

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - Ottawa and Arnprior Railway

24/01/1860 *Ottawa Citizen*

Ottawa and Arnprior

Ottawa and Arnprior Railway.

To the Editor of the Ottawa Citizen.

Sir - Is it not strange that our citizens should lack of enterprise so much as to sit quietly by and witness the benefits that result to us from our great staple trade shipping out of our hands by means of the Brockville and Ottawa Railway, that already carries most of the supplies for the upper lumbering country, not only from the west, but, with characteristic pertinacity, has entered on a competition for freights from Montreal through to Arnprior; and judging from the rates of charges offered, and other advantages, we may conclude that from this direction as great a falling off from our carrying trade will be felt as has already shown itself in the supplies from the western marts. And more than that, do our large merchants, who yearly clear their thousands from their commerce with the Lumberers. think that when these men find it best to bring their supplies through by way of Brockville, they will not occasionally make their purchases there; and that because the merchants of that place, are not at present prepared to fully supply such wants, the enterprise that prompted the opening up of a new avenue for trade will not also meet the wants of it? Rest assured it will, and large as has been the falling off in this department, it will yearly increase if not met by an offset. The retail merchants, too, have they failed to notice that the fall and winter trade has not been this season equal to what it was in former ones, leaving out, perhaps, the small increase of consumption in the city and neighbourhood on account of the greater population? If they have, and seek the cause, let them ask the storekeeper of Almonte, Arnprior, Smith's Falls, or Brockville. if they have suffered from the times? They will say no, that money is plentiful with us (unless they happen to owe you an account), and we daily see people in our streets that were never in the habit of coming here to buy before the Railway was opened. Or enquire of the farmer that strays in occasionally from the same neighbourhood, why he does not come as often as he used to, to our market, and he will tell you that he has as good a market, and sometimes better, nearer home; and to the question, why he does not buy as of old when he does come here? he will say that owing to the facilities for carriage of goods by the railway, the merchant at home is enabled to renew his stock oftener, and can give him goods nearly as low as we can; and, besides, that they have retail Grocery, Dry Goods, Hardware, Drug and Jewelry stores, calling almost every day at their doors, under the charge of those generally successful salesmen, known as Yankee pedlars, and if of a sarcastic turn of mind. may add that strange to say this was not so before the railway was opened. And is all this nothing. - not even worth a struggle to obviate? If it is, what has been done? The wealthy County of Carleton has talked of macadamizing the roads through the county, but will that answer the case? decidedly not. Such improvements are very much wanted, and will be very useful, but not as a means of coping with this competitor for our trade in any measure. We must, at least, offer equal facilities with those that exist on the other route, or greater. All will allow that what we want is an Ottawa and Arnprior Railway, but how are we to get it? - not by wishing for it. certainly. The county, although it would, I think, take stock to a large amount when the enterprise is opened under proper auspices, will scarcely take the initiative in the matter, and it seems to me that it lies in the province of the city, that will be most benefitted by it, to lead in the movement. To what means is New York indebted for her giant strides in the commerce of this continent but to her Clintons and Cornings, for her canals and railroads, and how did Chicago arise from a mere trading post to be a powerful competitor with St.Louis and Cincinnati, and finally outstrip them both, but by the untiring energy and enterprise of her Ogdens, Tracys and others, to whom she mainly owes her magnificent network of inland communication: and to come nearer home, is not the greatly increased prosperity of Montreal but the product of the rich diggings amongst the quartz of the St. Lawrence,- and the end is not yet. The Hon. John Young and the such men of Montreal were not satisfied with the great natural advantages which that city possessed, but bent themselves to their improvement, and see the result. Or would we have had the seat of Government located here if we had not had railroad connection with the St. Lawrence, and is not that and its successful continuance under the management of our own citizens mainly owing to the energy and perseverance of the men that took it in hand. These giants in a city's growth of course met with opposition in their path, and in each case from the very people to whom the greatest benefit resulted, and they had to struggle against - almost impossibility. There are men, in our city, who will sneer at the project of an Ottawa and Arnprior Railroad, and say that the cost will be more than it is worth, or that the traffic will never pay for building the road. Well. if we allow for the sake of argument that the latter might be the case, I think that, by comparison with other cases, it may be proved that the increase in value of property within a parallel line of ten miles on both sides of the road, will pay for its cost of building, but, as even a conviction of its truth, will not lead the owners of said property to build the road on those terms we must look for the carrying-out of our project in the usual manner. What we want is a De Witt Clinton, a John Young or a Robert Bell to take the matter in hand - a person who has energy and ability, and who will not be deterred by obstacles of any kind, and who has influence sufficient to interest capitalists of our own city and others, the former with the necessities of the case, and the latter with the manifest profits to result from such investment. En passant, I will say that I heard a gentleman of means, whose name I now forget, state that if half the stock was taken here he would engage to sell the balance within New York State.

It is time that our citizens understood the necessity of prompt action in this matter; the longer we delay the more difficult it will be to overturn and outstrip the then established results that follow the opening of the Brockville and Ottawa Railroad. We have been too long resting satisfied with our position, while the battle has been fought and won for the time by the merchants of Brockville; yet there were some of our citizens so blind as to think that no injury has resulted from the inroads of the Brockville merchants and Yankee pedlars, but if they watch closely and note events, they will observe it, bye and bye, more particularly when that road is finished through to the Ottawa River.

In conclusion, I would hope that someone will take the task in hand, and that these few unconnected thoughts may tend somewhat to the waking-up of slumbering enterprise in this very important matter, and not leave us open to the charge that we are resting satisfied with the precarious advantages to result from a metropolitan position, while our more insignificant neighbors are carrying of the solid prizes.

SENTINEL.

01/02/1860 *The Union, Ottawa*

Ottawa and Arnprior

For the past year and a half we have constantly agitated for action in relation to this road. On many occasions we have been subjected to abuse for our advocacy in this matter. The startling effects upon the trade of this city, through the opening of the Brockville Road, are now developing themselves and the warnings offered the public are now appreciated. The wretched mismanagement of our local affairs has thrown back our trade seriously. The outlay on the Public Buildings alone protects our city from ruin. Our merchants and our railway managers could speak feelingly, we believe, of the falling off in business. We hope some energy will now be exhibited to push this road through. The work may be commenced in three months if ordinary exertion is made.

Ottawa and Arnprior Railroad.

To the Editor of the Ottawa Citizen.

Sir,- will you allow me the privilege of a little space in your journal, to discuss the necessity of the construction of the Ottawa and Arnprior Railroad.

The fact is so generally admitted that the growth of our city depends, in a great degree on the internal improvements centering here that it is not necessary to offer any remarks in argument on that question. It is also a fact, though it may not be generally admitted, that there has been no period in the history of our city, when unremitting attention to railroad extension from this point through the fertile lands of our own and adjoining counties was more imperatively demanded for the protection and advancement of our own interests than at the present time.

Since the opening of the Brockville and Ottawa railroad to Almonte, it is quite evident that we have lost a large amount of business among which we may mention provisions, groceries and manufactures. These results, together with the importance of our manufacturing interests, should be of themselves incentives sufficient to move our citizens to immediate and vigorous action. The completion of the railroad to Arnprior will be a link in opening new and important markets for our manufactures and greatly increase our provision, grocery, dry goods and hardware business.

Another reason, and a very important reason, too, why there should be prompt and energetic action, is the unrelenting, and, in a great degree, effective efforts which are being made by the citizens of Brockville, to secure the trade of the great Ottawa Valley, which Ottawa, with her valuable and rapidly increasing commerce, and soon, her equally important manufacturing interests, has heretofore, and, to a great degree, still controls. We cannot expect to remain comparatively idle and at the same time, retain our position. Railroads have diverted trade from natural channels, and this they will continue to do, and in order to open up new markets for our manufactories, and secure the trade of the surrounding country, we must have railroads. Our Brockville friends will soon have a railroad connection with Arnprior, and will, in all probability, construct the road to Pembroke, - as they will then get a share of the four millions of acres of land granted to the Quebec and Huron Railroad. Our citizens have within their reach all the advantages which our Brockville rivals are endeavoring to gain! And more so, as we will get a share of the land for the construction of a road to Arnprior. Will they be secured to us, or will they be allowed to pass from us without a struggle? If the former, it will only be accomplished by vigorous and effective efforts. If the latter, we have only to fold our arms, and consider ourselves secured by our natural advantages.

If the Arnprior road was only completed, it would be one of the most important improvements that ever will extend from our city,- running, as it would, through some of the richest land in Canada, and tapping the principal roads of our county, and in Renfrew thus bringing a very large amount of business to the city that would otherwise go to the south. The Ottawa and Arnprior railroad will form a link in the great chain of roads which, in time, will connect the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and bring throughout the country the trade of the Celestial Empire. Independent of any connection with such a work as that alluded to, it would be a link of very great importance to the trade of the city, in the projected road from Quebec to Lake Huron.

The prospects of this road ought to be decidedly encouraging. Being conversant with the resources of the township's it would traverse, I think that ample stock can be secured from the county and city to push the road. The road will traverse a beautiful and fertile country - everywhere susceptible to the highest cultivation - crossing, in its route, the valleys of the Carp and Mississippi rivers, and that of the Madawaska all famed as unsurpassably rich and productive. I doubt whether any line, of equal length could be projected in the country, with less engineering difficulties, and for less money. The road in its course will intersect, at eligible points, different important roads, which must necessarily throw upon it an amount of business that it would now be impossible to estimate. That it will prove a most productive stock, all must admit, who are familiar with the country through which it will pass, and that it should be pushed forward to completion with energy and vigour, every person in the county and city ought to desire that a bill of incorporation be immediately brought before the legislature at its meeting, and the directors named and ere long you will see the Iron Horse passing to and from the city and Arnprior.

Yours, illegible

Ottawa, 9th Feb, 1860.

Ottawa and Arnprior Railway

If Ottawa city is to have the benefit of the Upper Ottawa trade, a means of communication, better than at present exists must be made between this city, and the Upper Ottawa country. Eight years ago steps were taken to secure that advantage to us. Most of our citizens will remember the proceedings at that time. An Act was obtained for the incorporation of a Company, and in 1856 a liberal land grant was also obtained in favor of the enterprise. The Act of Incorporation has been allowed by sheer neglect to expire by lapse of time, and the land grant has had the same fate..

Meeting of charter members of the Ottawa and Arnprior Railway.--