

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1851

04/01/1851 *Bytown Packet* *Ottawa and Prescott*

Much discussion of the Bytown and Prescott. Success is a foregone conclusion. Prospectus. Meeting at Kemptville on Monday last. Prospectus of Bytown and Prescott.

12/02/1851 *Prescott Telegraph* *Ottawa and Prescott*

Reported a meeting at Spencerville presided over by Prescott's Mayor W. Gibson, at which the following resolution was passed unanimously. "Resolved that this meeting cordially approve the projected Bytown and Prescott Railroad and are of the opinion that its completion will be highly conducive to the interests of this section of the country. Resolved that this meeting recommend the Council of this Township and other Townships between Prescott and Bytown to take stock of the Bytown and Prescott Road on the credit of the municipalities respectively, to the utmost of their ability. Carried.

The meeting was addressed by Mr. Patrick and Mr. Keeler of Prescott, R. Burritt Esq. M.P.P. Mr. R. Bell of Prescott and Judge Brown of Ogdensburg. After the business of the meeting was closed, the stock subscription book was laid on the table by Albert Hooker Esq., and several enterprising farmers came forward and showed confidence in the undertaking by subscribing liberally.

13/02/1851 *Brockville Recorder* *Kingston (CN)*

A number of delegates from places favorable to a grand Provincial Railroad from Toronto to Montreal met in the Council Chamber at Kingston, Monday, week. The room was filled with citizens and strangers who attended each of the three days the convention was in session. On the second day, Mr. Keefer took his seat as a delegate from the Montreal and Lachine Railroad Company and J.L. McDonald as delegate from Gaganoque. On a motion of Dr. Beatty, resolved that the Mayors and Wardens of each municipality on the line shall form a committee, making in all nine members. Resolved that the provisional committee shall meet in Cobourg. Resolved that the different municipalities shall appropriate £50 each to meet the expenses of the survey. A public dinner took place in honor of the convention.

It appears that the proposal to send a delegation. Was negatived in the Council of Leeds and Grenville by a majority of four.

22/02/1851 *Bytown Packet* *Ottawa and Prescott* *Spencerville*

Railroad meeting in Spencerville
(Abridged from Prescott Telegraph)

A very numerous meeting was held in Spencerville on the 12th instant, presided over by W Gibson, Esq., mayor of Prescott, - William B Imrie, Secretary. It was resolved unanimously, -

"That this meeting cordially approve of the projected Bytown and Prescott Railroad, and are of opinion that its completion will be highly conducive to the interests and improvement of this section of country."

"Resolved, - that this meeting recommends the township Council of this Township and the other townships between Prescott and Bytown, to take stock in the Prescott and Bytown Railroad on the credit of the Municipalities respectively, to the utmost of their ability. - Carried"

The meeting was addressed by Mr. Patrick and Mr. Keeler of Prescott, R. Burritt, Esq., MPP, John Scott, Esq., MPP, Mr. Bell of Bytown, and Judge Brown of Ogdensburg. We regret that we are prevented giving the speeches in detail from one of space.

"In concluding his very eloquent and instructive speech, the Judge made the following prognostications: - " I am sanguine (said he) that this road will be done in 1852. My faith is so strong I picture to myself for the opening jubilee. For that purpose thousands congregate at Prescott. The train is on the track; the iron horse seems restive; enthusiastic plaudits reverberate along the shores of the world's most splendid river; on, onward they speed amid cheers of joyous multitudes, swelling loud and louder at every in gathering. The grand scenery of the noble Ottawa rises to view; booming cannon foretell a warm reception; bells ringing; flags waving; deafening shouts of greeting. My most fervent prayer is that the lives of you and me be spared to witness the glorious event."

After the business of the meeting was closed the stock subscription book was laid on the table by Alfred Hooker, Esq., and several enterprising farmers came forward and showed their confidence in the undertaking by subscribing liberally.

19/03/1851 *Prescott Telegraph* *Ottawa and Prescott*

quoted the Ottawa Citizen as follows:-

Bytown and Prescott Railroad

The value and importance of this enterprise are becoming more apparent and appreciated. The first call has been promptly paid up and subscriptions to Stock are being constantly received., The advantages of Railroad communication have been made clearly apparent during the past three months. The demand for produce at Prescott, created by the Ogdensburg Railroad, carried off large quantities from Oxford, South Gower, Mountain and other large and prosperous Townships, and caused a large advance in prices.

Without the Ogdensburg Road the prices of Corn, Oats, Barley &c would have been 2d to 6d per bushel less than the prices that have been realized. Ere long the Montrealers will calmly set to work and make the road to Bytown; for with all their squabbling and eccentricities, they have too much good sense to be gulled so immeasurably as to decide on any other route; and we will yet see the main traffic of Upper Canada passing over the Bytown and Prescott Railroad.

12/04/1851 *Ottawa Citizen* *Ottawa and Prescott*

A public meeting numerously attended of the assessed inhabitants of the Township of Gloucester was held at Billings' Bridge for the purpose of giving their assent to the taking of stock in the Bytown & Prescott Railroad. It was moved by the Honourable Thomas McKay and seconded by Mr. Bearman that this meeting do give assent to the taking of five thousand pounds stock on the credit of the municipality., in the capital stock of the Bytown & Prescott Railway. On division, the motion was carried by a large majority. The men with large properties in the Township and upon whom the chief weight of taxation will devolve, were in favour of the motion.

26/04/1851 *Ottawa Citizen* *Ottawa and Prescott*

Shanly's report, 7 April 1851, is published.

First Annual general meeting of the shareholders of the By town and Prescott Railway Company
Held at the office of the company at Bytown pursuant to noticed, on Wednesday the 21st of May, 1851.

John McKinnon, Esq., president of the company, in the chair.

The president laid before the shareholders the report of the directors for the past four months: -
Report.

The directors of the Bytown and Prescott Railway company on the present occasion beg to lay before the shareholders the following report of the proceedings -
On assuming the duties of directors in January last, they proceeded without delay to take such steps as would ensure activity and expedition in carrier for word the undertaking in which the company are embarked. They immediately engaged the services of WALTER SHANLY, Esq., as chief engineer, and directed him to proceed with the examination of several routes, and reported thereon as soon as practicable. With a view to secure the best interests of the Road in so important a manner as the selection of the site, they felt bound to cause extensive examinations to be made, in order to obtain full and correct information; and accordingly Mr. Shanly received directions "to examine the following routes, viz.: commencing at Bytown keeping on the west side of the Rideau River to opposite Kemptville, and thence to Prescott; also from Bytown to Kemptville, keeping on the east side of the Rideau River from some point at or near Bytown, and thence to Prescott; and also from Bytown to Prescott direct; - and further, to examine the route proposed by Heck's Corners." The examinations were accordingly made by Mr Shanly with as much expedition as circumstances permitted, at that season of the year, - and completed about the middle of April. A meeting of directors was held at Prescott on the 17th of April, when Mr Shanly's report was received, and a bylaw passed for fixing the line of the road from the St. Lawrence River at Prescott to the Ottawa River at Bytown by the way of Kemptville, and keeping on the Eastside of the Rideau River, to enter Bytown on Lot Letter O. This route the directors believe will secure greater advantages to the road than any other. The following bylaws were also passed at the same meeting, - viz: "For the adoption of a common seal" - "For making a call upon the shareholders of the company," and "For fixing the time and place of holding annual general meetings."

The amount of Stock subscribed and now available, exceeds fifty-two thousand pounds, which shows an increase of over twenty-four thousand pounds since the month of January. The directors believe that a considerable amount will be realized further from the minor municipalities through which the line of road is located.

A call of two Shilling and Sixpence to share was made payable on the 19th day of February, and a second call of five Shillings per share, payable on the 8th of May instant. The first call was promptly paid, and on the second call there was received up to the 19th in inst., the sum of £125, and the amount remaining due is being speedily paid up. The total receipts up to the 19th inst., amount to £263. This does not include any of the payments of debenture bonds from the municipalities. The municipalities have taken stock to the amount of £20,500, and the taking of £6,000 more has been agreed to by the township of Oxford, - making in all for municipalities up to date £26,500.

The expenditure has been confined almost solely to the survey, and amounts £105, - leaving a balance on hand of £158. The Directors would mention here, that in making calls they are desirous of distributing them so as to make the payments as light as possible upon the shareholders, and therefore thus far they have called in only what was deemed necessary to meet current expenses.

The directors feel much pleasure in referring to the engineer's report; which, being from a gentleman of much experience and of acknowledged ability in his profession, is justly entitled to great weight. It shows very satisfactorily that the company were not mistaken in their original estimate of the probable cost of the Road, and that, - owing to the extreme favorableness of the ground, - a road of first-class capacity can be constructed on this route at the cost for below the ordinary cost of Railroads. The Directors believe that the means now available, with what they have good reason to believe may be further realized without difficulty, will place the work in such a state of forwardness as will enable the company to carry it through to completion on their own credit; and that if the undertaking be energetically carried forward, the Road may be in operation before the close of 1852.

The directors feel that they cannot close this, the first Report, without referring to the advantages which this Road will possess in a business way, and to the prospects which the undertaking affords of yielding to the capital invested in it a fair rate of remuneration.

The country through which the Road will pass, and upon which it will depend for its way business, is of the very best description as regards Agricultural capabilities. The very rapid settlement and improvement of the greater part of it within a few years back, and under very disadvantageous circumstances, and its constantly increasing prosperity, afford convincing evidence that ere long, under more favorable circumstances, the increase of population and consequent increase of traffic will be still more rapid. The population of the country which is commercially dependant upon this road at present exceeds 120,000, and in view of the results of improved facilities of communication, there is no reason to doubt that in a very few years that number will be more than doubled. The trade on the Ottawa alone, independent of all other exports maybe put at nearly one million of pounds per annum. The communication through the interior by touching the navigable waters of the Rideau at Kemptville, will also, they believe, contribute much to increase the business of the road, as it will enable most of the villages and Towns Southward on the Canal, and a large extent of country lying within reach of them, to avail themselves of the advantages of the Railroad. The extreme cheapness of the road is of the first importance in calculating the probable returns, as with only an ordinary proportion of business the profits would be much greater than usual. It is worthy of remark too, that the length of the road, - about 50 miles, - is the most favorable for working economically. The Director's conclude that by expressing their hopes that this great work, which is of paramount interest to the country, may meet with the success which it merits, and be speedily carried into operation.

All of which is respectfully submitted

(Signed) John MacKinnon President B. & P.R.R. Co.

Bytown 21st May, 1851.

It was then moved by A. Hooker, Esq, seconded by Joseph Bauer, Esq, and

"Resolved, - that the Stock Books of this company be closed until tomorrow at eleven o'clock A.M."

Carriage on division. Ayes 410 - Naves 210

Moved by the Hon Hammett Pinhey, seconded by J.B. Turgeon, Esq, and

"Resolved, - that H.V. Noel, Esq., of Bytown, and Walter D Dickinson, Esq., of Prescott, be appointed Auditors, - that they proceed at their earliest convenience to audit the receipts, disbursements and liabilities of the company, and furnish any shareholder with a copy of the report on being paid five Shillings for the same." Carried.

Moved by J.S. Merwin, Esq., seconded by J.B. Turgeon, Esq., and

"Resolved, - that John McKinnon, Joseph Aumond, Charles Sparrow, Daniel McLachlin, Nicholas Sparks, John Egan, John S. Archibald, Joseph Bower, Alfred Hooker, Thomas Creighton, John Moran, Alpheus Jones and Wm. Patrick be elected Directors for the ensuing year."

Carried on division. Ayes 422 - Naves 32.

Moved by R. W. Scott, Esq., seconded by J. B. Turgeon, Esq., and

"Resolved, - that the thanks of this meeting are due to Mr. McKinnon and his confreres in office for the activity and zeal displayed by them in the performance of the duties with which they were interested at the meeting organizing this Company."

- Carried

John MacKinnon President

Robert Bell secretary

Advertisement. The public generally are hereby notified that this line will be in full operation on and after Thursday the 17th instant. There is a woodcut of a sailing ship and a steam engine hauling two coaches.

The Directors of the Bytown and Prescott Rail Road held a meeting at Prescott on Tuesday last, the 2nd inst. at which the necessary steps were taken for proceeding with the work on the line forthwith. The tender of Messrs. French & Co. for clearing and grubbing of the woodland upon the whole line was accepted and their Chief Engineer has already advertised for certain sections of the grading.

It is the intention of the directors to push the work as vigorously as possible this fall, in order to have the advantage of the best part of the season for such description of operations. The heavy cuttings will be opened as soon as practicable, and kept in progress during the winter; and they can by this means be sufficiently advanced next season to allow of there being completed as early as the other portions of the line. Ground will be broken at Bytown on the second day of next month, though the clearing, &c, of the wood-land will be set about immediately.

We congratulate the people of Bytown as well as the people of the surrounding country on the prospects they now have of seeing this great and important work carried forward successfully. The second day of October will witness the commencement of the work of excavating for the track of a railroad that will place Bytown in a proud position. It is a work of which her people may justly feel proud - it is worthy of their best efforts, - and will richly repay them, - and in all probability this road will be the first in Upper Canada, upon which a Locomotive Engine will make its appearance. We believe now that the first journey made by a Locomotive in Upper Canada, will be over the Bytown and Prescott railroad. It cannot be long ahead, however, as the Great Western and other companies are pushing on their work rapidly.

The report of W. Shanley, Esq., the chief engineer, upon the location and character of the line, and embracing also its probable resources, which was laid before the directors, has been ordered to be printed, and will be given to the public in a few days. It is a masterly report written in a plain business - like manner, and clearly setting forth the important points of the subject. It shows, we think, beyond the possibility of dispute, that this line may be safely looked upon as one that will stand well up on the list of profitable, well - paying Roads. The resources upon which it will be dependent, - that is the various classes of traffic, - are put very low, but the summing of them gives an aggregate result that proves conclusively the correctness of the opinion, that the Bytown and Prescott railroad will be in a short time a highly remunerative investment. It is impossible now to form anything like an adequate idea of the advantages that will be realized by all sections of the country on the Ottawa, through the means of this railroad, - for great as have been the benefits gained elsewhere by such means, we believe that upon the Ottawa the advantages resulting from it will be even much greater than in ordinary cases.

Notice to contractors - tenders for grading. (illegible)

20/09/1851 *Ottawa Citizen**Ottawa and Prescott*

Publishes extracts from Shanly's report.

11/10/1851 *Ottawa Citizen**Ottawa and Prescott**Bytown*

On Thursday last, the 9th instant, was witnessed the very novel, and to the people of this section of Canada, most interesting ceremony of breaking ground on the line of the Bytown and Prescott Railroad. The day was as beautiful as could be desired, and an immense concourse of people were congregated to witness the proceedings. Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon the Procession, in the following order, formed in front of the Railroad office in Rideau Street, and from thence proceeded down Sussex Street to the place selected for the important operation:-

His Worship the mayor and Members of the Town Corporation.

Directors and Officers of the Railroad Company.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Burns and the President of the Railroad Company.

The Sheriff of the County and other Officials.

The Grand Jury.

Cadets of Temperance, in Regalia.

Sons of Temperance, in Regalia.

The President of the Company delivered an address, and then taking the spade proceeded to break ground, and tossed the first sod in first-rate style, amid the shouts and cheers of assembled thousands.

Justice Burns addressed the audience, congratulating them upon the prospect presented of so great and desirable an undertaking being carried forward. Judge Armstrong being called upon, congratulated all present on the occasion of breaking ground, in commencing a work of so great importance; and in a short but very happy and humorous speech, referred to some of the advantages that would result from it. G.B. Lyon, Esq. M.P., next spoke, complimenting the taxpayers, who had assented to their Municipality subscribing largely on behalf of the enterprise. They were all shareholders indirectly, and were interested in its success. Speaking in the open air, or on the subject of Railroads was not his field, and Railroads were not his politics. He wished the undertaking success.

The President returned thanks to the Sons of Temperance, complimenting them in the highest terms; which was replied to on the part of the Sons and cadets by Mr. Hewitt.

The Sons presented a highly creditable appearance both as regards numbers and respectability - and we were particularly pleased with the interesting and fine display made by the cadets.

Mr. Bell, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Friel being called upon, addressed the audience, and the proceedings closed.

Precisely at 7 o'clock a large party of gentlemen of the town sat down to dinner given by the President and Directors at Doran's. To say that the dinner was at Doran's is a sufficient description of the manner in which it was got up, and of the excellent quality of the viands - to state that it was got up in Doran's best style is to say all we can in praise of the eatables and wines. The President of the Company, Mr. MacKinnon, presided - supported on the right by Mr. Justice Burns, and on the left by Captain Ford, Royal Engineers. The Mayor of the town acted as Vice. On the removal of the cloth, after ample justice had been done to all the good things, toasts were given from the chair.

(There then follows a description of the toasts.)

A number of jovial songs were sung in the course of the evening by different members of the company, and that heartiness and good humour which the best of champagne and wines of every description, together with the auspicious events which the Company met to celebrate, were calculated to inspire, prevailed throughout.

22/10/1851 *Prescott Telegraph**Ottawa and Prescott**Prescott*

On Monday morning at 9 o'clock, the contractors for this section of our Railroad nearest the St. Lawrence, Messrs. Howard & Goslin, "broke ground" a couple of hundred yards below Fort Wellington. There was no parade, no ceremony, but the workmen assembled with shovels and picks and commenced operations. About 50 men are at work together with several teams and waggons.

We can congratulate our towns people on the actual commencement of this great undertaking..Bytown and Prescott Railroad is now fairly under way and although no great fuss has been made by its friends, we have no doubt that it will give employment to the first "Iron Horse" in Upper Canada.

05/11/1851 *Prescott Telegraph**Ottawa and Prescott**Prescott*

Notice is hereby given that .."a book of Reference for the Lands required for the construction of the Bytown & Prescott Railway throughout the County of Grenville has this day been deposited in the office of the Clerk of the Municipal Council"