

despatch which arrived in Canada after my departure, the Secretary of State informed me of the determination of your Majesty's Government to establish a steam communication between Great Britain and Halifax, and instructed me to turn my attention to the formation of a road between that port and Quebec. It would, indeed, have given me sincere satisfaction, had I remained in the province, to promote, by any means in my power, so highly desirable an object; and the removal of the usual restrictions on my authority as Governor-General having given me the means of effectually acting in concert with the various provincial governments, I might have been able to make some progress in the work. But I cannot point out more strikingly the evils of the present want of a general government for these provinces, than by adverting to the difficulty which would practically occur, under the previous and present arrangements of both executive and legislative authorities in the various provinces, in attempting to carry such a plan into effect. For the various colonies have no more means of concerting such common works with each other, than with the neighbouring states of the union.— They stand to one another in the position of foreign states, and of foreign states without diplomatic relations. The governors may correspond with each other; the legislatures may enact laws, carrying the common purposes into effect in their respective jurisdictions; but there is no means by which the various details may speedily and satisfactorily be settled with the concurrence of the different parties. And, in this instance, it must be recollected that the communication and the final settlement would have to be made between, not two, but several of the provinces. The road would run through three of them; and Upper Canada, into which it would not enter, would in fact, be more interested in the completion of such a work than any even of the provinces through which it would pass. The colonies indeed, have no common centre in which the arrangement could be made, except in the Colonial-office at home; and the details of such a plan would have to be discussed, just where the interests of all parties would have the least means of being fairly and fully represented, and where the minute local knowledge necessary for such a matter would be least likely to be found.

The completion of any satisfactory communication between Halifax and Quebec would, in fact, produce relations between these provinces that would render a general union absolutely necessary. Several surveys have proved that a railroad would be perfectly practicable the whole way. Indeed, in North America, the expense and difficulty of making a railroad bears by no means the excessive proportion to those of a common road that it does in Europe. It appears to be a general opinion in the United States, that the severe snows and frosts of that continent very slightly impede, and do not prevent, the travelling on railroads; and, if I am rightly informed, the Utica railroad, in the northern part of the state of New York, is used throughout the winter. If this opinion be correct, the formation of a railroad from Halifax to Quebec, would entirely alter some of the distinguishing characteristics of the Canadas. Instead of being shut out from all direct intercourse with England during half the year, they would possess a far more certain and speedy communication throughout the winter than they now possess in summer. The passage from Ireland to Quebec would be a matter of 10 or 12 days, and Halifax would be the great port by which a large portion of the trade, and all the conveyance of passengers to the whole of British North America, would be carried on. But, even supposing these brilliant prospects to be such as we could not reckon on seeing realized, I may assume that it is not intended to make this road without a well-founded belief that it will become an important channel of communication between the upper and lower provinces. In either case, would not the maintenance of such a road, and the mode in which the government is administered in the different provinces, be matters of common interest to all? If the great natural channel of the St. Lawrence gives all the people who dwell in any part of its basin such an interest in the government of the whole as renders it wise to incorporate the two Canadas, the artificial work which would, in fact, supersede the lower part of the St. Lawrence, as the outlet of a great part of the Canadian trade; and would make Halifax, in a great measure, an outport to Quebec, would surely in the same way render it advisable that the incorporation should be extended to provinces through which such a road would pass.

With respect to the two smaller colonies of Prince Edward's island and Newfoundland, I am of opinion, that not only would most of the reasons which I have given for an union of the others apply to them, but that their smallness makes it absolutely necessary, as the only means of securing any proper attention to their interests, and investing them with that consideration, the deficiency of which they have so much reason to lament, in all the disputes which yearly occur between them and the citizens of the United States, with regard to the encroachments made by the latter on their coasts and fisheries.