

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

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The Canadian Pacific Railway by M. Butt Hewson

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M. BUTT HEWSON

**THE CANADIAN
PACIFIC RAILWAY**

Publ 409

THE CANADIAN



PACIFIC RAILWAY;

BY

GENERAL M. BUTT HEWSON,

(Formerly, Originator and Promoter of the Memphis and Louisville Railroad; Chief Engineer [under Commission from the State of Mississippi] on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad; Chief Engineer of the Mississippi Central Railroad; Chief Engineer of the Arkansas Midland Railroad; Consulting Engineer of the Mississippi, Osage and Red River Railroad, etc., etc., etc.)

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1880.





TO

THE MEMBERS

OF THE

BOARD OF TRADE

OF

THE CITY OF QUEBEC

THIS PAMPHLET IS INSCRIBED IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

OF THEIR APPROVAL OF ITS VIEWS

BY AN ACT OF

PUBLIC HOSPITALITY

TO

THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E.

The distances set forth in the following pages are taken by compass-steppings from the map. They are simply approximations. The statements of cost are put in the sense that their amounts are sufficient to construct a railway, not by any means of the first class, but one which can be made to answer the expedencies of the case. They are stated on a general knowledge of the cost of railways in a new country, under similar physical conditions.

As said in the text, the line laid down is laid down but as a basis of discussion. I find reason to think that investigation will lead to determination of a line crossing the Nelson elsewhere than at Norway House. A survey made by the Pacific Railway service shows that between the heads of the River Sturgeon and the heads of Lake Nipigon, the country immediately north of the height of land for a length of nearly 400 miles is very poor. Dr. Bell's reports lead me to the belief that that poverty continues at some points down towards the banks of the Albany. They speak of the clay soil of the Nelson extending as far south as Berren's River and also to what they call "the height of land"—a phrase which is wanting in that quarter in definiteness. Other information concurs with these statements in leading me to think that the worthlessness, agriculturally, on the line between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg, applies considerably farther to the North. There is some reason for the opinion that to keep the proposed route well within the rich soils of Rupert's Land, it must cross the basin of the Albany as rapidly as possible; and follow the heads of the Equam, the Weemisk, the Dear, the Severn, &c. The undulations incident to that course are of but little moment in a country whose surfaces are so uniform. They offer no consideration worth a moment's thought in comparison with the advantage of a location which, running through fine soils, combines with it the most favorable possible accessories of settlement—a system of water-ways.

This pamphlet rests to but a small extent on my individuality. It takes its positions on other grounds by stating where their proof has been found. Its thinking rests on reasonings whose truth or falsehood the world can determine for itself without any reference to me. My personality and motive having, however, been dragged into the subject, it may be well to state both as they really are.

Though bound to the United States by many friendships and by the love I bear my children, I am not one of its citizens. I have never ceased to be a British subject. The military rank I have the honor to have held in the United States was obtained when the State in whose service I won it had been in process of "reconstruction." It was obtained, therefore, outside conditions which did not exist at the time within the limits of that State—outside conditions of citizenship. I give this explanation as a simple matter of fact, but certainly not in a sense of apology for my acceptance of a distinction whose obtainment is a subject of pride with better men.

To satisfy further inquiry I beg leave to add that I am an Irishman. A Civil Engineer by profession, I have practised under Sir John McNeil, Mr. Leaby, Mr. Gravatt; and also in the service of the Imperial Government. Twenty-odd years ago I lived for three years in Ontario, part of that time in promotion of a railway northerly from Whitby. Subsequently I went to the United States. In 1875 I returned to Canada, and from that to this have been led to hold myself secluded save when a few years ago I published a pamphlet on the Grand Trunk and a few months ago a pamphlet on the Pacific Railway.

Some people inquire into the motive of my pamphlet on the Pacific Railway. To the general one of making myself known in my profession, I add, in reply, the special one of breaking down a system which works the exclusion from the public service of Civil Engineers who entertain similar views to mine on the independence of our profession. Sir John Macdonald made me an offer twelve months ago personally and sent me a repetition of the offer subsequently by Hon. John O'Connor, of professional employment under the Crown. Even though the offer had been acceptable in all other respects—and it was one, I understand, of \$3,000 a year—I would still have been unable to have accepted it, for the reason I assigned at the time, the reason that, unable to bend my professional judgment to the uses of politicians, my acceptance would have been followed within a month by dismissal. A sufficient motive for my course on the subject of the Pacific Railway may, therefore, be found in my anxiety to show the character of its management in order to obtain some such modification of the public service as may enable Engineers to maintain their connection with the political power in the independence in which that connection is maintained by the bar.

I have only to add my acknowledgements for cooperation in the production of this pamphlet to some gentlemen in Quebec. M. Tache, the Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands in that Province, has kindly met my enquiries by supplying me with a map on which he had caused

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valuable information to be placed in my hands at the cost of much labour. M. Chs. Edouard Gauvin, a Provincial Land Surveyor, has shown his devotion to the national interests involved in the subject by giving his professional service in the production of the original of the map accompanying this pamphlet—giving that service gratuitously. Mr. Peverly, another Provincial Land Surveyor of Quebec, has also assisted me kindly by a highly interesting report on the subject of the country from Lake Mistassini to Lake Abitibi, near "the height of land."

M. B. HEWSON.