

Among the projectors was Sir Richard Brown, then engaged in schemes for connecting Great Britain with Japan, China and the East Indies by means of a continuous line of steam navigation and railways through British North America. He took up the project of the Halifax & Quebec Railway and became a prominent advocate of it. Routes were projected. Governors were argued with. Legislatures were induced to pass favourable resolutions. Chambers of Commerce took an active part. The Home Government finally in April, 1846, issued instructions to the Royal Engineers to make the surveys asked for, and in June following Captain Pipon and Lieut. Henderson of the Royal Engineers were appointed. They carried on the survey until the end of October when Captain Pipon was drowned in the Restigouche River, his place being filled in the summer of 1847 by Major Robinson, also of the Royal Engineers. The preliminary report was made by Lieut. Henderson in 1847 and the final report by Major Robinson under date of 31st August, 1848.

In March, 1849, the Legislature of Nova Scotia passed an Act authorizing the transfer to the Imperial authorities of Crown Lands ten miles wide on each side of the line of the proposed railway and pledging the House to the payment of £20,000 sterling for interest on capital to carry on the work. The British Government, however, declined to submit any measures to parliament for the aid required. In July, 1850, a convention was called to meet in Portland, Maine, for the purpose of considering plans for building a railway from that city through New Brunswick to Halifax. The public mind in the Maritime provinces however turned more and more in the direction of railway communication with their fellow subjects in the Province of Canada.

351. While the Railway Committee was battling in the Canadian Legislature in 1851 over the question of a standard gauge, the Hon. Joseph Howe, on the part of Nova Scotia, was pressing on negotiations for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway. He had secured the appointment by the different Provincial Governments of a joint delegation from Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, whose mission was to proceed to England and lay the scheme before the Imperial Government for its sanction and financial support. The delegates were to leave early in 1851, but owing to delay in the arrival of the two from the Maritime Provinces, Mr. Hincks, the Canadian delegate, arrived before the others, and was for a time, in London alone. During the interval Messrs. Peto, Brassey and Betts, in conjunction with Mr. Jackson, made a proposal to Mr. Hincks to construct a railway from Montreal to Hamilton, at which point it would join the Great Western; the basis of the proposal being that half the capital should be the direct bonds of the Government instead of the railway company's bonds guaranteed by the Government. This proposal, which was definitely submitted in May, was of much more importance to the Province of Canada than the project to advance which Mr. Hincks was then awaiting the arrival of his co-delegates. It shelved the Intercolonial. It created in Mr. Howe's mind a bitter feeling against Canadian public men, which bore fruit in after years, when the project of Confederation came into the arena of practical politics. But if it did this harm it brought into existence the Grand Trunk Railway Company, the history of which has just been briefly narrated.