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CANADA'S SHORT ROUTE BETWEEN CONTINENTS.

Advantages of Situation Enjoyed
by Canada—Her Sea Routes to
Europe and Asia a Vital Feature
of Her Expansion.

Specially Written for THE DRY GOODS REVIEW

HAVE you ever considered what geography has done for Canada? By occupying the northern, instead of the middle or southern, zone of the North American continent, Canada owes to Nature certain priceless advantages—somewhat slowly utilized it is true—but becoming more and more evident as international trade by sea and land gets to be the determining factor in the modern relations of great countries.

It took generations to realize the real facts. The United States developed first, by reason of its being the oldest settled part of the continent by the English race. Population poured in there, and the resistless wave of emigration westward carried English civilization to the Pacific coast—but first in territory acquired by the United States. The first transcontinental railway was constructed across the plains and through the mountains to a harbor in the United States, whose outlook was Asia, Australia and the Islands of the Eastern Seas. Capital naturally poured in first to a country thus developed and thrown open to the world. By the year 1860 the United States had a long start. The native energy of its people did much; capital and settlers from abroad did more; the facilities already provided for expansion accomplished the rest.

Now, Canada began to wake up. From 1800 onward, at intervals, the thought had occurred to a few men here and there that a Britannic Union of the northern Provinces would result in a New Empire from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The obstacles were real and seemed unsurmountable. The great plains were the hunting grounds of the Hudson's Bay Company. It was not the duty or the interest of the company to tell the world that the region was more than the habitat of fur-bearing animals; that it had the soil, climate and resources which—by the labor of men—expand into a great country. The Rocky Mountains were (of course!) a natural impassable barrier. What could you do with Provinces separated by nature, supposed to have a somewhat forbidding climate and dwarfed in the eyes of Europe by the splendid development of the United States?

All the idea lingered in the minds of men. It found its way into politics, and was discussed as a sort of magnificent dream. As

steam applied to transportation, and electricity to instant communication, came to the fore, Canadians were found to be foremost in utilizing these forces. Two Canadians, Samuel Cunard and Hugh Allan, were the pioneers of Atlantic steam navigation on a large scale. Gisborne, another Canadian, projected and helped to lay the first Atlantic cable—the credit for which was

afterwards claimed by the capitalists, who found the money. But the Canadian, Gisborne, was the pioneer.

Finally, a plan of union forced its way into Canadian politics. It fell, curiously enough, to the lot of two Scotsmen, one with the shrewd sense and mental strength of the Lowlander, the other with the courage and the imagination of the Highlander, to join forces and re-create in America for the English Crown, which both men served so loyally, a new Empire, to replace that which George III., and Shelburne, and Charles Fox had, in 1783, so stupidly and senselessly thrown away. When history comes to be written, the uniting of two men of strongly antagonistic party interests, like George Brown and John A. Macdonald, to carry the Canadian Dominion into existence in 1867 will be related as a crucial episode in the annals of the Colonial Empire.

Since 1867—the date of the real beginning of Canada—the Intercolonial railway has been built from the Atlantic Coast into Central Canada, and the Canadian Pacific railway now spans the continent—these two lines providing a route by rail entirely through British Canadian territory and connecting at both coasts with British fast steamship lines to Europe, Asia, and Australia.

In this way Canada has become a highway of commerce between three other continents. Its midway position in this respect is now clearly demonstrated. It is the natural, because the shortest route, for all quick freight, for passengers and for mails. While all-sea routes still give lower rates, owing to the cheapness of water carriage as compared with railways, and while this condition will continue for some time, the tendency is toward the short route. Time is, more and more, an object in modern commerce. No longer do staple products form to the producer the most profitable part of sea-borne freights. Perishable products are an important factor in foreign trade. Wherever agriculture is the chief occupation of a people, and the former is enough wideawake to seek markets abroad as well as at home for special lines, the geographical situation of the country is of vast import.

No one who consults a map of the world can fail to notice the Canadian advantage in point of situation—first, the Dominion's