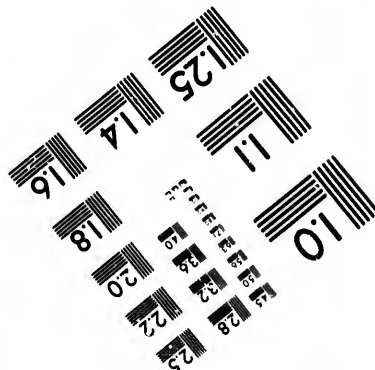
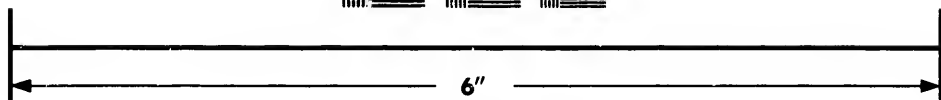
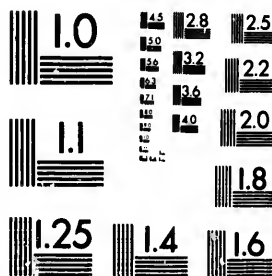


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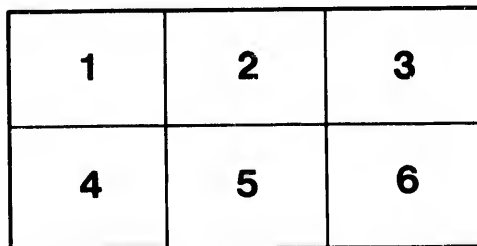
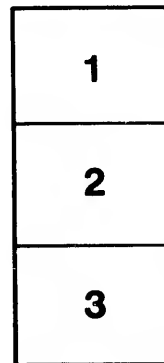
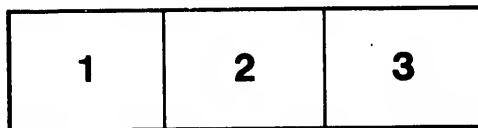
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SOME OBSERVATIONS

RESPECTING A

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GREAT WESTERN RAIL ROAD.

Printed by C. M. Hackett, Courier Office, Market Buildings, Toronto.

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SOME OBSERVATIONS

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GREAT WESTERN RAIL ROAD.



The present may be considered as an important crisis in the history of this Province ; Internal Improvement in the United States having proceeded with a rapidity and extent far beyond our efforts hitherto, has had the effect of placing that country in a more prosperous condition than ours. At last, public attention has been aroused, and all men who have the interest of the country at heart, are anxiously endeavoring to imitate the successful example of our neighbours. Any enquiry, therefore, into the resources and facilities of this Province, for the improvement of internal communication, must interest all parties, and form my excuse for offering my humble opinion upon the subject.

In making the enquiry, all private and sectional interest should be avoided, and discusion should be based upon the broad principle of public good : and it shall be my most anxious care to keep that grand object in view.

Charters for several Rail Roads, in different parts of the Province, having been obtained within a few past years, and the mention made by His Excellency, in his Speech, at the opening of Parliament, of a great Western Rail Road, through the Province, have directed Public enquiry toward this grand desideratum. Undoubtedly it is the most important subject of the kind ever agitated here. If it can be accomplished, it will produce a spirit of enterprise heretofore unknown, and attract capital and population to an unexampled extent into the Province.

I shall, therefore, proceed to lay down the route I propose, and to show the advantages it possesses, without, if possible, touching upon rival or conflicting interests, excepting in so far as they may be favorably affected ; and I entertain the hope that it may be shown to be the true interest of all to concur in my views of the matter.

It is conceded upon all hands, that a Rail Road of any great extent in this Province, must depend materially for its support and profit upon the transit of American travel and commerce over it.

The route then, that appears to be most likely to produce this desirable result, as well as to afford the greatest public facilities, is that contemplated by the London and Gore Rail Road Company. I shall proceed to shew the claims of the London and Gore Rail Road Company to have the route proposed by them considered as the proper one for the Great Western Rail Road. It will be remembered that the charter incorporating that Company was passed in March 1834 : to extend from Burlington Bay to London, and from London to the navigable waters of the River Thames, and from London to Lake Huron. Upwards of £50000 having been subscribed by persons directly interested upon its route, and 5 per cent. having been paid in upon a large portion of it, the work was commenced last March, at Burlington Bay, by breaking ground. The Directors conceiving that, before soliciting a further subscription of stock, it was necessary to procure a survey, and to engage an Engineer of known character and practical experience, employed Elisha Johnson, Esquire, of Rochester, who undertook the survey, and finished it about the first of the present month, and will in a few days submit his Report and Estimates to Parliament. Enough is known of this survey to warrant the confident anticipation of a very favorable Report. The Directors further conceiving that it would increase the value of the work, as a public improvement, to extend the Rail Road from Hamilton to Niagara River, and from the navigable waters of the River Thames to Detroit River, have petitioned the present Parliament to that effect. By reference to the map it will appear that the route proposed will connect the head of navigation upon Niagara river, which is at Queenston, the head of the navigation of lake Ontario, which is at Burlington Bay, it will cross at the head of the navigation upon the Grand River, the head navigable waters of the River Thames, and finally reach the Detroit river, passing over a well settled, populous and fertile country ; and through the flourishing towns of St. Catharines, Hamilton, Brantford, Woodstock, Beachville, Ingersolls, London, and Chatham. I shall not venture here to give the distances, as that will be much more accurately done by Mr. Johnson, in his report. It is so happily located, that during the season of navigation, it will connect all our great waters in their most important points, and during the winter it will form an uninterrupted communication through the Province by land.

Already a line of Rail Road is chartered, by different charters, in almost a direct line from the City of Boston, in Massachusetts, to Lewiston, on the Niagara river, passing through Albany, Schenectady, Utica, Syracuse, Auburn, Canandagua, Rochester, Batavia and Lockport to Lewiston; and also in Michigan, from Detroit to the St. Joseph, upon lake Michigan. Some of that line is already completed, and the remainder in active state of progress: and together with the route through this Province, will complete a line of more than 900 miles of continuous Rail road. One cannot contemplate such a result without feelings of the highest admiration—and it would be disgraceful to this Province, not to make her portion of it. Another circumstance, not to be lost sight of, is the contemplated Suspension Bridge over the Niagara river, at Queenston, which will conquer all the obstructions which that river has heretofore presented during a portion of the year, from the immense quantities of floating ice, which frequently renders the river impassible with horse-boats for several days at a time.

No route, either in the Province, or upon the American side of lake Erie, can compete with the one proposed, as it is shorter and passes over a better district of country than can elsewhere be found. To substantiate this, I must again beg the reader to refer to Mr. Johnson's report, which will soon be made public.

There are other important Rail roads in the State of New York, well worthy of notice, particularly the one from Utica to Oswego, and the one from Plattsburgh, on lake Champlain, to Ogdensburgh, upon the St. Lawrence. Whatever tends to lead the commerce and travelling upon lake Ontario, or the St. Lawrence, must contribute to the business of the proposed rail road. It has been suggested that the Western termination of the London and Gore Rail Road should be at the head of the St. Clair river; but the Directors came to the conclusion that for the present the Detroit river, opposite Detroit, would be the better point, as it is ascertained that a vast majority, perhaps in the proportion of twenty to one of emigration as well as commerce to the Western States, would be better suited to go to Detroit. The tide of emigration being at present to the South part of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, &c., the Northern part of Michigan being as yet very thinly populated. The time will come when it may be advisable, however, to continue the Rail Road to the St. Clair from London.

The following are nearly the distances from Buffalo to Chicago by water, and from Queenston by the proposed Rail Road to Chicago by St. Joseph. From Buffalo to Cleaveland 200 miles; from Cleaveland

to Detroit, by the American shore, (the route usually run by the American steam-bots,) 160 miles; from Detroit, up lakes Huron and Michigan, to Chicago, is 820 miles: making in all 1180 miles. From Queenston to Hamilton 47 miles; from Hamilton to London 80 miles; from London to Chatham 64 miles; from Chatham to Detroit 50 miles; from Detroit to the St. Joseph, 220 miles; and from thence to Chicago, by water, 40 miles, making in all 437 miles: shewing a difference of 743 miles. Of course I do not vouch for the perfect accuracy of these distances, but such may be depended on with very little variation. I have now touched upon the principal reasons for adopting this line through the Province, in so far as American travel and commerce would make it advisable. It remains to view it with respect to the rival or conflicting interests in the Province, and if possible to reconcile them. I will take them in their order as follows:

First,—With regard to the Niagara and Detroit Rail road, they could intersect from Bertie, at or near Woodstock, and thereby save the expense of constructing the remainder of the distance, and arrive at precisely the same point upon Detroit river they now desire, by a less distance than to follow the whole of their chartered route, securing to themselves all the principal advantages proposed by their own route.

Secondly,—With respect to the Hamilton and Port Dover Rail road, their interest would be to follow the same route with the London and Gore Rail road, for at least ten miles from Hamilton, the most difficult and expensive part, and then diverge to Port Dover.

Thirdly.—The interest of the Burlington and Lake Huron Rail Road would induce them to intersect from Goderich (which appears to be the most prominent point, upon Lake Huron) at or near to Woodstock or London, or between the Grand River and Hamilton.—It being probable that the Canada Company would be the Chief Stockholders in the undertaking, the point of intersection ought to be determined by them,—one great advantage to them would be that by such intersection they could begin their Rail Road at Goderich, and as it proceeded, every mile would be of advantage to them, and every shilling of the expense of constructing it would find circulation within their own territory. Another great advantage is, that it would open to them a winter communication with the Eastern and Western States. It strikes me they should select as near as possible for their mutual benefit, the same point of intersection as would be chosen by the Niagara and Detroit Rail Road. Goderich when so connected with the

London and Gore Rail Road would assume that commercial importance which her fine situation enables her to command.

Fourthly.—With respect to the Toronto and Lake Huron Rail Road that work can in no way be looked upon as conflicting or opposite in its interests but it may be assisted by an intersection or continuation of the London and Gore Rail Road, from Hamilton to Toronto. This would undoubtedly give to Toronto the advantage of a winter communication to the Eastern and Western States, which now that the commerce between the two countries is so great would be of the highest importance to that place.

Fifthly.—The plan of a Rail Road from Toronto to St. Clair, is so undefined and has been recommended in so imperfect a manner, that it is difficult to know what to offer for its accommodation unless it be that a Rail Road from Toronto to Hamilton will secure to the former place all the commercial advantages that the project alluded to can hold out, and will save them the expense of constructing the line from Hamilton to the St. Clair, which, in my opinion is quite sufficient without attending to the superior facilities which would attend an intersection at Hamilton, from the communication with New York and the Far West. But it is not at Toronto that this line of Rail Road will terminate, for as the means of the Province increase, and public and private enterprize put in motion. The Rail Road may be continued down the North side of the Lake as far as it may be found practicable unless the deep snows of the Lower Province should be found insurmountable during the winter, the Rail Road might with advantage be continued to Quebec. I have now alluded as briefly as possible to the leading reasons pointing out the route proposed by the London and Gore Rail Road Company as the proper one to receive the aid of the Province, and to entitle it to the confidence and support of all interests and parties—It is evident that in the present condition of this country, it is necessary that its resources should be concentrated upon some great and feasible public improvement, by the construction of which, other important and necessary works may subsequently be projected and accomplished. It is also equally evident, that the the present crisis requires that no time should be lost. I may here take the liberty of saying that of all the projected Rail Roads, the London and Gore is the only one in a situation to receive Legislative aid, as it is the only one which has been surveyed,—The Legislature could not charter a new one, and appropriate the necessary funds for its construction, because in the first place, without a survey they cannot know whether it is practicable, or if practicable, whether the expense would not prove

a serious objection. The only method they could this session adopt with prudence (if they wish a new route) would be to appropriate a sum of money for a survey and leave it to the next session to Legislate further upon it. But this course would occasion, to say the least of it, a delay of one year, still leaving it uncertain.

It can form no objection to the route I propose, that although it will conduce to public good, yet it offers greater advantages to some places than to others, as this must always be the case in all public improvements of the kind, and no one ought, while benefiting himself, to allow a spirit of envy to embitter his feelings at the prospect of greater gain being derived by his neighbours.

That the proposed route would be good stock, cannot be doubted, from the best and most authentic accounts, the travel from Buffalo, to Detroit has the past season amounted to 1,000 persons per day and from Detroit to Buffalo 400. The chief part of this immense travelling could be turned upon the Rail Road as the navigation of Lake Erie is long and dangerous, even in the best of times.

That the Province can afford the necessary means for accomplishing this work, is certain as the Provincial credit is good and any sum of money may be raised by debenture. As to other resources some very useful hints may be gathered from several publications which have lately appeared from the pen of Mr. Buchanan, the Consul at N. York, (who has actively interested himself in our internal improvements,) and the letter of William H. Merritt Esquire, abounds with useful information upon all such subjects. To these publications I beg to refer the reader.

A FRIEND TO INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

Toronto 23 November 1836.

Mary Jones died
10th July 1836

