

whole subject in all its bearings, recommending general acts embodying nearly all Mr. Gladstone's suggestions, but advising, also, an address to Her Majesty protesting against one or two of his suggestions as inapplicable to Canada.

338. In 1847 three charters for railways were granted by the Canadian Legislature, and in 1848 three more were granted. The legislature of 1849 passed four railway bills and in the session of 1850 five more were passed.

339. General Acts respecting railways were passed by the Canadian legislature, two in 1849 and one in 1850.

The first of the 1849 Acts provides that every railway company whose act of incorporation contains a provision subjecting it to any general law respecting railways, shall be bound to render every service to government in the conveyance of troops, mails, military and naval stores and ammunition, police and others travelling on Her Majesty's service, and to place at the disposal of the government, when called upon, any electric telegraph in their possession. This was providing for the future so far as it relates to telegraphs, for the first telegraphic wire in Canada was slung but two years before—between Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines and Niagara.

The second Act authorizes the government to guarantee, upon certain conditions, the payment of interest at 6 per cent on loans to be raised by any company, chartered by act of the provincial legislature, if not less than 75 miles in length. But no guarantee might be afforded until half the entire line had been completed, nor without due security for the repayment of the loan.

The same Act provided that in the event of the proposed railway between Halifax and Quebec being undertaken, the Canadian government would pay the sum of £20,000 yearly in proportion as the work advanced.

Although this Act failed to realize the expectations raised when it was proposed, it formed the basis upon which subsequent legislation was effected; it gave indirectly a powerful stimulus to railway construction. To it the first series of railways in Canada owed their development.

In 1850 there were in what is now the Dominion of Canada 66 miles of railway, the result of fifteen years' efforts; the chief dependence for imperial communication was upon the river system, aided by the few and shallow canals then in operation.

340. The year 1851 is a year to be remembered in the railway annals of the Dominion. The views of Henry Fairbairn were coming to the front again.

In that year an Act was passed by the Canadian legislature making provision for the construction of a main trunk line through the two Canadas.

In the session of 1851, the Canadian Railway Committee had before it a bill for a charter to construct a railway through British territory in North America to the Pacific Ocean.

In the same session the battle royal of the gauges was fought before the same committee.

In 1851 delegates from British North American provinces went to England to arrange for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway.