

RAILWAYS.

The importance of the railway interest in Canada may be estimated from the fact that the annual receipts of the railways are about equal to the annual revenue of the Dominion. But great though its present importance may be, it is but small compared to the future which unquestionably lies before it. We have as yet settled only the frontier of our country, and are only now building the Intercolonial Railroad which is to join Halifax with Quebec. But when the Ottawa valley is filled with settlers—Lake Nipissing as much alive with steamboats as Lake Ontario—the north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior busy for a hundred miles inland with mining enterprises—the Red River prairies covered with fields of golden corn and waving grain—when countless herds of cattle graze on the buffalo plains of the Saskatchewan—and British Columbia and Vancouver's Island have attained that industrial development which is certainly in store for them—then Canada will have fifty miles of railway for every one she now has. The Grand Trunk Railway will then want, in places, a quadruple track, and passengers landing at Halifax will cross the St. Lawrence by the Victoria Bridge, ascend the valley of the Ottawa, then up the Montreal river, strike the level plateau north of the great lakes, cross the Nor'-West plains, surmount the gentle slope of the Rocky Mountains, and reach the Pacific shores—the whole by rail in about ten days time—or part by rail and part by water in about fifteen. Unless pestilences, famines, continual wars or other dire visitations weigh upon us with much more severity than has yet been experienced on this continent, this will happen in less than fifty years.

We say this not vain gloriously, but that people abroad who read the words may know that though we are but young as yet, seeking indeed and accepting with gratitude assistance in our enterprises, we are conscious of and confident in the vastness of our resources and the rapidity of their development.

The article in our last *Year Book* mentions the leading ideas which led to the construction of each of our existing railways. To that, on this subject, we refer.

We now present a table, shewing the number of miles of railroad built in Canada* each year:—

Y'r.	In Ontario.	Quebec.	New Brun'sk	Nova Scotia.	Total.	Y'r.	In Ontario.	Quebec.	New Brun'sk	Nova Scotia.	Total.
1847	...	43	..	..	43	1860	4	41	45	..	90
1850	...	12	..	..	12	1861	..	..	..	..	..
1851	...	22	..	..	22	1862	..	..	23	..	23
1852	...	119	..	..	119	1863	..	..	..	..	..
1853	181	30	..	..	211	1864	..	35	..	..	35
1854	225	109	..	..	234	1865	..	..	..	..	..
1855	113	83	..	2	198	1866	5	..	..	..	5
1856	435	...	..	6	441	1867	36	..	19	53	108
1857	65	...	53	14	132	1868	..	..	11	..	11
1858	116	...	40	70	226						
1859	227	81	35	..	343		1,407	575	226	145	2,253

It will be noticed that from about 1852 to 1859 was the first railroad building era. It is also evident that we have now entered upon another, and we present the following approximate statement of the projected roads either now in course of construction, or of which the construction cannot be long delayed.

Ontario:—

Bruce and Grey Counties Railway, about.....	100 miles.
Hamilton and Port Dover Railway	40 "
Toronto and Lake Nipissing line ..	100 "
Canada Central Railway.....	250 "
	490

Of these, the Hamilton and Port Dover line is partly built, and the first section of the Canada Central commenced. The locations of the other routes are not yet determined, but in a couple of years, at furthest, Bruce and Grey must have their railroad, and some extension of the Northern will probably tend eastward towards Lake Nipissing in about five years.

Quebec:—

Part of the Canada Central.....	50 miles.
North Shore Railway from Quebec to Montreal.....	180 "
Part of the Intercolonial Railway.....	159 "
Eastern Townships lines.....	50 "
	439

The Intercolonial road is now about being placed under contract, and the Canada Central (from Montreal to Ottawa) and the Eastern Townships lines, (to connect Montreal more directly with the Vermont roads,) though not yet located, must inevitably soon be built. The North Shore Railway has the most uncertain future, but cannot be excluded from the enumeration.

* The miles "worked"—in a subsequent table—include branches of Canadian lines in the United States, and differ, accordingly.