

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1847-9

12/06/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

The Union Rail Road is now in operation and is a work of vast consequence to the people on the banks of the Ottawa. When it is considered that the enterprise of three individuals, Messrs. Egan, Aumont and Wright caused this improvement to take place and that it has cost some thousands ought we not to wish that we had many like this and venture to hope that as it is a boon to trade it may be a source of ultimate profit to the proprietors. The land through which it passes is very uneven, and as the cost of levelling has been a principal item in the outlay. Every means have been employed to render comfort and convenience to the traveller upon this line and when we take into consideration the --- conduct of the company is indeed praiseworthy. On landing from the Emerald you enter the "reception room", mount a flight of stairs and take your place in the cars. The luggage &c. is drawn up by machinery and at a signal the cars start and in a few minutes you arrive at the terminus. The distance is three and a half miles and there are several beautiful curves along the route. The road is lined on both sides by wild, unbroken woods, if we except a beautiful little lake named after one of the proprietors Lake Aumont - round which you whirl until you strike the woods again. The lover of sport, the huntsman born or our neighbour the scribe might find amusement on every terms here for fish and fowl roam here at will. Crossing the only railway within a hundred miles. Leaves Union Village.

25/06/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

The Hon. James Ferrie and Mr. Davidson of the Bank of North America assembled on the Ottawa to inspect the Union Rail Road on Monday last.

31/07/1847 Bytown Packet

Bytown and Britannia

Prospectus of Bytown and Britannia Rail Road

A rail road having been sanctioned by legislation from Montreal to Lachine, another projected from Carillon to Grenville and again another completed of 3/4 miles at Chats Portage above Bytown which is proved to work most effectively it becomes evidently essential to facilitate the communication by railroad and steamboat from Montreal to Portage du Fort. A rail road should be constructed from Bytown to meet the steamboat on Lake Chaudiere above the Deschenes Rapids, a distance of 6 3/4 miles from Central Basin. Should cost £3,554 plus 30% = £4,621, doesn't include land damages, stations, cars, wagons - no mention of locomotives.

27/11/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Advertisement. Emerald and Oregon with the Union Rail Road are now in operation. Cars connect with the boats.

27/11/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Ottawa

A rail road car intended for the "Union Rail Road" was drawn through the streets from the wharf to the premises of Joseph Aumont Esq. (one of the proprietors) on Monday last. The green "on's' " were at a dead stand as to the exact character of the new arrival.

Prescott and Bytown Railroad.
(from the Prescott Telegraph.)

The people of Prescott have taken the first active step towards the commencement of this great undertaking. A large and respectable meeting of our townspeople, together with several gentlemen from the surrounding country, was held at the Town Hall on Monday evening last, for the purpose of adopting measures for obtaining a survey of the route, procuring a charter, and completing the requisite preliminaries. Samuel Crane Esq. who we were glad to see takes a deep interest in this project, was called to the chair and John Patton, Esq. requested to set as Secretary.

The chairman briefly stated the object of the meeting. Read Burritt, Esq. MPP opened the ball with some general operations upon the necessity that would exist, on the completion of the Ogdensburg Rail road, for an extension of the line from Prescott to By town, in order to enliven the trade of those two great provincial thoroughfares, the Ottawa and St Lawrence. The immense quantities of timber which in time will be required for the shipbuilding and other purposes of the Atlantic cities, will assuredly be drawn from the forests of the Ottawa and it was a matter not to be overlooked, and indeed the probability was very strong that on the repeal of the Navigation Laws, British and foreign shipowners would as a matter of economy, seek the banks of the St. Lawrence for the construction of the ocean ships. All the produce of various kinds, of the whole backcountry; all the supplies required for the lumbermen, in provisions, merchandise, &c, would necessarily come over this road, to say nothing of the immense travel which would be superinduced by the road itself. Not being a practical engineer, he could give no opinion respecting the facilities which the country presented nor the probable expense. But from all the information he had received he could not doubt that the stock would yield a fair return; the enterprise would always command his warmest support, as he conceived it of the utmost importance to the prosperity of this section of the province.

James West, Esq. Provincial surveyor, explained the nature of the country between the two rivers. He was well acquainted with the whole line, and was of opinion that a Rail Road could not be constructed over any other surface of country, of equal distance, in North America, at a less expense than this. The distance would be about 54 miles, almost a perfect dead level, with little bridging, and probably no rock excavation whatever. Mr. W. enlarged upon the advantages likely to accrue to the country from the completion of this important work. Amongst a host of other benefits which he enumerated, he stated that the government contemplated the furthering of immigration on a large scale. He (Mr. W.) was acquainted with several townships along the Ottawa, all possessing superior advantages for settling, and being of easy access; if this road were in operation, a large number of immigrants could be introduced into these unsettled parts, at a trifling cost, and thus whilst benefiting themselves, would tend materially to develop the resources of that at present neglected section. Rail Roads wherever formed, it was well known invariably created business, and it was impossible to imagine the amount of traffic that would spring up on this line. The southern travelers who yearly make the circuit of the lakes would probably avail themselves of this route to gain access to the Caledonia Springs, and the beautiful scenery of the Ottawa.

William Patrick, Esq. had noticed that some persons were opposed to building railroads, because they did not accommodate each individual party; in other words that they did not pass every man's door. In those countries which was favored with these inestimable conveniences, it is true, that settlements through which they passed did not feel the benefit in a great degree; but it was an undoubted fact, that the terrain of all Rail Roads have always reaped extraordinary advantages. The Bostonians, who are favoring (?) and shrewd people, are alive to the importance of this fact; and the great exertions making by them to render the city the focus of trade for the eastern states, Northern New York, Lower Canada, &c prove their keen sagacity in the matter. Prescott would be a terminus for the road now under discussion, and it requires very little inducement to discover that this town would soon put forth its energies and make rapid strikes in every department of trade.

Mills, Esquire civil engineer, addressed the meeting, and threw a good deal of light upon the subject of Rail Road building. He had heard of this meeting, and had taken some pains to refer to documents in his possession. He had been engaged in the construction of several railroads in the United States, and had examined others now underway in this Province. He exhibited statistics showing the average cost per mile of many of the principal Roads in operation. The Rail Roads now in course of construction from Hamilton to Port Samia is estimated to cost £5,000 per mile. The heavy T rails, (the only kind that he would recommend) increased the expenses enormously. Their usual cost alone had been £2,500 per mile. Mr. M. was acquainted with the general features of the country between Prescott and Bytown, but not intimately with the contemplated route, and could ?? only, guess, at the probable expense, which he ?? would be in the neighborhood of £5,000 per mile. He had no doubt of the feasibility of the scheme; and knew that the project would place Prescott in that position which she ought to long ago have attained. Mr Mills' experience in Long Sault and other canals, and his practical business talents, rendered his opinion of great weight, and the meeting rendered appreciation of his information in a marked manner.

W.B. Wells, Esq. did not consider that it made much difference to the people here whether the road was very costly or not; as he had the best information for stating that the leading stockholders of the Ogdensburg Road would be ready to build this road to Bytown at their own expense, providing the people on this side of the river would procure a charter and take the necessary steps for the formation of the company. He hoped, however, and fully believed, that the people of the Johnstown and Dalhousie districts would come forward monthly and do their share of this undertaking. Even if this ? did not pay as well as the Telegraph or some other, this should be looked upon as a national subject and all parties ought to unite to unite to the general good. Having an administration pledge the policies of Reform and Progress, and the opening out of the dormant resources of the country, he felt no hesitation in believing that the cooperation and encouragement of the Government could be easily obtained in the furtherance of the present design. It appeared to him that the great object at present was to procure the funds for obtaining the Charter, and if possible for the survey of the route by some competent engineer whose name would be a guarantee for the correctness of his statements and estimates. These estimates would have of course to be made on the spot. They had heard from two able practical gentlemen who had addressed them, that these estimates would probably be low. There could be no doubt that they would be so, and that the line would be constructed one of them ?? on the continent in point of practicability and cheapness - but were it otherwise, more likely to be the most difficult and expensive, the work would ?? way later be accomplished. The two great rivers of the North were destined to be connected between Prescott and Bytown; these were the ? points about which that could be no dispute and he trusted that the work had been ? this time with such determination on the part of the movers so as to lead to this happy and speedy completion.

Augustus Keifer, Esq. of Bytown, happened to be in town and heard of the meeting arrived just in time to hear a part of Mr. Wells speech. Mr. K. was called upon to speak on behalf of his own townspeople, which he did in a very creditable and satisfactory manner. He stated that there were ten thousand lumbermen on the Ottawa, the principal part of whose supplies of provisions, &c come from the United States by way of Montreal. The people of Bytown were fully alive to the importance of uniting the trade of the Ottawa and St. Lawrence by an iron road. They had already obtained the right of highway from government for the planting of the telegraph posts between their town and Prescott, and were making arrangements for the ? of that work. As to the survey of the Rail Road line between the two places, he knew one gentleman in Bytown who had offered £25 towards that object and at least one half the expenses would be borne by that town, provided Prescott would buy the other half.

We have not attempted in the foregoing to give an outline of the capital speeches delivered on the occasion, as I limits are too confined this week to do justice to the parties. The meeting was harmoniously conducted throughout, and the various individuals who took part in the proceedings, entered into the subject before them with proper spirit. The following is the official account of the meeting, formulated by the secretary.

Proceedings of a meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Prescott, held in pursuance of public notice on the evening of 19th June, 1848, to consider the expediency of applying to the legislature for a charter to construct a Rail Road between Bytown and Prescott, and having the ? property surveyed.

Samuel Crane Esq. having been appointed chairman and John Patton, Esq. secretary, the following resolutions were made and pasted
On motion of Reed Burritt, Esq MPP, seconded by James Weston, Esq.

One resolved - that the construction of a railroad from Prescott to Bytown would greatly contribute to promote the trade and facilitate the communication between those places and the adjacent country. And would open up a large tract of fertile land for improvement, and would tend much to advance the prosperity of this portion of the province.

On motion of William Patrick Esq. seconded by James Higgins, Esq.

2nd resolved - that the present Rail Road constructing from Ogdensburg to Boston fully contemplates the necessity of having a corresponding communication between the waters of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa.

On motion of William B Wells, Esq. seconded by William H?hard Esq.

3rd resolved - that the undermentioned gentlemen viz. Dr. Jessup and Messrs., William B Wells, Alfred Hooker, Samuel Crane, John Moran, Chauncey H. Peck, John Patton, Alpheus Jones, Robert Hadrian?, William Patrick, James Higgins, and James West, be a committee to correspond with the people of Bytown and other places on the subject, and to solicit their cooperation therein and draft a Petition to the Legislature to be presented at the next session for an act of incorporation and to procure signatures to the same

On motion of real Barrett, Esquire. Seconded by William Hubbard Esquire.

4th resolved - that the editors of papers published in Bytown and Prescott be requested to publish the proceedings of this meeting.

On motion of William B Wells Esq. Seconded by William Patrick Esq..

Resolved - that the chairman do now leave the chair and that Dr. Jessup be called thereto.

On motion of William Patrick Esq.. seconded by James West Esq.

Resolved - that the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman and secretary for the services on the present session.

On motion of Walter G Dickson Esq. seconded by John Moran Esq.

Resolved that the thanks of this meeting are due to Mr. Mills civil engineer and Mr. West provincial surveyor for the information given by them to the meeting.

(signed) Samuel Crane, Chairman

John Patton, Secretary

24/06/1848 Bytown Packet Ottawa and Prescott

Most important intelligence - the Prescott and Bytown Rail-Road - communication with the Sea Coast.

As we intimated in our last, a meeting was held at Prescott, on the St. Lawrence, the proceedings of which will be found in another column.

The men of Ottawa, and particularly the people of Bytown, should come forward now manfully, and meet their friends at once. Unless this railroad be constructed the trade of Bytown must go down. The Rideau Canal is no longer useful. But two steamers ply regularly upon it now. The St. Lawrence has taken its place. We must, therefore, find another source of trade. The Prescott railroad will open to us the whole continent of America. The railroads of the neighboring Republic will deposit at Ogdensburg material for an increased trade, and free trade conceded will make Bytown another place altogether. Our waste lands will become settled - the two great Canadian Rivers will be united; and an impetus will be given to manufacturers by the application of the great water power at our disposal. We agree with the Gazette that "want of capital affords no excuse." Let meetings be held, and the act of incorporation be granted by the provincial legislature. The work will go ahead.

08/07/1848 Bytown Packet Ottawa and Prescott

Bytown and Prescott Railroad.

A meeting was held in this town, according to announcement in our last, to take steps regarding the Prescott and Bytown Railroad. We are glad that some movement has been made regarding this matter, which is of such paramount importance to this section of the province. All that is necessary to carry out the first point - viz., the survey of the road - is £300, which sum will, no doubt, be forthcoming. When the survey and estimates are made, and a charter obtained, we have no doubt that the work will be commenced. American capitalists are prepared to advance the funds, being anxious to connect the new line with the great line from Ogdensburg to Boston. The committee should not sleep over its work. Nothing will save this part of the country from ruin but this railroad, or some other, which promises as great facilities for the transport of Sawed Lumber &c., to the Eastern States. The meeting was respectably attended, and several gentlemen addressed it touching the merits of the undertaking, including Messrs. Scott and Egan, Members of Parliament, and Messrs. Herve, Armstrong, Keefer and Friel.

Proceedings of a public meeting held at the courthouse in Bytown pursuant to notice, on Saturday, 1st July, 1848, to take into consideration the propriety of cooperating with the inhabitants of Prescott, Ogdensburg and the District of Johnstown, in their endeavors to procure a charter for a Rail - Road from Bytown to Prescott.

Christopher Armstrong, Esq. was called upon to take the chair, and Edward Smith Esq., appointed secretary.

The proceedings of a meeting held at Prescott on the 19th June, 1848, having been read, the following resolutions were put and carried unanimously:-

Moved by John Scott Esq. MPP, seconded by James Robinson, Esq.

Resolved, - that this meeting fully concurs in the views of the Prescott people, as expressed by them in the proceedings of the meeting regarding a Rail - Road from Prescott to Bytown, as a continuation of the great line of road now in course of construction from Boston to Ogdensburg.

Moved by Robert Herve, Esq., seconded by Nicholas Sparks, Esq.

Resolved, - that as the commercial community of Bytown, and the entire valley of the Ottawa having long laboured under great disadvantages in not having a direct and speedy communication with the St. Lawrence, this meeting is fully alive to the importance of prompt and vigorous measures being taken to ensure the construction of a Rail - Road from Bytown to Prescott.

Moved by John Egan, Esq. MPP., seconded by Wm. Harris Esq.,

Resolved, - that it is the opinion of this meeting a Rail-Road from Bytown to Prescott, would ensure to the people of central Canada, and the valley of the Ottawa, not only increased facilities for traveling and imports, but would be the means of throwing open a profitable market for manufactured timber in the towns and cities of the Eastern States; and that it behoves every man whose property or prospects are fixed on the Ottawa to use his best exertions in promoting this enterprise.

Moved by H.J. Friel Esq., seconded by Edward Griffin, Esq.

Resolved, - that the undermentioned gentleman viz; The Hon. Thomas McKay, John Egan, Esq., MPP., John Scott, Esq., MPP., GB Lyon, Esq., MPP., Edward Malloch Esq., MPP., His Worship the Mayor, Ruggles Wright, Nicholas Sparks, Joseph Aumond, I.T. Besserer, William Stewart, George W. Baker, Robert Herve, Charles Sparrow, Bradish Billings, Andrew Main, and Augustus Keefer, Esquires, be a committee to correspond with the Prescott committee on the subject - to open a subscription immediately to defray the expenses of a preliminary survey and report, and to procure an Act of Incorporation from Parliament at its next meeting.

Moved by John Egan, Esq., seconded by William Harris, Esq.,

Resolved, - that the chairman do now leave the chair, and James Robinson, Esq., be called thereto.

Moved by Augustus Keefer, Esq., seconded by Mr Dawson Kerr,

Resolved, - that the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman and secretary for their services

(signed) CHR Armstrong chairman

Edw'd Smith, secretary,

Bytown, July 1st, 1848