

the interior. Almost to the beginning of the present century the cultivation of the soil was prohibited by law, in order to keep the island as a fishing station. Hence the slow progress made. The Geological Survey, however, has shown that in the great valleys of the interior there are 3,000,000 acres fit for settlement and capable of sustaining a large population, while the aggregate of areas elsewhere of arable and grazing land is 2,000,000 acres. In the great valley of the Exploits alone there are 800 square miles of good agricultural land. In the Gander, Exploits and Humber valleys are extensive forests of pine and other timber.

370. The first railway was opened in 1884 from St. John's to Harbour Grace, 83½ miles; a few years later a branch line to Placentia (27 miles) was built. In 1892, however, the greatest public work yet undertaken by the colony was initiated—the construction of a line of railway, 500 miles in length, from a point on the Placentia Railway across the island, and having its terminus at Port-au-Basque. This new line is named “The Newfoundland, Northern and Western Railway.” It will be to Newfoundland what the Canada Pacific line is to the Dominion—it will render accessible its fertile lands, its forests and minerals, and thus will give an immense impulse to the development of the rich natural resources of the colony. The line runs north from Placentia Junction, crossing the rivers Terra Nova, Gambo, Gander and Exploits. After traversing the valley of Exploits for some distance, it turns north-westerly, crosses the newly-discovered coal field near Grand Lake, then through the Humber Valley, along the fine Deer Lake country to Bay of Islands; thence south through the fertile lands around St. George's Bay—destined to be the garden of the island—and terminates at Port-au-Basque with its splendid harbour. The distance from its terminus to Sydney, C.B., is but 100 miles; so that by a line of steamers plying here, passengers will in a few hours reach the Canadian railway system, and find means of conveyance to all parts of the continent. In addition to opening up the interior of the island, at present but very partially known, this line will have the effect of bringing the colony into closer relationship with Canada, and so hastening its “manifest destiny”—union with the great confederacy of British provinces in North America. The contractor for this important undertaking is Mr. R. G. Reid, of Montreal, who is carrying on the work with such energy that it is likely to be completed in the end of 1895. Already trains are running to the Exploits River, a distance of 200 miles. The scenery at many points along this line is magnificent, and the attractions to settlers, as well as tourists and sportsmen, very great.