine now and again came to a more than ordinary serious descent we gave ourselves up in blind faith in Providence. At one or two places along the line was firewood stacked in large quantities, destined to brighten the hearth of many a denizen of Quebec.

It is presumed the railway can bring into the city some 50,000 cords yearly. The cost of building the 25 miles to Gosford was estimated at \$120,000, the annual income at \$29,000 and expenditure (including a charge of ten per cent, reserve for renewal of plant) at \$45,195.

09/12/1871 *Canadian Illustrated News* *Gosford Pole Railway*

The Gosford Railway Bridge over the Jacques Cartier River.

The Gosford railway, the first wooden line of importance ever laid in Canada, runs from the Valley of the St. Charles at Quebec, to the township of Gosford, a distance of 26 miles, and will doubtless be further extended into the interior when it's early difficulties are fully overcome. The Gosford Station is merely a depot for cord wood in the wild bush, there being but a few modern shanties and a sawmill at it. The rails are of sugar maple, and are laid on pine sleepers. The gauge is four feet eight and a half inches - the American gauge, in fact, though in the new application of the term it cannot be called a "narrow gauge" railway. The wood along the line is excellent, comprising apple and birch trees of huge dimensions, and the supply of fuel for the ancient capital from the district which the road traverses is almost inexhaustible. The bridge over the Jacques Cartier River, of which we give an illustration, is seventy-two feet high, built of wood, and though severely tried by the freshets of last spring, resisted their shocks without giving a sign of weakness. The three piers of the bridge are built on solid rock. With three trips the Company can deliver eighty cords of wood per day, which find ready sale in Quebec. It is anticipated that on the giving out of the wooden rails their place will be supplied with iron, and should sufficient funds be forthcoming the line will be carried to Lake St. John, an extension which would be of the utmost importance in the whole Province, and especially to the Capital.